



A materialistic Hegel for the times of the WethOthers¹

Un Hegel materialista para los tiempos de los NosOstros

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Abstract

This paper seeks, on the one hand, to clarify the relationship between Hegel and Machiavelli as materialist thinkers who, on the other hand, allow us to understand the fascism that plagues us in contemporary political forms. We will use arguments from Marx, Gramsci and Cassirer to show that in Hegel-Machiavelli's thought are the principles for a Political Revolution, namely, the WethOthers.

Keywords: *Hegel. Maquiavelli. Materialism. Revolution. WethOthers.*

¹ The key concept "WethOthers" refers to the Spanish concept of "NosOtros". The Italian translation has avoided creating a new word for the concept in their language. See ESPINOZA LOLAS, R. *NosOtros. Manuale per dissolvere il capitalismo*. Milano-Udine: Mimesis, 2023. A new French version of Ricardo Espinoza Lolas' work will soon be published, giving this key concept a new translation. In this case, we follow the translation of the concept presented in the article ESPINOZA LOLAS, R. *The Revolution of the WethOthers (NosOtros)... Around a Theory of the Real for a Material Historical Politics of Our Times*. *Crisis & Critique*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, pp. 271-292, 2022.

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Resumen

Este escrito busca, por un lado, aclarar la relación que existe entre Hegel y Maquiavelo como pensadores materialistas que, por otro lado, nos permiten comprender el fascismo que nos agobia en las formas políticas contemporaneas. Utilizaremos argumentos de Marx, Gramsci y Cassirer para mostrar que en el pensamiento de Hegel-Maquiavelo están los principios para una Revolución Política, a saber, el NosOtros.

Palabras-clave: *Lorem. Hegel. Maquiavelo. Materialismo. Revolución. NosOtros.*

Introduction. How do you read Machiavelli?

What we aim to express in this paper is a rethinking of Machiavelli from Hegel and Hegel from Machiavelli. In doing so, we are reevaluating both of them in the context of the power (*Macht*), which represents an event that alters the coordinates of the established order (a radical eruption of freedom), of what is considered "natural," that is, the framework of global capitalism. Although we acknowledge that Hegel only discusses *Il Principe* and not the *Discorsi*, we will demonstrate that the latter is also present in Hegelian thought concerning the interplay between the theoretical and the practical.

To achieve this, we will focus on two figures: one mythical, that of Theseus, and the other "almost" mythical, that of Aesop. Both figures enable us to gain insight into both thinkers from within, thus making their philosophies and policies accessible to us. It's widely recognized that these figures hold significant importance for Hegel, spanning from his youth to his maturity. Theseus assumes a fundamental role in Machiavelli's *Il Principe*, which remains relevant to our contemporary times (and if misinterpreted, can lead to fascism). Similarly, Machiavelli himself is akin to an Aesop who, for over five hundred years, has conveyed the tales of humanity in its theoretical and practical struggles. Hegel then embraced the legacy of the Florentine thinker, a legacy later taken up by Marx and many others, but Hegel stands as the most influential figure, propelling philosophical and political theory into the twentieth century.

During the early 19th century, Hegel, as Cassirer aptly notes toward the end of his life in the USA (he passed away in 1945), amidst the dire times of power (*Macht*) and violence (*Gewalt*) brought about by the events of the Second World War, explicitly aimed to become a new Machiavelli for his era, three centuries after the Florentine. His goal was to reimagine a unified Germany (while recognizing differences), thus establishing a dynamic coherence that would organize it, as fragmentation was prevailing outside its own historical context, preventing the realization of human freedom:

Desde el punto de vista práctico, esto exige también que en ese pueblo florezca la verdadera libertad, la libertad política; ésta sólo comienza allí donde el individuo por sí mismo, como tal individuo, se reconoce como general y esencial, donde tiene un valor infinito o donde el sujeto ha adquirido la conciencia de la personalidad, es decir, donde pretende valer exclusivamente por sí mismo (...) Por razón de esta conexión general de la libertad política con la libertad de pensamiento, la filosofía sólo aparece en la historia allí donde y en la medida en que se crean constituciones libres.²

Today, there are numerous thinkers like Negri, Esposito, Balibar, and Villacañas, who strive to be the "Machiavelli" of our time, five centuries later, attempting to bring cohesion to a fragmented Italy, an unfinished France (this was also pursued by Althusser, Lefort, Abensour), a Spain struggling to break free from Francoism's atomizing and poisonous influence, and a Europe in a perpetual state of disintegration, unable to escape the grip of continuous and nihilistic conflict.

The crux lies in how our position with respect to Machiavelli shapes a particular philosophical and political approach, determining how freedom unfolds amidst a material history that reflects humanity's essence. This dynamic is equally applicable to Hegel himself, not merely as a reader of Machiavelli and *Il Principe*, but within his own oeuvre, spanning from his early work (around *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 1807) to his later years (the three volumes of *Wissenschaft der Logik: Das Sein-Die Lehre vom Sein* 1812-1832, second posthumous edition, *Die Lehre vom Wesen* 1813, and *Die Lehre vom Begriff* 1816). This phenomenon carries over to Marx as well—first in his republican phase that

² HEGEL, G. W. F. *Lecciones sobre historia de la filosofía I*. México: FCE, 1995, pp.91, 92.

aligns with reformists, and then in his revolutionary phase. Marx's engagement with Hegel stems from Hegel's intrinsic matter, constituting both theory and politics. The initial Marx interprets Hegel through an idealized lens, always via Feuerbach and the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, aiming to understand the present. On the other hand, the subsequent Marx approaches Hegel through the *Wissenschaft der Logik* and the disappointment of the German and European revolutionary endeavors, striving to construct a revolutionary future. Thus, the focus isn't solely on Marx, but rather on these two seemingly distinct interpretations of Hegel that organically shape him. This, once again, underscores Hegel as both a thinker and a politician, seamlessly merging theory and praxis. Hence, Hegel's interpretation of Machiavelli becomes pivotal for us to explore, illuminating political theory across the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Undoubtedly, Machiavelli's *Il Principe* can evoke apprehension, especially considering the fascism and Nazism that marked the twentieth century. It continues to resonate differently today. However, regardless of this context, Machiavelli remains a historical thinker of power, freedom, and the populace. Hegel recognized this amid the turbulence of his era. Even Mussolini, the founder of the Fascist movement in 1919, wrote a brief prelude or introduction to Machiavelli in April 1924, published in his 1922 creation, the Fascist journal *Gerarchia* (a monthly journal). This came at a time when Mussolini had assumed unifying authority over a fragmented Italy, alongside a figurehead King like Vittorio Emanuele III di Savoia. In this context, El Duce imparts to us:

