

The buddy-boss and the entrepreneurs-of-themselves

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A philosophical appraisal provoked by a proper name has a few challenges to face in order to reach its purpose. The first challenge comes in the form of a trap, which this chapter will avoid at all costs by following the Freudian prescription on *wild analysis* - this means that the Chapter will not pretend to sustain a pseudo-psychoanalytic or pseudo-psychological *analysis* of the person of Donald Trump. And after introducing a brief critique to readings such as this, the text will present the direction which wants to achieve. In short, the aim of this text is a philosophical exploration of “the problem of Trump” which will investigate Trump as a psychoanalytic *symptom*. The understanding of Trump as a symptom under the Freudian/Lacanian lenses, forces us to pose a fundamental question: Trump is a symptom of what? And from the comprehension of the paradoxical dimension of the psychoanalytic symptoms, this question allows us to take another step further and pose a puzzling question: what a figure such as Trump could be a solution to? In other words, how could Trump have become a valid (social) response. The investigation of what is symbolically encapsulated/captured by a figure such as Trump presents valuable insights - not only on how we make politics nowadays, but also, on what we think about ourselves.

Donald Trump

To write about a politician is never an easy task to be assigned or to assign yourself. First of all, for the obvious fact that politics concerns division. Different thoughts and different actions are usually present and are always in dispute when the topic of politics arises. The politicians that propel such thoughts and actions are often under the scope of academics and the media and with the politician in particular this could not be much different. Let us just highlight a few elements that won't be addressed here, before we dive into our main discussion: 1. This text has no intention of exhausting a biographical render of the politician; 2. The present text does not have any intentions of detailing Trump's political actions and going in-depth on his Executive practices of power. Basically, this text is a philosophical render appraisal that takes advantage of a Zizekian-derived short-circuiting psychoanalysis to approach a proper name under its scope. And our main point here is to explore the following question: What could Donald Trump be an answer to? Even if this question itself is not necessarily a new question to pose, it is indeed the main question to be examined. In other words, to understand Trump as a symptom of something, it means that our main objective is to look into what could he be a symptom of?

As previously mentioned, in order to develop this text, the theoretical approximation aims not to a conflation or juxtaposition between philosophy and psychoanalysis, but on the other hand, to the viable short-circuit through both fields - when one finds its limits the other could present a certain perspective and vice-versa. Although this is not a philosophical text about epistemology, an interesting consequence that such an approach allows is to take a closer look at the epistemological limits of both fields that this analysis illuminates. For instance, the realm of politics does not belong to philosophy nor to psychoanalysis. But a certain Zizekian parallax view of sorts is viable nonetheless. In other words, both fields manage to provide texture, conceptual depth and perspective towards complex political situations or political figures. Therefore, the conceptual concern of theoretical limits can be of great help when dealing with politics that does not belong either to one nor the other.

This text wants to explore what could Donald Trump be a symptom of, while also trying not to fall on the trap of pretending to pose pseudo-psychological profiles or superficial interpretations of Donald Trump. Therefore, the philosophical appraisal

of Trump as a symptom lies in diving into the social and economic configuration that led to what could Donald Trump be an answer to.

The dangers of wild theoretical analysis

"Watch out! It's a trap." To write about someone you know personally is a rather hard thing to do. Sometimes, one can presuppose that his or her impressions are more than enough to address a proper name, that basically, one can be spoken through your own words. Well, a simple thought experiment can be of great help here to show how difficult this really is. So, this thought experiment is the following: think of someone you know (e.g. a relative or a friend) and consider what you can say or write about this person. After thinking, writing or telling your thoughts about this person to the person herself or himself; this particular person could either agree, disagree or partially go for one of the sides. Nothing too mysterious about it. But applying some critique to this thought experiment: shouldn't this be somehow shocking instead of obvious? Well, even when we have confirmation, that is, a positive agreement with our impression about someone, shouldn't this instead of coming as a relief be experienced as a profound awe? Or maybe, come with some doubt about how I could be right about this trait of the other? More than just a game of matching to sample, of trying to fit behaviors to categories, to fit qualities to traits, something rather complex lies in this brief exercise deeply embedded in the relationship one has with the other. Of course, when we are dealing with someone that we actually know (or that we at least think that we do...), there is something from the routine, the re-editing of practices, the desire that propels reinteraction and so on... But still, could even this be enough? So, one could quickly notice how our own impressions do not necessarily fit and are usually received with suspicion if not by the other himself or herself, it can easily be by our own selves. The qualities and attributes which pop into our minds, instead of providing great comfort to ourselves, proving that words can be used to translate something about that particular person, can most likely produce profound puzzlement: how can I affirm this about that person? How can that person agree with this thought I have about her or him? So, in a sense one quickly notices that what we "have" on others, our impressions, our thoughts, our perceptions, our ideas, are nothing but glimpses of how little one has in order to grasp otherness.

