

“Capitalism, in its evolution, has become a mode of destruction”: a conversation with philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato on the links between the use of force, inequality and the ecological crisis

Maurizio Lazzarato is a sociologist and a philosopher, and a researcher at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and at Pantheon-Sorbonne University (University Paris I). He is also a member of the Collège international de philosophie (CIPh). Lazzarato has been critically thinking and writing about capitalism, debt, neoliberalism, always attentive to questions of subjectivity, communication, and the media.

In this episode, we talked about neoliberalism, populism, fascism, authoritarianism, and how the use of force, inequality and the ecological crisis are connected. In his recent book [“Capital hates everyone: Fascism or Revolution,”](#) Lazzarato argued that capital functions in a logic of war, dominating ever more aspects of social life and turning liberal societies increasingly less democratic. We talked to him about how the climate crisis fits into his analytical framework. Lazzarato’s work brings crucial concepts and perspectives that can help us to think through the relationship between what is possible and what is impossible in face of the climate emergency.

Bernardo Jurema

Your most recent book is entitled "Capital Hates Everyone: Fascism or Revolution". To start, we would like to know why this title? How do you see the continuity with your previous books? What is the critique of capitalism that you want to present? Could you talk about how your interest in debt led you to connect it to governmentality and what are the implications of this connection?

Maurizio Lazzarato

The problem with debt is that in working on debt, I was led to work on a crisis that took place exactly a century ago, at the end of the 19th century, so there was a crisis of capitalism after the Paris Commune, basically, and capitalism came out of this crisis with a triple strategy, that is to say, colonization, monopoly in the economy and financialization. A century ago, there was this triple strategy of capital that led to the First World War, to fascism, to European civil wars, and as soon as the crisis of the 1970s came along, the capitalists went back to this old strategy. So they applied a much more advanced financialization, a new form of colonization that I call internal colonialism and an even greater centralization of the economy, of economic power and political power. And so, with behaviors that are very similar and very different from a century ago, we are heading, after the financial crisis, as we did a century ago, towards the rise of fascism, the rise of the extreme right. And that's why, with the debt crisis, I went to reconstruct the history of capitalism, and if you look at the history of capitalism, exactly at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, a crisis occurs that is very similar to the

contemporary one, even if it is different because in the meantime, they have found a way to intervene in the crisis, but the phenomenon is very similar. That is to say, there is a centralization of political power and therefore a crisis of democracy, a rise of the extreme right throughout the world, exactly as there was, and the possibility of war. The First World War was the outcome of this strategy. We don't know yet where we are going, but basically, we are in a situation where this danger, this threat is still present.

So, I would like to say something important about the First World War, if it is possible.

Bernardo Jurema

Yes, of course.

Maurizio Lazzarato

The First World War is not very well analyzed in history, even in Marxism, because Marxists have difficulty with war, but the First World War is very important because it determines a radical change in capitalism. The First World War, for the first time, we have the mode of production that is intertwined in a very strong way with war, with the State and with work. It is society as a whole that is mobilized, what was called at the time general mobilization. This production, which is brought to a maximum, is a production for destruction, for war. So at that moment, capitalism becomes not only a mode of production, it also becomes a mode of destruction. That, for me, is very important to underline the fact that destruction has always been at the heart of capitalism, there is always a relative destruction - each crisis of capitalism implies the destruction of productive forces to create a new accumulation - but then with the First World War, destruction becomes an absolute destruction which leads, with the Second World War, to the construction of the atomic bomb. The atomic bomb is the crystallization of the possibility of the destruction of humanity. Men will continue to die individually, but humanity would not die. Here, on the other hand, men continue to die individually, but there is also the possibility of death and the end of humanity. If you read the texts of Ernst Jünger, a German who was an aristocrat, a bit conservative, who analyzed the First World War well, he said that the First World War was less a battle than a great organization of work. It was an immense mechanization of work. What happened at that time was really a reversal. So with this destruction, a reversibility between production and destruction occurred. This reversibility between production and destruction means that each act of production is at the same time an act of destruction and each act of consumption is at the same time an act of destruction that continues to occur with the climate crisis. This means that **capitalism is directly bringing about the destruction of humanity in another way. It is not killing humanity with the atomic bomb, but with the impossibility of living on this planet.** So it is not the end of the Earth, because the Earth will be fine without humans, and maybe even better, but it is very important to underline this aspect. **Capitalism, in its evolution, has become a mode of destruction, and this reversibility of production and destruction on which we live today means that even the banal acts of capitalism, today, any production, any consumption is at the same time an act of destruction.** Hence the title of my book, it's in relation to that. I didn't write it in this book, because well, next year it's going to come out, but in a way, the contradiction is even more acute, that is to say that capitalism, today, controls the crisis better than it did a century ago, so we don't arrive immediately at war, we don't arrive immediately at fascism. We have the possibility that democracy lives with fascism. What we are experiencing, what we have seen with Bolsonaro, with Trump, what we see in Europe, is that forms of fascism can live with democracy. A radical change is not necessary, as it was a century ago. We are in a situation that was analyzed by a young German, already at the end of the 70s, called Ernst Jünger, who died very young, at 27 years old,