La cuestión es la siguiente: después de cuatro siglos, ¿qué sigue siendo de vital importancia en *El Príncipe*? ¿Podrían tener los consejos de Maquiavelo alguna utilidad para los gobernantes de los Estados modernos? ¿Está el valor del sistema político de *El Príncipe* confinado a la época en que la obra fue escrita, y es por tanto necesariamente limitado y, en parte, caduco, o es, por el contrario universal y actual – especialmente actual? Mi tesis da respuesta a estas preguntas. Afirmino que la doctrina de Maquiavelo sigue siendo válida hoy en día, después de un lapso de cuatro siglos, pues, si bien los aspectos externos de nuestra vida han cambiado enormemente, no se han constatado profundas variaciones en la mente y el carácter de los individuos y de los pueblos (...) El término Príncipe debe entenderse como equivalente a Estado. Para Maquiavelo, el Príncipe es el Estado. Mientras que los individuos, movidos por su egoísmo, tienden al atomismo social, el Estado representa una organización y una limitación. El individuo trata continuamente de evadir las restricciones.³

And so, the Italian philosopher Giulia Battistoni is correct in her endeavor to reconsider Hegel beyond the fascist Machiavelli that Pöggeler (and many reformist or social democratic thinkers) so greatly apprehends. In line with James Burnham's thinking, she emphatically highlights:

Mussolini selbst hat eine 'Einführung zu Machiavelli' geschrieben. Ein Missbrauch dieses Werks sei aber Machiavelli nicht zuzurechnen : ‚Wir tadeln nicht einen Forscher, der die bisher unbekannte klinische Zusammensetzung eines Giftes erklärt hat, nur weil ein Mörder sein Traktat benutzt hat [...].⁴

³ MUSSOLINI, B. Preludio a Maquiavelo. In: *Pensar la política: entre Virtud y Terror*. Madrid: ediciones libres AU La Caverna, 2015.

⁴ BURNHAM, J. I machiavelliani. *Critica della mentalità ideologica*. Milano: Masson S.p.A., 1997, p.52. (Mussolini himself wrote an "Introduction to Machiavelli". However, Machiavelli cannot be blamed for the misuse of this work).

A Theseus WethOthers⁵

If we look around, we realize that most of the new political leaders follow a certain Italian fascist "indication" and they embody a Theseus of domination and "Hate the Other". This tendency is favored by fascist figures, from Mussolini himself to dictators like Pinochet and totalitarian businessmen like Trump, as well as numerous politicians such as Milei, Meloni, Le Pen, and others. Yet, a crucial question arises: Will Boric in Chile or Petro in Colombia replicate a fascist trajectory, akin to how Putin governs Russia? How can we differentiate the "good" Theseus from a totalitarian fascist? How can we distinguish a Theseus who wields power and even deploys violence without being a fascist? Is the distinction between power and violence sufficient to comprehend Theseus? How does one identify a revolutionary Theseus rather than a reformist or, worse, a totalitarian one? Moreover, if Theseus isn't a personal name but rather a function, an operator – or in Lacanian terms, if Theseus is not an individual but a signifier – then Theseus becomes the Name of Theseus.

Hegel, following Machiavelli, articulates his stance explicitly in his Constitution, and we should recall a portion of the epigraph of this text:

Dieser Theseus müßte Großmuth haben, dem Volke, das er aus zerstreuten Völkchen geschaffen hätte, einen Antheil an dem was alle betrifft einräumen, weil eine demokratische Verfassung als Theseus seinem Volke gab, in unsern Zeiten und grossen Staaten, ein Widerspruch an sich selbst ist, so würde der Antheil eine Organisation seyn Charakter genug⁶

We are familiar with the myths, as well as the remarkable "biography" penned by Plutarch (a work extensively studied by Machiavelli and Hegel), which illustrates that Theseus is no ordinary hero. He vanquished the Minotaur with his bare hands (a bestial incarnation of Dionysos himself). He fell in love with the quintessential maenad, Ariadne, and employed her thread to navigate the intricate labyrinth (a task more intricate than slaying the Minotaur). The allure of Minos's daughter was so potent that she relinquished her entire Minoan world for the sake of her Attic champion. On Athena's behest, he abandoned Ariadne, and like Hercules, he undertook numerous heroic feats against a myriad of Hellenic monsters. Furthermore, he not only founded a united Athens but accomplished this under the guidance of the wise goddess herself, often depicted with her arms and the owl, symbolizing Athena (a somewhat unconventional goddess, one might say in contemporary times). Summing up this figure from antiquity, the eminent historian Pierre Grimal expresses:

Después de la muerte de Egeo... Teseo asumió el poder en Ática. Su primer acto fue realizar el 'sinecismo', o sea, reunir en una sola ciudad a los habitantes, hasta entonces diseminados en el campo. Atenas fue así la capital del Estado así constituido. La dotó de los edificios políticos esenciales: el Pitraneo, la Bule, etc. Instituyó las fiestas de las Panateneas símbolo de la unidad política del Ática. Acuñó moneda, dividió la sociedad en tres clases: nobles, artesanos y agricultores, e instauró, en líneas generales, el funcionamiento de la democracia tal como existía en la época clásica. Conquistó la ciudad de Megara y la incorporó al Estado que había creado. En la frontera del Peloponeso y el Ática erigió una estela para señalar el límite de los dos países: de un lado, el dorio; del otro, el jonio. Y de la misma forma que Heracles

⁵ A more extensive version of this text, with more developed ideas, can be found in the article ESPINOZA LOLAS, R. The Revolution of the WethOthers (NosOtros)... Around a Theory of the Real for a Material Historical Politics of Our Times. *Crisis & Critique*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, pp. 271-292, 2022.

⁶ « This Theseus would have to have the magnanimity to give the people, which he had created from scattered peoples, a share in what concerns all, because a democratic constitution as Theseus gave his people, in our times and great states, is a contradiction in itself, so the share would be an organisation of sufficient character ». HEGEL, G.W.F. *Fragments of a Critique of the Constitution of Germany*. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Band 5. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1998, p. 157.

había fundado los Juego Olímpicos en honor a Zeus, Teseo instituyó, o, mejor dicho, reorganizó en Corinto los Juegos Ístmicos, en honor de Posidón.⁷

Upon examining Theseus's achievements, thanks to Grimal's synthesis, we come to realize that he is by no means a human, let alone a man, of flesh and blood. He embodies neither a Duce, nor a Führer, a Caudillo, a Liberator, a Dictator, or anything else that encapsulates an inherent "essence." Theseus doesn't manifest the concealed essence of a universal entity eager to unveil itself, nor does he carry within him the entirety of a distinct essence. In Theseus, there exists no essence whatsoever, much less the essence of a Heimat that yearns for complete expression. As Machiavelli articulates, Theseus is a product of material fortune, which subsequently transforms into the virtue of certain individuals. Hegel, in the Constitution, refers to this concept in a twofold manner, expressing Machiavelli's nuance as both *Zufall* and *Notwendigkeit*:

Wenn Macchiavel den Fall Cäsar Borgia's ausser politischen Fehlern auch dem Zufall zuschreibt, der ihn gerade in dem entscheidendsten Augenblick des Todes Alexanders aufs Krankenlager | warf, so müssen wir dagegen in seinem Fall mehr eine höhere Nothwendigkeit erblicken, die ihn die Früchte seiner Thaten nicht gemessen, noch sie zu grösserer Macht ausbilden ließ, weil die Natur, wie sich an seinen Lastern zeigt, [ihn] mehr zu einem ephemeren Glanz, und zu einem blossen Instrumente der Gründung eines Staates bestimmt zu haben scheint, und weil also von der Macht, zu der er sich emporschwang ein grösser Theil nicht auf einem innern und auch nicht äussern natürlichen Rechte beruhte, sondern auf den fremden Zweig der geistlichen Würde seines Oheims gepropft war⁸.