Well, this rather long but somewhat fitting introduction sets one of the objectives of our text. If it is hard to defend something about someone that we actually know, what can be said about someone that we only know through media and news? Although obvious, this is a necessary point to be made. There are limits as to our true ability to assert some things about proper names that we do not personally know, that we do not personally have contact with. So, if it is clear that there are limits to asserting things about people that we *actually* know, imagine when we are considering what can be said about people we only know through the media... This is why the first direction of this text is actually inspired by such limits or perhaps, about the thought of such limits. More importantly, this does not mean to choke theoretical fields but instead, to oxygenate them by not wasting our time with some troubling directions.

To give proper depth to such troubling directions there is a crucial text to be examined here. In 1910, Sigmund Freud (2018) published a brief psychoanalytic text called: *Wild Psychoanalysis* [Über "wilde" Psychanalyse"]. In this text the psychoanalyst will start presenting a peculiar clinical situation that happened to him and that inspired him to write about the need for certain attention when applying the psychoanalytic procedure. Basically, a new patient looked for Freud because she was going through a treatment with a neighborhood doctor who became aware of psychoanalysis and decided to use the method. But after seeing this young doctor, the woman instead of feeling better found herself experiencing further levels of anxiety. And since the method was being developed by Freud she decided to see him instead, in order to make sense of the interventive direction that the young doctor chose to work with her and that made her feel more anxious.

The clinical summary of the situation was the following: the young doctor was treating a 40-year old woman that found herself in a troubling situation and suffering high levels of anxiety (*angst*). The woman was recently divorced but could not stand the idea of not having sexual relations. Following Freud's understanding there were three viable solutions to this situation: a) going back to her husband, b) find another lover and c) masturbation (2018, p.81). The core issue of this particular situation was that she actually did not want to go back to her husband and the other two possibilities would go against her religious and moral background. Facing this situation Freud writes about some crucial clinical points that any psychoanalyst should pay attention to when applying this method. What Freud is calling *wild psychoanalysis* concerns this list of elements that psychoanalysts should pay

attention to in order not to poorly treat their patients and also, not risking a wrongful application of the method (2018, p.82). For instance, how a psychoanalyst should not take from face value everything that the patient says about her or his doctor (basically, because there is an enormous amount of different elements that simultaneously take place in the application of psychoanalysis...) as well as many other elements.

If on one hand Freud's text is deeply concerned with the bad practice of psychoanalysis itself and he wants to argue the issues of not fully grasping the psychoanalytic intricacies that go in his formulations and practice, on the other hand, there is something highly interesting concerning treatment and the process towards a cure that should never neglect the adequate timing for certain interventions. In this sense, Freud defends that there is a certain clinical moment to address a few topics with analysands but also that limits must be considered in order to develop such methodological finesse.