but he was a philosophical genius, and he said that in Germany at the end of the 60s, we were indeed going towards what he called an authoritarian state, and this was going through a political crisis, an economic crisis. An authoritarian and fascist form would have been installed indirectly through the instruments of democracy, through the administrative decrees in which we have been completely immersed, in France, since 2007. We are in a situation of continuous emergency. So there you have it, it's this history of debt that has led me to this concept of capital as the reversibility of production and destruction. And so, if we don't manage to block this mode of production, we will indeed reach the extinction of humanity, that's for sure. We always have the possibility of being destroyed by atomic bombs, because they are always there, but instead of having a concentrated violence in the bomb, we have a violence which is very diffuse, and which will prevent humanity from reproducing. So in two centuries, capitalism has succeeded in destroying what nature had taken a few billion years to produce.

So that's the thesis of the book, that we are indeed heading towards this power of destruction that emerges from capitalism.

Bernardo Jurema

In your answer you have already touched on elements of our next question, that's good. We're on the right track. Now I would like to ask your opinion on climate finance: we have to finance everything, and the same goes for climate policy. One of the main topics at COP26 was climate finance. What are the ways of thinking about this, are they still reflexes of neo-colonial development patterns? Is the climate indebted person the new indebted man, to use one of your terms?

Maurizio Lazzarato

I didn't understand the question very well. You're asking about the need to finance an ecological conversion, right?

Bernardo Jurema

Yes, yes, exactly.

Maurizio Lazzarato

OK. No, now I think it's a false problem. We can't solve this issue. If my analysis is correct, the one I had just now, there is a level of radicality that cannot be solved by this hypothesis of ecological reconversion within capitalism, because it presupposes that capitalism is capable of improving itself, of functioning and applying the laws of the market to pollution. But we have a history, we have two, three centuries, we know that capitalism is not going to solve the problem, it is only going to make it worse. This destructive power has only increased in the history of capitalism. It began in the 19th century, in the factories of England: there was the danger that the proletarians, the workers who were hired, were children, men and women who risked dying. The English Parliament had to intervene in order not to destroy the labor force that capitalism employed. In the 20th century, we had this destruction, this further passage of destructive power that came, indeed, to the deaths of the two world wars that killed many proletarians in the North and many colonized people in the South, millions and millions of people. With the Second World War, we arrived at the real possibility of the destruction of humanity, and here we arrive at another level of destruction. So I don't think that it is through ecological reconversion that we can solve this question.

I don't think that we need to introduce a new type of financing, but a capacity to destroy this system. Either we stop it in one way or another, or we will all die. Marx said something that is not often mentioned, in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, that the class struggle can be resolved with the victory of one of the two classes or the annihilation of both classes. What we are experiencing is that we are not going to the victory of the proletariat or of the bourgeoisie, but we risk the annihilation of everyone. This is what Marx had foreseen. So financing green ecology, I don't think that's a solution. It will only make the situation worse as it is. It's not possible, I don't think it's... to leave it to the market, it's a catastrophe. Especially since the market doesn't exist. The other thing to point out is that this market ideology does not exist.