If Machiavelli attributed the downfall of Cesare Borgia not solely to political errors, but also to an accident (*Zufall*) which, at the most critical juncture—Alexander's death—struck him down with illness in bed, similarly, we must perceive in his demise a higher necessity (*Notwendigkeit*) that prevented him from reaping the benefits of his deeds or harnessing them to amplify his authority. Nature, as reflected in his vices, seemed to have destined him for ephemeral brilliance and to serve merely as an instrument for state foundation. Theseus epitomizes ultimate freedom, and thus he operates within constituent power, even when his actions appear as violence. This intricate dynamic challenges social democracy as perceived by Pöggeler, as it signifies that in Hegel's view, social revolt is always conceived as an expression of free power.

Hegel's Theseus isn't a being of flesh and blood, let alone an embodiment of something essential. However, neither is Machiavelli's Theseus, although at times *Il Principe* might lead us to believe he's a tangible figure. Yet, he doesn't embody any essential Florentine spirit or any specific people. Instead, he emerges as a fortuitous chance that assumes necessity in the context of radical freedom that arises within the socio-historical fabric interwoven with one another. Theseus isn't a totalitarian or revolutionary subject, as he isn't a subject at all. Machiavelli himself offers the keys to understanding this in his *Discorsi*, as Negri comprehends:

⁷ GRIMAL, P. Diccionario de Mitología Griega y Romana. Barcelona: Paidós, 1989, pp. 508-509.

⁸ « If Macchiavel ascribes Caesar Borgia's fall not only to political errors but also to chance, which threw him on the sickbed at the most decisive moment of Alexander's death, we must, on the other hand, recognise in his case a higher necessity, which did not allow him to measure the fruits of his deeds, nor to develop them into greater power, because nature, as is evident from his vices, [he] seems to have been destined more for an ephemeral splendour, and for a mere instrument in the foundation of a state, and because therefore a greater part of the power to which he rose was not based on an internal or external natural right, but was grafted on the foreign branch of his uncle's spiritual dignity ». HEGEL, G. W. F. *Fragmente einer Kritik der Verfassung Deutschlands*, op. cit., pp. 134-135. This quotation, which is here in the original German and extended version, also appears in a short version and in English at: Espinoza, R., "The Revolution of the WethOthers (NosOtros)... Around a Theory of the Real for a Material Historical Politics of Our Times", in *CRISIS & CRITIQUE* Volume 9/Issue 2, 2022 ISSN 2311-5475, p. 274.

"... la república se torna en el cuerpo del príncipe, la materia viva del poder constituyente. La crisis del discurso político que Maquiavelo había experimentado entre 1512 y 1513, tanto en la escritura del *Libro delle Repubbliche* como en su vida personal, es superada teóricamente".⁹

Now, for Machiavelli, just as Hegel recognizes three hundred years later, Theseus represents the republic. Power and freedom find their expression within the republic, specifically through the people (or plebs or multitude, the terms vary for Machiavelli and signify distinct characteristics that highlight the human emerging from the power's freedom):

Né si può chiamare in alcun modo, con ragione, una repubblica inordinata, dove siano tanti esempi di virtù; perché li buon esempi nascono dalla buona educazione; la buona educazione, dalle buone leggi; e le buone leggi, da quelli tumulti che molti inconsideratamente dannano: perché, chi esaminerà bene il fine d'essi non troverà ch'egli abbiano partorito alcuno esilio o violenza in deisfavore del commune bene, ma leggi e ordini in beneficio della publica libertà".¹⁰

From Machiavelli's Prince to the people, to the political community of different people, is what the Florentine author's Theseus shows us, a people that appears in the movement of revolt, a living people that does not allow itself to be tamed by anything, and that emerges from randomness and then becomes something necessary, as if it were a metaphysical essence. The Chilean case, which we have discussed in 2019, could be seen as a becoming of a constituent process. It is not possible to think that Boric is the Theseus, but rather it is the popular becoming, of multiple Chileans of all kinds who took to the streets, first with violence (burning the Metro, looting businesses, etc.), then in resistance (confronting the police and the military) and then in dialogue (agreeing with parliamentarians on a political solution) which generated a change for the whole country, a change at a historic level (even if this then failed over the years and especially after the Covid-19 pandemic). Everything that was considered true, that which was established, was dissolved and set in motion to change Chile.

In the midst of turmoil and revolt, the people, in its essence, manifests its own motion. This movement signifies the advent of history, complete with all the associated hardships it may entail. However, it simultaneously represents the eruption of the constituent, of power as freedom, which facilitates the establishment of a specific type of State. This State invariably evolves through the conduit of this popular movement. Machiavelli's Theseus guides us from the Prince to the People, illustrating a populace that materializes within the very revolt. An example can be found in Chile during October 2019, where the multitude engaged in various expressions of protest, ultimately triggering a process of constitution. While Gabriel Boric was not Chile's Theseus, it was the Chilean people themselves, through their myriad forms of popular dissent, who surged onto the streets, leading to a transformative moment in history. An upheaval of power ensued, accompanied by violence, driven by the aspiration for the collective welfare of all. A foundational State emerges from its grassroots. A State characterized by its continual dynamism now serves as the locus of truth. Hegel, from an early age, already asserted in his Phenomenology that truth resides in process; and indeed, truth takes the form of a process, a movement, a historical occurrence, guided by none other than the fraternity of Dionysos. That is why it is a WethOthers, that is, a "we" perforated by the difference that constitutes it, an Other:

⁹ NEGRI, A. El poder constituyente. Ensayo sobre alternativas a la modernidad. Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2015, p.99.

¹⁰ MACHIAVELLI, N. Discorsi sopra la prima deca de Tito Livio. In: MACHIAVELLI, N. Tutte le Opere. Secondo l'edizione di Mario Martelli (1971). Milano-Firenze: Bompiani, 2018, p.322.

Die Philosophie dagegen betrachtet nicht unwesentliche Bestimmung, sondern sie in sofern sie wesentliche ist; nicht das Abstracte oder Unwirkliche ist ihr Element und Inhalt, sondern das Wirkliche, sich selbst setzende und in sich lebende, das Daseyn in seinem Begriffe. Es ist der Proceß, der sich seine Momente erzeugt und durchläufft, und diese ganze Bewegung macht das Positive und seine Wahrheit aus¹¹

Theseus cannot be just any conceivable Napoleon (even if certain strains of Hegel's thought leaned in that direction, or even Richelieu, who eventually met a headless demise along with his cherished cats meeting a horrendous fate). Theseus stands as a signifier that encapsulates the essence of the "Name of Theseus," which signifies a function emerging from a complete and vibrant whole. This function refuses to be ensnared by a closed theory of reality or a reproductive and monotonous praxis that aims to perpetuate the status quo. Theseus serves as an operator of freedom, representing a true power that breaks open the labyrinth in which we've been confined. With his sheer determination, he obliterates the metaphorical Minotaur of an unfulfilled life, of dormant work, and of stagnant time. Theseus embodies the essence of time—the living time we share among ourselves—within the very act of revolt, to foster the creation of an alternative time. Theseus presents a revolutionary embodiment of the living movement within reality, and within it, of humanity itself. Gramsci recognizes this immediately upon *reading Il Principe*:

Il moderno Principe, il mito-Principe non può essere una persona reale, un individuo concreto: può essere solo un organismo, un elemento sociale nel quale già abbia inizio il concretarsi di una volontà collettiva riconosciuta e affermatasi parzialmente nell'azione.¹²

And this is precisely why Machiavelli isn't forgotten, as certain contemporary theorists of social democracy would suggest (and naturally, among all varieties of conservatism, not to mention right-wing ideologies, since at times the term loses its distinct meaning). Machiavelli himself ardently declares: "... li popoli... benché siano ignoranti, sono capaci della verità"¹³. This WethOthers makes sense from a material logic, never in an ontology that is always idealised or spiritual, and Hegel knows this very well as a reader of Machiavelli.