So, Freud points out that a crucial element that must take place in this process is that of the patient being able to trust his or her doctor through *transference* (2018, p.87). This means that something like a particular connection must be established in order for the treatment to take place. Another interesting point raised by Freud is that knowing about the unconscious and having a thesis about the unconscious is not enough for someone to be cured from her or his anxieties [*angst*]. It is not a matter of unknowing [*Unwissenheit*] on a conscious level which will lead to the formation of the illnesses but the internal resistances (2018, p.86). Freud is basically defending that learning and studying about suffering through psychoanalysis is not enough to deal with suffering. Or as he beautifully puts it, to learn about psychoanalysis for the person going through anxieties is as helpful as distributing menus for those who starve (2018, p.87). This point is clear, there is something else that is completely different in terms of the psychoanalytic organization of a phenomena. Freud supports the same line of thought when considering how the animistic perspective of sexuality that is crucial for psychoanalysis is not the same thing as prescribing for people to have sex. The sexuality at stake for psychoanalysis is much more complex. So, another crucial element to deviate from being wild with patients, according to Freud, is to deal with resistances that lead to the imprisonment of a certain desire that becomes unknown for the person who is suffering. To summarize the risks of wild psychoanalysis, is basically about understanding that...

[a] psychoanalytic intervention, therefore, certainly presupposes a great contact with the person who's suffering, and that the attempts of right at the first session of treatment running over she or he with the abrupt communication [*Mitteilung*] of their secrets, guessed by their doctor, are technically reprehensible and generally as a result extract of profound unfriendship from the patient to the doctor, cutting off all other possible future influences. (2018, p.87)

What Freud is pointing out is vital for this text, basically to rush into conclusions and to address a patient about certain secrets can only do harm. But if we transpose this attitude to our main point, which is to address Donald Trump, what seems to be key in this critique is that one should avoid at all costs the wild guessing of pseudo-psychological profiling. Basically, because without the proper contact and the context of treatment itself, it's just falling into the trap of inflammatory diffamation which lacks proper depth concerning the dynamics which orchestrate such phenomenon. Parallely, this is not much different from the point raised by Slavoj Žižek (2001) when he talks about the attempts of trying to find the psychological motives to Hitler's hatred towards Jews. Not only does Žižek argue that trying to substantialize evil is too delicate and misses the point of examining Hitler's monstrosity, he is concerned with the amount of other reasons that become unheard when a type of diagnosis is put into action (2001, pp. 61-7). Žižek understood the psychoanalytic lesson that Freud left and perhaps, this is a good measure for all of us to consider. In other words, the problem of diagnosing Trump wildly is to obliterate all political agenda he is defending, all the ethically questionable decisions of his political plans and overshadowing his actions behind this improper way of understanding clinical phenomena which is much more complex and delicate than matching boxes to a certain nomenclature. In order for a proper diagnosis to be made, especially psychoanalytical, psychological and psychiatric ones, an incredible amount of evidence must be considered. This raises the problematic point of satisfying ourselves with a diagnosis as a justification, in order to put at ease troubling decisions. For Trump must be seen as a politician for his political acts - and such acts speak for themselves within the political realm, they do declare a position, they do take sides (as politics does). Now that we understand the risks of being wild concerning a proper name, it makes sense to look a bit closer into what one could

actually say about Donald Trump. Not for trying to force things that we can not say about him, but in order to focus on what *can* actually be said about him. Fundamentally, this first session is all about the limits of what can be said. Because to do so, is to avoid the proper problem, especially in the realm of politics, which is to realize the symptomatic embodiment that certain politicians re-edit and sustain through their practices and narratives. There is something about being able to contain ourselves about what can be said and not jumping into impressions, precisely in order to understand what can be said (and not only Trump for that matter...).

Trump as symptom: a philosophical approach

The French philosopher Alain Badiou in 2019 released his appraisal on Donald Trump positing the crucial challenge of thinking about Trump as a symptom. This strategy not only seems adequate but the proper epitome of the philosophical challenge of trying to deal with a proper name within the realm of politics. In the words of the philosopher: "Trump must be interpreted as an ugly symptom of the global situation, not only of the United States but of the world, the world in which we are living today" (2019, p.36). Following his construction, it becomes clear that the current status of social reality suffers from lacking an alternative. Badiou argues that the power of global capitalism lies in sustaining itself as the dominant idea that there is no other choice (2019, p.13).