As I was saying earlier, for the last century and a half, what has driven the economy is not the market, but monopolies. It is a concentration of power that is enormous. It is the state and the monopolies. The market does not decide anything. The market is only the market of monopolies. It is the market controlled by the state and the monopolies, so this law of the market, of giving something to the market, is absolutely fanciful. We are told stories about the market economy. It was never a market economy. When it was borrowed from the United States... That is to say, what happened in the First World War, this concentration of the State and of capital, the construction of monopolies, the integration of monopolies into the war, that is an irreversible phenomenon. We are not going to return to the market. What I find absolutely ridiculous is that at the end of the 19th century, capitalism colonized the whole world, massacred the South, organized the war between the imperialists and the economists came up with the theory of general equilibrium. General equilibrium never existed in that capitalism, it was exactly the opposite. Capitalism aimed at absolute, absolute imbalance. If capitalism reaches equilibrium, it is dead. There can be no equilibrium. Equilibrium is the death of capitalism.

In the 1970s, when capitalism needed to revive the imbalance, to achieve an even greater concentration of production, another theory of the market was invented. Market theories are born when they cannot really work. That is, it is only ideology in the sense of the market. Foucault fell into this idea of ideology, political life, governmentality... Governmentality is not made by the market, it is made by the state and by the monopolies, by the duopolies if you like. So there you have it, I think that it is not the solution of financing the conversion that can solve the question, on the contrary.

For capital, you have to understand that producing cars, producing houses, producing yoghurts, producing green ecology, is the same thing. By definition, the problem is that whether they produce yoghurt or green conversion, they have to make a profit. We always fall back on the same mechanisms. So there you have it... This story dates back a century and a half, we say we're going to get out of it, but capitalism is a civilization that cannot be civilized, by definition, and we're heading for the extinction of humanity, that's all.

Bernardo Jurema

This is very good, it leads us to the next question: Many thinkers, researchers or academics are now trying to understand the link or the relationship between neoliberalism, fascism and authoritarianism, even populism. You are part of this framework. What do we need to look at to understand the present moment? Can you explain why you think this term "new fascism", which you use, is analytically important to make sense of the current historical moment?

Maurizio Lazzarato

Because as I said earlier, we analyze the history of capitalism, so if we go towards the crisis that looks a

bit like the one that started around 1870, that is the first Paris Commune, where capitalism, as I said earlier, chose the strategy of colonization, monopoly and financialization, because financial capital was already hegemonic a century ago, this is not a new development. If you read the economic debates of the time, especially the debate that developed within the revolutionary movements, that is, between Lenin and Luxemburg, the hegemony of capitalism had already been achieved, it was already an economy of rents. What is strange is what happened afterwards. It's not worth discussing, but after the Second World War, there were 30 years, but 30 years of exception. And this way of getting out of the crisis through this financialization, colonization, and this monopoly, it led to what? To solve this situation, the way out was wars and fascism. That's it, historically. We got out of these situations through war, through the two world wars, a destruction never seen in the history of humanity, and the fascist regime, because indeed, the things that were very different from that time, was that at that time, there was a real socialist, communist alternative that was in place, so there was really a danger. There was a communist danger because the First World War had given rise to the Soviet Revolution, so there was a real danger. And even in Europe, Braudel, the great French historian, said that in 1914, just before the war, Europe was ready to fall into socialism. It is therefore obvious that this contradiction was not only an economic contradiction within capitalism, there was a real alternative that was being set up, and therefore the violence was to eliminate this alternative possibility of socialism and communism. Today, we find ourselves in this situation without having this stake for capitalism. So there's no need to use all the violence it did a century ago. But still, you see, it can't get out of it without going through authoritarian forms that are new forms of fascism, and the United States is imagining a new Cold War, even if we don't yet know where it's going to go, where the main enemy is China. So that's why, in my opinion, this story is not over. Just because Trump lost... There is a debate in the United States, yes. I was reading the newspapers that came out in the United States a year after Trump's fall, they talk about civil war, you know... The United States is divided in two, and so there you have it, it means that capitalism, when it pushes, when it is completely liberated from any form of regulation, when it pushes its limits, its productive capacities to create, it goes towards contradictions that are enormous and that can only be resolved with authoritarian forms or war. Today, the situation, as I said earlier, is completely different, first of all because there is no socialism, there is no Soviet Revolution, this project no longer exists... The means of controlling the crisis are much stronger, we have understood that we have to put money into the economy rather than not putting it in as they did at the beginning of the 20th century, so we have the capacity to intervene differently, but still, we are going towards forms that I define as new forms of fascism, they are not equal to historical fascism for the reasons that I have just mentioned, but still, there is fascism that is rising everywhere, the extreme right is rising everywhere. That is to say that racism and sexism are becoming absolutely fundamental political issues today.