Logical material history vs. ontological spiritual history

As a result of what has been said in the previous section, it is necessary to immerse ourselves in Hegel's material logic in order to find the best way to find the WethOthers. A problem of philosophers, and also of certain political theorists, is to think of history in an idealized way; that is, a "dead" (spiritual) history. And this problem persists today and there are many authors who move away from thinking history from the very materiality in which it takes place, namely, a living history, in movement and which does not seek to ideologically reproduce the best of possible worlds, but which expresses the world in its event "in spite of" our present; it is a history in a living time: revolutionary time. This is a practice that Machiavelli repeatedly engaged in, and it mirrors the approach of the Frankfurt School's

¹¹ « Philosophy, on the other hand, does not contemplate unessential determination, but it contemplates it in so far as it is essential; not the abstract or unreal is its element and content, but the real, the self-establishing and self-living, existence in its concept. It is the process that generates and runs through its moments, and this whole movement constitutes the positive and its truth » HEGEL, G. F. W. *Phänomologie des Geistes*. In *Gesammelte Werke*. Band 9. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1980, p. 34

¹² GRAMSCI, A. *Quaderni del carcere*. Volumen secondo. Quaderni 6 – 11 (1930-1933). Torino: Einaudi, 2014, p.951.

¹³ MACHIAVELLI, N. *Discorsi sopra la prima deca de Tito Livio*. In: MACHIAVELLI, N. *Tutte le Opere*. Secondo l'edizione di Mario Martelli (1971), op. cit., p.322.

Adorno, who often contrasts with the Freiburg School of Heidegger (not to forget *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*, 1964). It's almost as if atheist and leftist thinkers, collaborating across disciplines and operating within the context of capitalism, endeavor to unearth the real and the human within it, even when it's painful to confront how humanity has evolved within this capitalist era. They do so in contrast to thinkers—many of them believers and conservatives—who attempt to pigeonhole human existence into a structural framework, often proceeding from a confined hermeneutics of philosophy. Furthermore, these thinkers perpetually seek to uncover the essential and definitive essence of the human, a quest that proves to be elusive. This divergence positions Critical Theory closer to Machiavelli while casting Ontology as its antithesis. Consequently, the trajectory from Marx to thinkers like Butler¹⁴, Žižek, Negri, and Rancière aims to uncover a material history of humanity and, in tandem, a living creation in the context of an active time. It's worth noting that the true thinker of time isn't Heidegger, but rather Marx, and by extension, Hegel (Machiavelli).

Marx, on one hand, possesses an understanding of Hegel that few others do. Neither Butler nor Žižek, for example, are as steeped in Hegelian thought as Marx is. He approaches and interprets Hegel from an intrinsic standpoint, signifying that Hegel's response to Aesop's wise diptych unfolds within himself. Hegel's response is articulated just a paragraph later in a similarly enigmatic manner, as he interlaces a rose with a dance through the term "here." This response could be seen as an echo, in a sense, of Machiavelli's perspective. Marx astutely recognizes and conveys this in his remarkable work, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), which stands 32 years apart from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. In this work, the youthful Marx offers a profound interpretation by simply positioning Hegel's cryptic statement following Aesop's diptych: "Hic Rhodus, hic salta! / ¡Aquí está la rosa, baila aquí! (*Hier ist die Rose, hier tanzt!*)" It is as if the second sentence is the answer to the first. And in fact it is; and this is the point of Machiavelli that current interpretations forget. The dance goes for that leap and the rose for Rhodes (a Lutheran rose as an expression of the human, but in Hegel no longer nailed to the idealized cross of the afterlife, but making a material life in the only life we have), and both sentences from the "here" that essentially articulates them. For Marx it is almost an answer given by Hegel himself to Aesop, and his always current fable, an answer that operates as a fantasy that haunts us, and his "Hic Rhodus, hic saltus!" now speaks to us in Dionysian terms as a dance, but, if we look in detail at Marx's text, we realize that a small detail changes; it is a small slip with respect to Hegel's text-quote. Marx points out to us: "Hic Rhodus, hic salta!". From "saltus" in Hegel it becomes "salta" in Marx. A nuance that does not indicate the same thing, but that, instead of contradicting Hegel, it seems that Marx is, as I pointed out, for a change giving the reason to Hegel, from within Hegel himself reads it, and is deepening it and making it explicit in *The 18th Brumaire*. It is the "Machiavellian" moment, and not Machiavellian (an adjective that does not really concur with Machiavelli's doing), of Hegel (mature) that Marx sees very well (and being very young). And that moment is Hegel's material history, which is a history that from there opens the logical, since the logical has nothing to do with relief, cancellation, totalization and less abstraction, but expresses the very material openness of the human and the real itself (this has been studied in detail by one of the authors of this article in Hegel and the new logics of the world and the State)¹⁵.

Conversely, another Marx emerges here; a Marx who is read through the lens of Hegel. It's Hegel himself who paves the way to understand Marx (in the process of interpreting Hegel). By this, I mean

¹⁴ Cfr. BUTLER, J. *Sujetos del deseo. Reflexiones hegelianas en la Francia del siglo XX*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 2012.

¹⁵ Cfr. ŽIŽEK, S., *Visión de paralaje*. Buenos Aires: FCE, 2006, p. 36.

that if we examine a materialist Hegel— not one ensnared by panlogism— and concurrently, a materialist Hegel anchored, dancing within and for the present, embracing that "here" (akin to Machiavelli), we discern that his proposition involves the opening up of all enclosed logic. This refers to an ontology that seeks to uncover an inherent, categorical structure within the realm of the real. This interpretive framework enables us to grasp Marx in a different light, thereby allowing us to scrutinize Hegel through his Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*. A Hegelian Marx surfaces, someone who, starting from Machiavelli, utilizes his own work *The 18th Brumaire* to elucidate how the French propelled the most inadequate figure to power: Louis Bonaparte. This Hegelian Marx is multifaceted. On one hand, he comprehends Marx on a profound level, deciphering the latent intricacies of his writings—details that irk ontological or conservative Hegelians. Additionally, this Marx is one who, bereft of Hegel, would struggle to read and interpret not just Hegel's philosophy, but even his own revolutionary ideas. In fact, Hegel himself permits Marx to embrace his inner Machiavelli, a fact underscored in his recommendation to Engels in a letter dated September 25, 1857:

Por cierto, en su 'Historia de Florencia' Maquiavelo describe muy graciosamente cómo peleaban los condottieri (Copiaré este trozo y te lo remitiré. Pero no, cuando vaya a verte a Brighton --¿cuándo? - te llevaré el libro de Maquiavelo. Su 'Historia de Florencia' es una obra maestra).¹⁶

That is why Marx points out something so current, something so common sense, but that we forget it:

"[...] las revoluciones proletarias, como las del siglo XIX, se critican constantemente a sí mismas, se interrumpen continuamente en su propia marcha, vuelven sobre lo que parecía terminado, para comenzar de nuevo, se burlan concienzuda y cruelmente de las indecisiones, de los lados flojos y de la mezquindad de sus primeros intentos, parece que sólo derriban a su adversario para que éste saque de la tierra nuevas fuerzas y vuelva a levantarse más gigantesco frente a ellas, retroceden constantemente aterradas ante la vaga enormidad de sus propios fines, hasta que se crea una situación que no permite volverse atrás y las circunstancias mismas gritan"¹⁷

The aspect of fortune as both *Zufall* and *Notwendigkeit*, as expressed within Hegelian thought, resides within the very material history that Marx examines to narrate the process of power and freedom—the essence of a revolutionary transformation. The '*Theses on Feuerbach*' authored by the youthful Marx in 1845 don't critique Hegel but rather the conservative, spiritually-inclined young Hegelians of that era. These Hegelians were not aiming for any conceivable revolution; instead, they sought to maintain the existing state of affairs, a stance reminiscent of 'gatopardism.' Unfortunately, this tendency endures among numerous contemporary Hegelians and many political philosophers, too.

The circumstances that urgently demand attention, as Marx perceives, involve that which may initially appear random and accidental but ultimately becomes necessary. This element is none other than Hegel, specifically the '*Philosophy of Right*' (essentially the 'Doctrine of the Concept' within the 'Science of Logic,' as we'll explore). In essence, Aesop, interpreted through the lens of the 'rose' and the 'dance,' encapsulates the notions of the constituent, power, and freedom. This concept is elaborated extensively by Espinoza Lolas in '*Ariadna: Una interpretación queer*.' While Marx doesn't explicitly mention Hegel in this pivotal passage that elucidates the erratic behavior of the French and their

¹⁶ MARX, K.; ENGELS, F. Obras Escogidas, en tres tomos. Moscú : Editorial Progreso, 1974, tomo I (<https://www.marxists.org/espanol/m-e/cartas/m25-9-57.htm>)

¹⁷ MARX, K. El 18 brumario de Luis Bonaparte. Madrid: Fundación Federico Engels, 2003, p.17.

association with Louis Bonaparte, he does so in the memorable opening of 'The 18th Brumaire' "Hegel dice en alguna parte que todos los grandes hechos y personajes de la historia universal aparecen, como si dijéramos, dos veces"¹⁸. It's akin to stating that we must avoid a deadly cycle where forthcoming events are graver than what we've experienced before (a shift from tragedy to farce; a recurrent scenario prevalent today, especially evident when figures like Theseus metamorphose into caudillos such as Evo, Pablo Iglesias, Maduro, Trump, Cristina, Putin, Erdogan, Zelensky, Orban, etc.). This phenomenon is reminiscent of our daily fare, traversing realms from Hegel's era to our present (which is why individuals like Benjamin, Lacan, Žižek, and many others lack faith in revolutionary processes, neither do social democrats, ontologists, nor adherents of spiritual history). Yet, this theme originates with Machiavelli and must be seen in the light of Hegel, filtered through Aesop and Machiavelli, and encompassing life itself in its constant flux, transformation, and suffering. Essentially, one must consider this same Hegel, interwoven with the essence of Aesop and Machiavelli, as well as life's perpetual movement, metamorphosis, and agony. This entails a recurrence in the dance, within the present moment, within this Rhodes, within Machiavelli's Florence, within Hegel's Germany, within present-day Chile undergoing a reactionary transition, within Italy governed by Meloni. Within this context, we aim to create an open logic, enabling us to conceptualize the present within a certain framework that remains dynamic and precarious, devoid of any ontological aspects. Although Marx himself doesn't explicitly delineate his source of Hegelian influence, he acknowledges its origin in Hegel. Marx understands that Hegel conveys this notion even more profoundly than himself; the Swabian philosopher intends to convey that this repetition has transformed into an imperative. This is what warrants serious consideration. Hegel, at a highly mature juncture, articulates this concept in his 'Lessons on the Philosophy of History' from 1830, the same lectures where he continues to extol Machiavelli: "Durch die Wiederholung wird das, was im Anfang nur als zufällig und möglich erschien, zu einem Wirklichen und Bestätigten".

And what Marx asserts, in consonance with Hegel's thought at this juncture within '*The 18th Brumaire*,' is that in order to avert the recurrence of the farcical scenario or, to phrase it more accurately, to prevent the emergence of a closed system, an enclosed present, a 'here' devoid of leap, without dance, it is not only a flawed philosophy we must evade, but also the necessity for a totalitarian way of life. Instead, it is imperative that within each 'here,' theoretical and practical elements unite within the practical domain itself, thereby manifesting as a dance of existence in a 'here' that manifests within Rhodes itself. This transpires in a present that displays complete efficacy while simultaneously remaining free. Machiavelli consistently underscores this notion, as evident in the Discorsi where the Florentine thinker from the very onset communicates to his readers:

Volendo, pertanto, trarre li uomini di questo errore, ho giudicato necessario scrivere, sopra tutti quelli libri di Tito Livio che dalla malignità de'tempi non ci sono stati intercetti, quello che io, secondo le cognizione delle antique e moderne cose, iudicherò essere necessario per maggiore intelligenza di essi, a ciò che coloro che leggeranno queste mie dichiarazioni, possino più facilmente trarne quella utilità per la quale si debbe cercare la cognizione delle istorie.¹⁹

That is why the historical material analysis in order to be able to open from there, in Hegel's language, the logical. Gramsci adheres to this approach distinctly, all while retaining an awareness of the

¹⁸ Ib., p.13.

¹⁹ MACHIAVELLI, N. Discorsi sopra la prima deca de Tito Livio. In: MACHIAVELLI, N. Tutte le Opere. Secondo l'edizione di Mario Martelli (1971), op. cit., pp.308-309.

significance that Lenin and the events of the October Revolution of 1917 held for him: “Si giunge così anche all'eguaglianza o equazione tra 'filosofia e politica', tra pensiero e azione, cioè ad una filosofia de la praxis. Tutto è politica, anche la filosofia o le filosofie [...] e la sola 'filosofia' è la storia in atto, cioè è la vita stessa”²⁰.