Badiou reminds us how recently the world felt the weight of lacking different narratives after the Cold War. He notices that the different attempts to socially organize ourselves lost prominence in favor of global capitalism that posits itself as the only possible global possibility. And the French philosopher is not naive when he sustains this point, what he is doing is precisely refining a crucial conceptual reference within the field of politics: the monster. His definition of monster within the field of politics concerns how

...any political decision, at the level of the state, depends strictly on what I would call a monster, namely global capitalism, with its inequalities, its crises, and its wars. It is not true that a government, today, can be an autonomous entity. From the very outset, it is tied down within an all-encompassing determination, and it must affirm that what it does, and even more what it can

do, depends upon its adhering to the laws of this determination, which are the laws of the monster. (2019, p.16)

This means that this monster only knows one thing, which is to become more and more monstrous. And Badiou's Maoist-Marxism prescribes crucially what pumps the heart of this monster, i.e., more inequality (2019, p.17). So, instead of a global experience of freedom reached through modernization of the means of production, exchange and technology, what actually happened was precisely what Marx & Engels had already warned about in their *Manifesto* - the complexification of exploration and the fabrication of a world in the image of Capital. In this sense, the sense of confirmation is somewhat unavoidable but the real trouble is that things are now much worse than what Marx and Engels actually foresaw. What the French philosopher is articulating as the monster of global capitalism meets a beautiful prescription posed by David McNally in *Monsters of the market* (2011) which is "it is a paradox of our age that monsters are both everywhere and nowhere." (2011, p.2) And this is precisely the point about the monster of global capitalism - it is invisible because it lives and inhabits everywhere in the world being sustained by the expression of global capitalism, that is, global media as well as global social media and the internet.

The fundamental law of the monster, as Badiou (2019, p.17) argues, is inequality and who also paid attention to such monstrosity, calling it in rather similar terms, was Slavoj Žižek in *Disparities* (2016). Noticing how in global capitalist modernity, Capital fits the image of the Kraken since we live in an epoch of the awakening of such creatures, Žižek asks: "Are our times – more precisely, the times of capitalist modernity – [is] not such an epoch of the awakened Kraken? Is Kraken not a perfect image of the global Capital, all-powerful and stupid, cunning and blind, whose tentacles regulate our lives?" (2016, p.3) Žižek develops this rather beautiful metaphor of the Kraken, this mythical monster, a water creature that moves at the bottom of the ocean and its movements are noticed and felt at the surface, and once awakened the negative disruptive power of its movements can not go unnoticed. As he questions: "What are explosions of unexpected economic crises, of 'irrational' social violence, if not the echoes of the whips of Kraken's tentacles?" (2016, p.3) Following the Žižekian Kraken, this is how one feels its moving tentacles and incredible reach, its embrace provokes all possible sorts of (economic) disruptions into our lives and we are experiencing this deadly embrace that forces us to struggle

to breathe, to grasp some air while drowning deeper into global economic despair. And this is the main reason why it is paramount to look closer to monsters in order to understand the current political and economic situation, which unfortunately will not fit in this Chapter, but are rather crucial to as theoretical considerations to better consider³ reality nowadays. In other words, the philosophical examination of monsters tells us about the decrepitation of the global economy better than other figures, but mostly because these monsters tell us (almost all that) we need to know about our own selves and our role in such predicament.

Considering the monstrosity of global capitalism, the enlargement of disparity which dictates inequality is growing globally more and more. Badiou even points out that "today, 264 people possess as much wealth, in inheritance and income, as the 7 billion others who make up the rest of the world! This is a far greater imbalance than was possible during the age of absolute monarchies" (2019, p. 17) and that "[t]oday, the role of the state is the same everywhere: to protect these inequalities, to protect the monster." (2019, p.17) So, it is not hard to grasp the monstrous movement of global Capital and how Badiou sustains the political steps that go in order to defend it. And there are two key points to be highlighted by the French philosopher: 1. How the lack of political alternatives in the main political narrative was crucial to set the monster free; and 2. How crucial it is to rescue that there are different political postures to adopt in the face of this monster. In other terms, Badiou (2019) portrays how this monster knows no states, it only knows what must happen in order to survive; he then argues that the current political narrative which lacks alternatives, benefits from the manipulation of affects in order to destabilize and guide the self-preservation of this monster. So, in other words, the problem of our time is: how should we face such monster?