Bernardo Jurema

Absolutely. The United States is divided, but at the same time, on very important issues, it is very unified, the elite anyway, the political class. For example, the Pentagon budget that was approved by the Biden administration is the largest in history, almost \$800 billion, it's unheard of. In fact, one of the concepts you work with is the "war machine". Could you tell us a little bit more about this concept and how it is strategic to the reflection on the analysis that you are doing?

Maurizio Lazzarato

I'm about to publish a book on the revolution, and three or four years ago, I did a book on the war with Eric Alliez, so I think that there are two concepts that were at the center of the revolutionary debate

during the history of the revolutionary movement, the war and the revolution, that have been completely forgotten, they have been put aside. The question of war and the question of revolution have been removed.

It is impossible to think of capitalism without war, that is to say that historically, capitalism, the form, the war, the civil war are part of the instruments, the alternatives, the options that capitalism has at its disposal. That is to say, we cannot think of capitalism only as production. That's the problem, we think of capitalism only as production according to a Marxist concept, etc. But we have to put in this concept of capital war, fascism, sexism. That is to say, we have to put into the concept of capital what was not there. We have a rather economic vision if we only take capitalism as production, and after the war, fascism and sexism from outside. No, capitalism was born with the conquest of the Americas, 1492. It was not born with the revolution in Manchester. It was born with slavery, the establishment of slavery. So it's a fundamental thing. And it was born with the fact that the subordination of women was finalized to capitalist production. So there is indeed an enormous quantity of work that was not recognized by the capital. The work of slaves, the work of the poor, the work of the people of the South, the work of women that must be integrated into capitalism, both as work and as a form of domination. This thing, if we actually take the beginning of capitalism, which begins with the conquest of the Americas, we cannot separate capitalism from war, from the war of conquest. The war of conquest is fundamental in the south of the world and in Europe, with all the ways we have known and all that, much more violent and much stronger in the south of the world, but the war of conquest is part of capitalism. This, the war of conquest, there is no class formation. It takes a war of conquest for the peasants to be dispossessed of the means of production, for the Africans to become slaves, it takes a war of conquest, and for the indigenous people of South America to become colonized, it takes a war of conquest, otherwise they don't. So we must reintroduce this concept of the war of conquest, which is absolutely fundamental.

Every time, it is the product, you see, of the passage from Fordism to neoliberalism, it is not by chance that Chile is an absolutely fundamental element. It is a fundamental element, because every new form of colonization presupposes a war of conquest, in Chile, for example, and in the whole of Latin America, at that time, there was a real war, a civil war, an internal war, and it was only at the end of the civil war that neoliberalism was imposed. So what they don't say, what they forget to say, is that neoliberalism without Pinochet would not exist and would not have that form, and we know that Friedman, as I write in the book, that Friedman, [who] went to Chile and they concocted... and in every government in South America there were colonels and neoliberal military. So what Foucault completely forgets to tell with the history of neoliberalism is that. You can't talk about neoliberalism without talking about what happened in Latin America. You have to know that the neoliberalist experience begins in Latin America.

So what I'm saying is that we must reintroduce this concept of war, we must reintroduce the concept of racism. Racism is not an external form, it is a form absolutely internal to capitalism, like the domination of women, it is a concept that must be put inside capitalism, the concept of capital must be widened by putting in it what is not there and that we try to add afterwards. Capital is not only what Marx described. Marx describes primitive accumulation, so he writes it, indeed, but afterwards, one has the impression that once the Manchester mode of production is put in place, primitive accumulation no longer exists. No, this form of violence always continues. So there is a co-presence of modes of production and forms of violence that are related to racism, sexism, exploitation, that are contemporary. They are not different. If we look at the history of capitalism from a world perspective, capitalism has always been production and war, production and domination, production and violence.

The problem is that European Marxism often looks at the sector of capitalism only from the point of view of Europe. One must always bear in mind that one must always connect, because the market is the world market, as Marx said. But Marx and Marxism did not really analyze... Capitalism is like a world market, and the world market exists because there is slavery, new forms of slavery, there is colonization, there are new forms of colonization, there is the domination of women, new forms of domination of women, so all these forms of domination have to be seen together, even if these forms of domination cannot be reduced to the capital/labor relation in the classical sense of the term. That's it. That's why the notion of war is absolutely fundamental, especially the war of conquest.