Our interpretation can be summarized with a simple formula: Hegel (Machiavelli)-Marx, always functioning from Marx-Hegel (Machiavelli). Marx possesses a profound understanding of Hegel (Machiavelli) that few others can match, interpreting his philosophy radically. His philosophy is akin to a remix of Hegel's (if Hegel aimed to be the Machiavelli of his era, Marx aimed to be the Hegel of his own, hence his intense disagreement with the other young Hegelians). Ultimately, Marx's perspective is consistently viewed through the lens of Hegel (Machiavelli), as Hegel (Machiavelli) provides the framework to comprehend Marx's revolutionary approach and his efforts to transcend the test of failed repetition posed by Hegel (neither Benjamin nor Lacan could navigate the Hegelian test successfully, and Žižek nowadays cannot either; however, Butler does triumph over it, thus undergoing a transformation in her philosophical stance, feminist activism, and advocacy). This is largely because Žižek stands far apart from Machiavelli. Although this can sometimes escape the attention of the Slovenian thinker, it remains central to the perspectives of Marx, Lenin, and Gramsci (when they move beyond an idealized interpretation of Hegel). In essence, Hegel himself underscores this idea in his *Philosophy of Right* (§ 343), playing a pivotal role: “La historia del espíritu es su acción, pues el espíritu no es más que lo que hace”²¹. In his youth, Hegel spoke of life (*Leben*) or spirit (*Geist*) almost interchangeably, as life, internalization, solely functions through action, mutation, movement, and history. This is precisely what Machiavelli conveys throughout his entire body of work.

And that's why thinkers like Cassirer, as well as others who have interconnected Hegel with Nietzsche (almost in contrast to the oversimplified interpretation that some French thinkers offer, pitting Hegel's negativity against Nietzsche's affirmation, as if Hegel were solely focused on the universal and Nietzsche on the singular), realize that this interrelation stems from the “Machiavellian” operational mode inherent to Hegel's own work. Hegel reiterates constantly in the *Science of Logic* that whatever is internal must manifest in its externality, a crucial element in the ethical and political realms. Essentially, both Hegel and Nietzsche are proponents of freedom's constituent manifestation in power. In their philosophies, the dichotomy between egoism and altruism is dissolved, as this egoism actually lays the foundation for new virtuous conditions accessible to all: “Basándose en esta idea de la historia universal, Hegel suprime la distinción común entre actos ‘egoístas’ y actos altruistas. El ‘inmoralismo’ de Nietzsche no fue un rasgo nuevo; ya lo había anticipado el sistema de Hegel”²².

The Hegelian logic that we cannot forget

From the previous section, we must not forget the hegealine logic in its most radical materiality, by the hand of Machiavelli, who, like Cassirer, has seen that it is what allows us today to be able to think of the communal in its differences and at the level of a given society and history. Hegel, distinct from many Hegelians—especially academic philosophers who discuss him without reading him—endeavors to respond from his own life and within the context of his times to a shattered Germany that, in formal terms, no longer exists. He does so by examining Machiavelli, the Florentine thinker who delved into theory and praxis, movement and history, fortune and virtue, power, freedom, and the concept of the

²⁰ GRAMSCI, A. Quaderni del carcere. Volumen secondo. Quaderni 6 – 11 (1930-1933), op. cit., p.886.

²¹ HEGEL, G.W.F. Principios de la filosofía del derecho. Barcelona: Edhasa, 1999, p.490.

²² CASSIRER, E. El mito del Estado. México: FCE, 1947, pp. 317-318.

people. He aims to understand how humanity can emerge as a society amidst the barbarism it faces. Hegel dismisses the solutions presented by Kant and his followers—Fichte, Jacobi, Hölderlin, Schelling. Instead, he draws from philosophers such as Spinoza, Montesquieu, and other "controversial" thinkers like Machiavelli, in his pursuit of a philosophy and politics that coalesce, stemming from praxis itself (this is captured in the classic phrase of the connection between the real and rational, akin to the owl's late arrival, as depicted in the renowned Preface of the *Philosophy of Law*).

To truly comprehend Hegel, we must move beyond the conventional notion of him as merely a thinker of dialectics. On one hand, we must reject the perspective that portrays his concept of *Aufhebung* as something closed, insular, and totalitarian, devoid of inherent vitality (as often presented by various post-Kojève French thinkers). On the other hand, we should discard the notion that Hegel's method operates as a simplistic synthesis, wherein opposing differences are merged into a superior entity, idealistically reconciled (a viewpoint frequently found in biopolitical critiques centered around Spinoza, as observed in Negri's works, and particularly among Negrists, as well as in Agamben's biopolitics) or in a practical way (Frankfurt School in its third wave centered on social democracy and Honneth's studies). This is no longer the case at all in Hegelian studies and many current philosophers, where Hegel's method is no longer understood at all in this way and has been studied in a technical way by Bernstein, Ruda, Duque, Vieweg, Pippin, Jameson, Žižek, and Espinoza Lolas among others. And today Hegelians such as Butler²³, Malabou, Zambrano, Cadahia, Zupančič, and others, work Hegel for their feminist thought from a way of understanding his always open method, a logic of the not-all, to express difference and intersection²⁴.

Speaking technically, what does Machiavelli achieve when he engages in political philosophizing within "*Il Principe*" and "*Discorsi*," particularly in a manner that stands as an exemplar that others, as mentioned earlier, have sought to emulate as the Machiavelli of their era? Hegel, even during his early years in Tübingen, and subsequently in his early writings such as "*Faith and Knowledge*" or "*The Constitution of Germany*" (both written around the same period), extending through the second edition of the "*Doctrine of Being*" in the "*Science of Logic*" (completed in 1831 and posthumously published in 1832), and encompassing works like "*Phenomenology of Spirit*" (1807) and "*Philosophy of Right*" (1820), as well as his Berlin lectures and the editions of the "*Encyclopedia*" (the final one in 1830), endeavors to discern that which seems to exist "in itself" (*an sich*), independently, only to subsequently reveal it to us (*für uns*) through meditated and subsequent thought, although this emergence takes place (as he highlights in his comprehensive critique of Kant within the "*Phenomenology*"). This aligns with what Hegel terms the "judgment of determinant reflection" in the "*Doctrine of the Essence*" within the "*Science of Logic*" (1813). It is the essence of thought and praxis, a realm in which Gramsci remains deeply immersed throughout his life as both a thinker and an activist: "[...] Es ist damit die Aeusserlichkeit der Reflexion gegen das Unmittelbare aufgehoben; ihr sich selbst negirendes Setzen ist das Zusammengehen ihrer mit ihrem Negativen, mit dem Unmittelbaren und dieses Zusammengehen ist die wesentliche Unmittelbarkeit selbst. - Es ist also vorhanden, daß die äussere Reflexion nicht äussere, sondern eben so sehr immanente Reflexion der Unmittelbarkeit selbst ist; oder daß das was durch die setzende Reflexion ist, das an und für sich seyende Wesen ist. So ist sie

²³ Cfr. BUTLER, J. "Prefacio (1999)", en *El género en disputa. Y el feminismo y la subversión de la identidad*. Barcelona : Paidós, 2007, p. 27.

²⁴ Cfr. ŽIŽEK, S. *El sexo y el fracaso de lo absoluto*. Barcelona: Paidós, 2020.

bestimmende Reflexion”²⁵. To clarify further, according to Hegel: There exist three modes of thinking, and if we wish, modes of praxis (pertaining to political engagement). The first mode is the judgment of present reflection, which is the most immediate. This involves contemplating the presence of things, facts, conflicts, betrayals, suffering, envy, desires, and temptations—perceiving them as if they were concrete entities, essential aspects, and so on. It mirrors the unrefined aspects of daily life in which we navigate, as everything seems to function as though preordained by a divine force, the self, or some external entity.