Pursuing this line of thought, this first point was deeply developed by the British philosopher Mark Fisher, who in his portrayal of *capitalist realism* addresses the challenge of understanding that "it is easier to think about the end of the world than the end of capitalism" paraphrasing Frederic Jameson⁴ and Slavoj Žižek⁵. So, his notion of capitalist realism is a derivation of what both Badiou and Žižek were parallelly theoretically developing concerning the effects and consequences of global capitalism for the past forty years or so. It becomes easier to understand that capitalist realism concerns the ontological consequences of subjugating reality to capitalism as the only possibility of existence. How shrinking the experience of reality into one and only mode, which is subjugated to the capitalist format, leaves deep

marks into the way relationships are made, on how we work and on how we suffer. These are only a few of the consequences of naturalizing the contradictions inherent to global capitalism and of embracing reality as such, that tends to forget the historical construction which led to the current state of things and the perspective that things could be different. Fisher (2009) captures an interesting example of such contradictions, for instance: “[w]e believe that money is only a meaningless token of no intrinsic worth, yet we act as if it has a holy value.” (2009, p.13) This explains the invisibility of this monster that is everywhere and nowhere at the same time in our global economy. Mark Fisher (2009) follows the steps of both of his inspiring philosophers and will also criticize our active role in sustaining this monster and addresses the need for responsibility; that is, to think and to problematize reality in order to transform that which imprison us. Fisher briefly summarizes the internal mechanisms of this monster, its guts:

To reclaim a real political agency means first of all accepting our insertion at the level of desire in the remorseless meat-grinder of Capital. What is being disavowed in the abjection of evil and ignorance onto fantasmatic Other is our own complicity in planetary networks of oppression. What needs to be kept in mind is both that capitalism is a hyper-abstract impersonal structure and that it would be nothing without our co-operation. The most Gothic description of Capital is also the most accurate. Capital is an abstract parasite, an insatiable vampire and zombie-maker; but the living flesh it converts into dead labor is ours, and the zombies it makes are us. There is a sense in which it simply is the case that the political elite are our servants; the miserable service they provide from us is to launder our libidos, to obligingly re-present for us our disavowed desires as if they had nothing to do with us (2009, p.15)

Although this feels like a rather long digression, the crucial point that we are making here is that it does not make sense to understand Trump as a symptom, if we forget the crucial psychoanalytic logic behind symptoms. In other words, psychoanalytically speaking, a symptom is a symptom of *something*. And as Freud (1989; 2014) formalizes his notion of symptom inverting the medical understanding of his time (which took symptoms as a mere manifestation closed in itself), the psychoanalyst gave another logic to the manifestations of symptoms, understanding them as the effect of an underlying causal structure. With this definition of symptoms

in mind, we could perhaps find something to say about Donald Trump, since it allows us to understand what Trump could actually mean politically speaking. If the point about the monster became clear enough, now we can present a first conclusion: Trump is a symptom of this monster or perhaps, a monstrous symptom. Badiou argues that this symptom is a nod to dying politics and all its magnificent moribund aspect; while I wish to laterally bring the Brazilian philosopher Paulo Arantes (2014) to this discussion, since he prescribes that we are facing a different temporality requiring new political coordinates. Perhaps this allows us to notice that the symptom that Trump represents or that Trump taken as a philosophical category of global capitalism through the intricacies of neo-Keynesianism vertigo, might as well also signal the importance of spreading the need to talk about politics throughout all layers of society in a different matter. This highlights that without focusing on the disparities, on the excluded and without a proper critique on wealth accumulation, and with all of this needing to focus on local attempts of transformation - no one will ever escape from this monster.

The buddy-boss and the entrepreneurs-of-themselves:

Trump as the mask of the monster

Facing this first conclusion, naturally another realm of questions arise, for instance, how could Trump be understood as an answer? Or to better formulate, how could people have trusted their political faiths (although within a highly problematic democratic format) on him? The first answer was hinted by Badiou but the second could be better examined with the help of Žižek and Étienne Balibar.