Then there is the judgment of external reflection, which in the immediacy of life makes one realize that what is presented exists before someone else—an individual, a human subject, something internal. Everything external has a connection, a correlation with the internal in some manner. Each desire belongs to someone, just as every pain does. Every essential aspect, every object, is somehow linked to an interior element that gives it meaning. However, even in the context of external judgment, things function as if two entities were connected in a somewhat magical or immediate manner—simply put, one as an object and the other as a subject. Instead, the determining judgment of reflection is what Hegel refers to in the "Doctrine of the Concept" of the Science of Logic (1816) as the Absolute Idea, or in the Philosophy of Right (the interplay between the real and the rational)—it's the dynamic, open, and moving interrelation of one with the other. This is the experience that emerges from praxis itself, from history, from what Hegel metaphorically calls the "bone" in the Phenomenology, from the contingent, from the essence of humanity reflected in its passions, from fleeting materialities, and from the concept of the no-longer-existing god. Through this, a certain structure is formed, always belated, always unfolding afterward, yet inherently necessary, even when it falls short. In other words, the judgment of determinant reflection represents the essence of the constituent process—a manifestation of power that functions as a free operator while being free. At times, it employs force and violence to open up everything in existence, revealing new domains of forces. This is the very essence of Machiavelli's work and life, even when he was exiled to San Casciano. Hegel technically articulates this concept, which was also the essence of actions by figures like Machiavelli, Marx, Lenin, and Gramsci:

Por mor de esta reflexión dentro de sí, las determinaciones de reflexión aparecen como libres, como esencialidades flotantes en el vacío, sin atracción y repulsión unas respecto a otras. En ellas, la determinidad por la referencia a sí se ha fijado sólida e infinitamente. Es lo determinado, que ha sometido a sí su transitar y su mero ser puesto, o sea que ha hecho inflexión de su reflexión, que va adentro del otro, en reflexión dentro de sí. Estas determinaciones constituyen por esto la apariencia determinada, tal como es dentro de la esencia: la apariencia esencial. A partir de este fundamento [por esta razón], la reflexión determinante es la reflexión que ha salido fuera de sí: la igualdad de la esencia consigo misma se ha perdido en la negación, la cual es lo dominante.²⁶

It is Machiavelli's reflection that we witness in these words of Hegel and in the views of many "Machiavellians" like Gramsci. The essential appearance is the manifestation of history—its way of showing itself, of revealing itself—in its continuous movement, encompassing numerous material moments. In this historical sea, we navigate precariously, realizing a perpetually open, bleeding, and

²⁵ « Thus the exteriority of reflection is cancelled in relation to the immediate; its self-negating positing is the merging of itself with its negative, with the immediate, and this merging is the essential immediacy itself. - It thus exists that external reflection is not external, but just as much immanent reflection of immediacy itself; or that what is through the positing reflection is the being that exists in and for itself. Thus it is determining reflection ». HEGEL, G. W. F. Wissenschaft de Logik. Erster Band. Die objektive Logik (1812/ 1813). In: Gesammelte Werke. Band 11. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1978, pp. 253-254.

²⁶ *Ib.*, p.455.

belated determination of the human within the midst of the real—a human fragmented in a fragmented reality (both Machiavelli and Hegel had already surpassed the critique of Meillassoux's speculative realism of their respective times, as seen in his "After Finitude," 2006). It is indeed possible to conceive the real beyond the substratum and correlation in a contingent manner. This is why Cassirer, who ultimately became another Machiavelli, categorically asserts:

Él fue el primer apologista de Maquiavelo. Para comprender este hecho debemos tener en cuenta las condiciones especiales en que Hegel estudió la teoría política de Maquiavelo. Era en tiempos de las Guerras Napoleónicas, después de haber renunciado Francisco II a la corona del Imperio Germánico. El derrumbe político de Alemania parecía un hecho consumado [...]. En este estado de ánimo, en una situación política que parecía completamente desesperada, Hegel leyó el *Príncipe* de Maquiavelo. Y entonces creyó haber encontrado la clave de esta obra tan denunciada y tan elogiada. Encontró que había un exacto paralelo entre la vida pública alemana en el siglo XIX y la vida nacional italiana en el periodo de Maquiavelo. Esto despertó en él un nuevo interés y una nueva ambición. Soñó en convertirse en un segundo Maquiavelo, en el Maquiavelo de su propio tiempo.²⁷

Conclusion: Hegel, the monstrous of them all

This article has shown us that Hegel, as a reader of Machiavelli, becomes a materialist thinker and that we should not be afraid of him, but on the contrary, because he allows us to rethink the human in communitarian articulations that lead us away from the current temptation to follow the fast track of neo-fascism. And for this the logical element of the late Hegel becomes a liberating element of the human in the midst of the real, that is, it enables us to build a people, a people that in its differences can walk together²⁸.

Gramsci, a faithful disciple of Machiavelli and Hegel (which required him to distance himself from the esteemed and beloved Croce—a task made possible during years of imprisonment and illness, due to the idealization Croce held of Hegel and the intricate nature of Gentile's thought; through this Hegelian process, Gramsci confronted the rise of fascism and its impact), perceived an intriguing unity between them: "Hegel aveva affermato che la servitù è la culla della libertà. Per Hegel, come per il Machiavelli, il 'principato nuovo' [...] e la connessa servitù sono giustificati solo come educazione e disciplina dell'uomo non ancora libero"²⁹.

While in prison, Gramsci remained active in his intellectual pursuits, engaging in a reevaluation of Hegel amidst Italy's crisis. Faced with the death of Lenin, the collapse of socialism, and the stagnation of communism, Gramsci observed the political machinery advancing under the grip of fascism and his "friend," Mussolini. Just as Marx and Lenin previously grappled with Hegel's concepts to reinterpret his dialectical method, Gramsci encountered a similar challenge. However, he added a distinct layer—Machiavelli's experience five centuries earlier in a situation marred by destruction, exile, torture, sickness, and the quest to understand how the people could rise as a force for liberation and the unification of human misery and folly. From the depths of slavery, freedom emerges as a *Macht* and *Gewalt*, carving a path amidst the chains that bind us. The State, an oppressor in its own right, as the young Chilean women of Las Tesis aptly put it, becomes akin to a "male rapist" (echoing Segato's sentiment). This State becomes complicit in perpetuating servitude, woven through the fabric of education; yet, it is this very education, this *Bildung* as Hegel would describe it, that ignites an explosion,

²⁷ CASSIRER, E. El mito del Estado, op. cit., pp.145-146.

²⁸ Cfr. ŽIŽEK, S. Menos que nada. Hegel y la sombra del materialismo dialéctico. Madrid: Akal, 2015.

²⁹ GRAMSCI, A. Quaderni del carcere. Volumen secondo. Quaderni 6-11 (1930-1933), op. cit., p.1370.

a rebellion, and a revolution that reshapes the system and shapes history. As a result, the path cannot be guided by abstract moralists, in the words of Cassirer, nor by the Kantian moralism critiqued by Nietzsche. Similarly, one must not adhere to yellow social-democrats, as they hinder social transformation and obstruct the manifestation of Machiavellian virtue. For Hegel, this virtue embodies the constituent power that emancipates humanity:

Los moralistas abstractos consideran la pasión como una cosa de aspecto siniestro, y más o menos inmoral. Pero también en este punto Hegel acepta la concepción maquiavélica de la *virtù*. 'Virtud' significa fuerza; y no hay en la vida humana motivo más fuerte y poderoso que las grandes pasiones. La Idea misma no se actualizaría si no empeñara todas las pasiones humanas.³⁰

From these capricious passions, the emergence of the people occurs, and it is here that the Calvary of the absolute unfolds, as articulated by Hegel—a Calvary intricately woven with pain, war, and death. Hegel's clarity is striking, at times even more unyielding than that of Sade himself, as Machiavelli shapes him from within: "Das Selbstbewußtseyn erreicht seine Befriedigung nur in einem andern Selbstbewußtseyn [...] Es ist ein Selbstbewußtseyn für ein Selbstbewußtseyn. Erst hiedurch ist es in der That; denn erst hierin wird für es die Einheit seiner selbst in seinem Andersseyn"³¹. It is a dance between oneself and the Other that forms us, an experience of being "in the same boat" where pain occasionally intervenes, and violence at other times. The process of constitution couldn't be comprehended without the events of October 18th in Chile in 2019—those were the days of the people's profound uprising. Although it may have subsided momentarily, it will surge again through a popular foundation, an ongoing construction that we refer to as: WethOthers.

Therefore, the human being isn't merely a monolithic self in and of itself—holding together all things (as Descartes suggested), a transcendental subject enabling knowledge and practical operation (according to Kant), or radical freedom shaping the world (as Fichte proposed). Instead, we are inherently a movement that structurally and radically propels us forward, and I'd like to add (always with contingency and precarity), once again drawing from Hegel (and Machiavelli). We move because there's an object (*Gegenstand*) that constitutes us as a blend of movement, contingency, passions, desires, and so forth. In German, the word for consciousness is *Bewusstsein*, as employed by Hegel. He uses it in a dynamic temporal sense. It's as if we are a movement, a life (*sein*) that we shape through our past (*wusst*), but transits interactively with the world, things, the Other (*be*), and ourselves as an Other occurs within us—all in their full fortune and contingency. This is consciousness for Hegel, illustrating that internally, we are torn (as Machiavelli consistently highlights throughout his work) because life is an ongoing series of failures (there's no potential for full recognition, as demonstrated in *Il Principe*: the inaccessibility to power and freedom, given we will perpetually be in a state of fragmentation). What's inherent to consciousness is despair (*Verweifung*), leaving us in doubt without an escape. We don't know what to do. Consciousness is radically and harshly finite, existing within the articulation with the Other, the entirety of the Other—manifested from one's death to the Other on the slaughterhouse bench (*Schlachtbank*) of history itself (as mentioned in the Introduction to the *Lessons of Philosophy of History* in 1824). Hegel is more radical than Sade; he's a new Machiavelli (unfortunately forgotten by Pöggeler, Abensour, Honneth, Esposito, Negri, and many others). There's no archetypal scene or visual

³⁰ CASSIRER, E. El mito del Estado, op. cit., p.317.

³¹ « Self-consciousness reaches its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness [...] It is a self-consciousness for a self-consciousness. Only through this is it in fact; for only here does it realise the unity of itself in its otherness ». HEGEL, G. W. F. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, op. cit., p. 108.

construct for it (unlike Sade's literary endeavor, not merely a game to provoke the bourgeoisie of the time, which was the Marquis's intent). Let's not overlook the shocking conclusion of the Phenomenology when it points towards the Calvary (Schädelstätte) of the absolute spirit as the very epitome of humanity's history viewed from its unity—constantly a place of disaster, death, and pain that intimidates us throughout. Machiavelli illustrates this through his works: *Il Principe*, *The Art of War*, the *Discorsi*, and *History of Florence*.

In *Glauben und Wissen* of 1802, Hegel, while engaging with his text on the Constitution, concludes by countering Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte (all of whom were still alive) at the dawn of a new century, stating: "Lo más diáfano, infundado e individual de los filósofos dogmáticos como de las religiones naturales tiene que desaparecer. Sólo de esta dureza puede y debe resucitar la suprema totalidad en toda su seriedad y desde su más profundo fundamento, a la vez abarcándolo todo y en su figura de la más radiante libertad"³². Hegel makes it clear that for a certain freedom to manifest within our lives as human beings, we must wholeheartedly embrace the pain inherent in our existence. Anything that remains immediate, serving as a symbolic construction of homogenization, must fade away (neither Euclidean geometry is sustained, and even less so in revealing the human; nor does Lacan's symbolism hold, which is why the therapeutic thinker ultimately leans towards the final stage of the real)³³. Whether at a critical level, as a fideist, or as a voluntarist, it becomes impossible to continue contemplating the human condition. Hegel seeks to distance himself from that elusive "thing in itself," which is presented in various manners and continues to ensnare us within a fantasy that has entangled humanity for centuries.

"Germany is no longer a state," bitterly complained the young Hegel in the Introduction to *The Constitution of Germany*, as "[...] everyone has gone their own way, taken care of themselves, and as a result, the whole has dismembered; there is no longer a state." This situation still persists today, just as it did in Machiavelli's time. But what kind of state do we desire? Certainly not Hobbes's state, which acts as "a male rapist," subjecting everyone to its control. Rather than being a constituent force that unites us through intersectional liberation, it instead oppresses us within an empty and fatalistic totality. Hegel viewed the state from the perspective of freedom and continuous motion (a viewpoint Lenin adopted after reading Hegel's *Science of Logic*, following the failure of the Second International and the onset of the bourgeois First World War in 1914). Only when the state remains in motion, perpetually influenced by the contingent, can it facilitate harmonious coexistence. Thus, society takes precedence, and the state's presence diminishes, surfacing only when it is absent as an organ of constituent power, expressing freedom (for example, during the pandemic, the state was sought to address health emergencies). Machiavelli articulates this explicitly in the significant Book III of the *Discorsi*, particularly in the title of its first section: "A volere che una setta o una republica viva lungamente, è necessario ritirla spesso verso il suo principio."³⁴ And if the state serves as a conduit for our collective power, allowing us to experience freedom in that openness, even in the midst of its inherent uncertainty, it's possible that Machiavelli's legacy remains alive within us, as he suggests in the final paragraph (49) of the *Discorsi* "Una republica, a volerla mantenere libera, ha ciascuno di bisogno di nuovi provvedimenti"³⁵.

³² HEGEL, G.W.F. *Fe y saber*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2000, p.194.

³³ Cf. LACAN, J. *El Seminario 20: aun (1972-1973)*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1975, p. 101.

³⁴ MACHIAVELLI, N. *Discorsi sopra la prima deca de Tito Livio*. In: MACHIAVELLI, N. *Tutte le Opere*. Secondo l'edizione di Mario Martelli (1971), op. cit., p.567.

³⁵ Id., p.695.

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