Badiou (2019) approaches the first question defending that Trump represents a *novelty* and not someone *new* within politics. Although subtle, such difference within the Badiouian philosophical project is not only important to be considered but it becomes quintessential in order to understand the philosophical treatment given to Trump as a category. In his words: "Trump must be interpreted as an ugly symptom of the global situation, not only of the United States but of the world, the world in which we are living today" (2019, p.36) much in line with the argument about the monstrosity of global capitalism. So, the novelty of Trump can be translated as a symptomatic repetition, a re-edition or perhaps, a re-branding of demagoguery in the field of politics. To put in better terms, Trump appears as someone new, a foreigner to the field of politics and so on, but on the other hand, he was a well-known mediatic figure and businessman, in other words, he is a famous celebrity - which is

just another modality of recognition within rising global capitalism. In this sense, his interests are clearly within the attempt to sustain the monster and to supposedly change things in order to benefit the larger amount of the population and help with the disparity; but in reality his changes are only substitution of the ones in power to make room to fit others like him. This is why Trump is a novelty, he pretended to change things around only to keep everything as such through his changes. So, one could argue that the crucial problem about Trump is that he is the current embodiment of the same old problem instead of a new one. Or perhaps further, that Trump is nothing but the troubling continuation of the global capitalist status quo. And the crucial risk, as Badiou argues, comes not from Trump as a centrist promise of sustaining the (troubling) democratic structure as it is, in order to sustain the monstrous system of global capitalism - but from the fact that he materializes an ideological nod towards the far-right (fascism). It is in this sense that Trump encapsulates a novelty and there is nothing new, in Badiouian terms, about him. His position is just another attempt to save the US economy within the global economy from the standpoint of a businessman and there is absolutely nothing new about this, even less in the hate speech, bad politics and poor decision making.

This is why we can philosophically understand Trump as a symptom of a monstrous global economy. And still following Badiou here, Trump translates the lack of alternative into the political realm, capturing popular frustration arising when former social coordinates seem not to operate in the same way. For instance, economical shifts and the cyclical crises of capitalism⁶. Trump is also a symptom of a time and system where attempts to change are nothing but empty gestures to keep everything as it is. Badiou also brings up the excluded to the discussion, basically noticing the surplus of people without jobs and without homes (2019, p.40) who are not fully integrated into capitalism. People that want jobs and simply cannot find them, while the employed half work overtime and push long hours on their weeks (a contradiction nicely noticed by the French philosopher) (2019, p.39). Well, people in desperate times seek to find hope and the ideological dispute is the political battlefield. Trump in his aggressive, affective, simple tone shifted the narrative towards placing himself as the more aligned with global capitalism in order to change; but following what was presented until now, such change works as a novelty and not as something new. There is nothing actually changing, there are only better adaptations towards a global devouring monster called economy.

Another feature that helps us understand this monster concerns labor and the working force in global capitalism. Slavoj Žižek brings up the working paradigm of the "entrepreneurs of the self" within the scenario of global capitalism (2017, p.65). Basically, naming the experience of freedom of choice within capitalism, which although false, must appear to the subject as something that was totally up to him or her to be decided. As Žižek puts it, this translates into a contradiction: "Constantly bombarded by imposed 'free choices', forced to make decisions for which we are mostly not even properly qualified (or possess enough information about), we more and more experience our freedom as what it effectively is: a burden that deprives us of the true choice of change." (2017, p. 66) Well, isn't this precisely the subjective formulation of *novelty* instead of choosing something new? Here, Badiou and Žižek seem to be very formally close to one another.

And digging deeper into what this means, we could here take Balibar's development of *total subsumption* (2019, p.36) within global capitalism. First of all, because this could provide an insight to Badiou's formulation on people not integrated to capital but also, because such notion provides the necessary depth to something different in terms of labour exploration as Balibar so precisely prescribes. Pursuing his formulation on total subsumption, it becomes clear that there are more levels to explore the working force itself. Or to put in better terms, the worker itself becomes a field of investment. Just another commodity in order to be exploited. This means that every single element that allows the worker to be productive: health, mental health, security, education, transportation and so on... are more levels to be explored for surplus-level (Žižek, 2019). So, not only the end result of the work itself which is captured by capitalism producing surplus-value is captured by capital, now there is this additional form of exploration where all elements that allow a worker to work became forms of exploration captured by capital. This process of commodification in global capitalism is the blood that runs through the veins of the monster and this additional surplus-value feeds the very own system in the name of accumulation. The crucial ideological trickery is that, such configuration is imposed to workers as a free-choice, as a mode of becoming entrepreneurs-of-themselves, as assuming agency of their own means of labor, somehow becoming the boss of your own selves for being left to their own devices, but forgetting completely of the upside of such direction which is the impoverishment of labor itself through the further exploration of the worker itself.

And what does this shift within the capitalist logic have to do with Trump? Well, if we understand that Trump made his entire mediatic career as the embodiment of the successful businessman, as the "perfect" image of capitalist accomplishment and that he used that in his campaign and in rallies, relying on such argument⁷ in order to provoke the identification⁸ of his voters - then, perhaps it becomes clearer why Trump could sound like an answer to the symptom that he himself translates. Trump becomes this kind buddy-boss, the expert that promises the narrative of success - if you are one of the chosen ones⁹... We can understand this along the lines of the faith deposited by many in the hands of someone who, allegedly, understands the monstrosity of global capitalism and that would messianically lead his people out of its internal logic. However, even before the rise of Trump to power, this tacit promise was quickly broken by the internal logic of total subsumption, for after the 2008¹⁰ crisis the worker was freer than ever and was never more explored.

Conclusion

This is why we need the discussion of a proper name, the name of the 45th president of the United States of America, the name Donald Trump, instead of starting with the commentary on the news, comments about the man, about his family, what he eats, how he dresses and so on... The more meaningful philosophical appreciation lies through the investigation of what gets overshadowed by all this glowing spectacle. In other words, there is a crucial necessity of avoiding falling into the easy trap of name calling. Basically, falling into the fallacious danger of mistaken clinical diagnosis as justification for political acts and in this sense, losing the ability of actually facing political acts for what they are. And in order to avoid this trap of wildly interpreting about who Trump really is, the essential point is to consider how Trump represents a political symptom of the current global economy. Or to put it in better terms, nowadays within the perspective of global markets, the economy not only infiltrates but in many times dictates the politics of States and political choices in general. But the real issue comes from the lack of creative solutions and new possible ways within our predicament. The psychoanalytic render on symptoms is valid to take a closer look at what Trump represents, since he means (for some) a viable solution to inherent contradictions of reality. The trouble is how to adequately traverse (in psychoanalytic terms) such symptoms and reach its proper depths... remembering that it is not about Trump, but about what he represents within politics.

When capitalism becomes the only possible way, the only viable narrative and there is no other consideration beyond it, the effects upon reality are experienced in many different realms, like work, culture, the arts, politics, work force, theoretical consideration and so on. This ideological narrative provides a frame and the total inframing of reality generates consequences, because the contradictions of capitalism are not softening through its crisis, but complexifying. Thus, with the intensification of the modes of exploration, the attempts to put this monster at ease becomes harder and instead of considering difficult measures to deal with complex issues, a simple narrative (which oversimplifies things instead of dealing with their proper depth) sounds appealing. In this sense, Trump enacts the solution and the problem that symptomatically represents. Especially in times where our freedom of choice seems to be more in our hands than ever, where the option to become entrepreneurs-of-ourselves is just another possibility in our hands facing many others. But as a freedom which hides the distance between the political injunction of this choice and the material conditions which motivates them, this disparity needs to be noticed. And in this sense, to think about Trump is to glare upon reality itself and consider a construction which finds in businessman solutions for social problems, knowing that they do not have the answer. So, to notice what Trump represents, what he symptomatically encapsulates about the reality of our global economy is to reflect upon the lack of creativity towards our responses in the direction of something new.

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Notes

¹ See More in "Trump defends ICE raid strategy" in <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/08/09/politics/trump-defends-ice-raid-strategy/index.html>

And the more recent "Immigration Grinds To A Halt As President Trump Shuts Borders":

<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/18/817965714/immigration-grinds-to-a-halt-as-president-trump-shuts-borders>

as brief examples of the ethically difficult measures adopted. Even if we consider it as a harsh position based on a pragmatic position devoid of political correctness, the act itself is no less brutal facing a moment of crisis and setting viable examples on how to deal with them...

² At the preface of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* [1848] (2004) addressing the bourgeoisie's desire of constant expansion of the market: "The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of

production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image".

via <https://www.marxists.org/>

³ About monster and monstrosity see Slavoj Žižek in *Looking Awry* (1992); *Refugees, Terror and Other Troubles with the Neighbours: Against the Double Blackmail* (2016); *Monstrosity of Christ* (2009); as well as other works from his vast *oeuvre*.

⁴ See Fredric Jameson, *The Seeds of Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.xii; and "Future City," *New Left Review* 21 (May/June 2003), p.76.

⁵ Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2010), p.329. On the ideological construction of ending the world through which appear in many fictional narratives in cultural productions, but never attempting at the material premise that usually drives it: capitalism.

⁶ Kojin Karatani captures the cyclical crisis of Capital in his article "*Capital as Spirit*" arguing that: "The periodic occurrence of a crisis invalidated the idea of ascribing crisis to the failure of economic policy or anarchic production. Neither was it an indication of the collapse of capitalism. Conversely, it only shows that capital has to accumulate itself through business cycles, which necessarily entail crisis. Furthermore, it means that capital has no means to solve its own contradictions other than through crisis." (2016, 184) in *Crisis and Critique* (Vol. III; Issue III), pp.166-189.

⁷ See more in "'I'm really rich': Donald Trump claims \$9bn fortune during campaign launch": <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jun/16/donald-trump-reveals-net-worth-presidential-campaign-launch> by Dominic Rushe and "Trump Bragged Nonstop About His Success While Quietly Hemorrhaging Millions" by Lydia O'Connor: https://www.huffpost.co.uk/entry/trump-wealth-brags_n_5cd30f06e4b0a7dffcd04f88?ri18n=true&guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAABH4oya-2wYQbs5GpSM3x_LIMTSkCiUoHINQnJISnJqs4JNEr7yoPBGp5Z3ebJhXb515WPVZ1Jy-vK1zvlqiD0iWm6sAGgMyiwQK8MC7z84_-kh_q3Pfy3kaWTD1usME-VYLqsPBsNb6WlvcDd_JHTBaX1F-6zHishJzsIV0jx

⁸ The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1966; 1966a; 1998) throughout his entire work dedicated himself towards such a designation. The development of this notion, in a highly simplified incursion, basically addresses the egoic formation through an Imaginary capture of its own image in the mirror stage therefore, through an external experience, provoking alienation and aggressivity through such process. This transformation takes place once the subject assumes (unconsciously) an image for herself/himself and forms the ego. The Symbolic identification on the other hand, as a secondary step, concerns the Ego Ideal and Ideal Ego and the symbolic completion of such an image once it places the subject into the symbolic realm. The importance of this discussion for us, is that affects are deeply traversed in the identificatory processes and this captures us, setting actions in the name of it - either to sustain it or to destroy it. See more in *Écrits*, pp.2-23.

⁹ The blurred lines between culture and reality seem to go along the lines of Adorno and Horkheimer in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1985) where something the cultural spectacle subjugates the will towards revolutionary change. But also, on the horizon of placing ourselves horizontally towards the characters that are displayed in the TV (pp.143-144). Much like Donald Trump is a familiar face that hides the unfamiliar mechanics of capitalism.

¹⁰ Badiou in *The Rebirth of History: Times of Riots and Uprisings* (2012) makes this point resoundly clear; the crisis of 2008 where States had to bailout banks in order for the global economy not to crash, showed to everyone that the invisible hands of the market, as Adam Smith once wished, came with an immense price. In order for the wealthy to continue accumulating such cost would have to be paid by the excluded and the working force through different modalities of exploration, which were perfected towards the paradigm of the entrepreneurs-of-themselves.