Bernardo Jurema

We read your book in English, but I translated part of it for French, so maybe it's not exactly that, but you write that "that society is divided, that there are opposing forces and those forces manifest themselves through strategies of confrontation, including through technology" (Lazzarato 2021: 126) and that it "doesn't just produce the technical machine, but also the humans that serve it" (Lazzarato 2021: 127). You add that "Man and machine are an assemblage [agencement], hence a field of possibilities, of virtualities as much as constituted elements (mechanical parts, software programs, algorithms), but all of that must be framed in relation to the possibilities and constituted elements of the war machine" (Lazzarato 2021: 162). What are the implications of your understanding of the war machine with regard to the ecological crisis?

Maurizio Lazzarato

The war machine, that is to say... To understand what the war machine is, it's very easy: you take the work that Mumford did, he is a historian. When he analyzed the Egyptian empire, he speaks of a social machine, a megamachine. This megamachine... That's the question: the productivity of the megamachine in a society does not depend only on technology. First, it depends on the political machine. The Egyptians built enormous monuments, the pyramids, with very simple technologies, but it is the megamachine that produced them. So what I wanted to introduce was this concept, which is not mine, which is a concept by Deleuze and Guattari, it is the difference between technical machine and political machine or war machine. Because normally, we analyze technologies only from the technological point of view, we don't see the megamachine that produces the technologies. In this case, for example, we do not see the function that the Pentagon and the American army have had in the development of science. We know that all new technologies come out of the Second World War because they were invented and produced within the funding and political control of the American army, and this continued throughout the Cold War, and still today. The technology investments of the Pentagon and the U.S. military are greater than the investments that Google, Amazon, all of that are making. We have this whole ideology about individual entrepreneurship, when even today, it's the political machine that controls the development of technology. That's why I introduced this concept of war machine, saying that, indeed, if we look at technological development, there is this relationship between the political machine and the technological machine, we don't want to separate the two by thinking that there is a technological revolution that happens by itself and that changes social conditions. It's not that. It's always the same problem. If we look at how neoliberalism was born, it needs a war machine that eliminates the possibility of revolution in South America. Once the revolution has been eliminated and the people who wanted to change have been defeated, they are defeated, then the neoliberal precepts can be applied. You turn the defeated into the governed, because you have lost. Subjectively, you are defeated, and you have no other alternatives. You have lost politically and

militarily. Some parties have been massacred, some parties have been tortured, some parties have gone into exile. The population is defeated. At that point, the political machine prepares the economic machine. The economic machine comes afterwards. Foucault's governmentality, if you will, comes afterwards. At this point, you can make human capital small, impose the debt. If you say to someone, "You are human capital," to someone who is trying to make a revolution, he will say, "What the hell is this? It's ridiculous". So, in order to impose human capital, capitalism, individual entrepreneurship and all that, you have to do it only from this subjective defeat. Subjectivity, there, you have defeated it, at that moment, and you can introduce all the forms of governmentality, therefore the forms of subjection, so, you are a worker, you are a woman, you are in debt, all that logic that, afterwards, was put in place, effectively, if we look at the history of Chile, the first time that they started to introduce the debt in a systematic way, it was in Chile. For education, they started to introduce debt for students, so effectively, that's why the political machine is absolutely fundamental. It doesn't work... That is to say, even production doesn't impose itself like that. Production comes after, and it goes together, so effectively, we have lost this capacity to be together, war, capitalism, fascism, racism, sexism, these are the forms of power that, in my opinion, work together. And now, it's coming to a head: we have an explosion of racism, a rise of sexism, the possibility of a new form of fascism, the possibility of war. So that's why, if we want to analyze what's happening now, we have to look at capitalism theoretically.

Bernardo Jurema

Very good. We're coming to the end of the interview, we have two more questions. Towards the end of the book you write that "destruction and creation are complementary, which means that in order for the war machine to realize the 'mutation', the conversion of subjectivity and the supersession of capitalism, it must also have as its aim 'war' against capital. And this 'war' must also liberate the machine, inseparable from the human" (Lazzarato 2021: 171). What exactly do you mean? How do you envisage this "war" to liberate the human and the machine? What forms of social mobilization do you have in mind?

Maurizio Lazzarato

That's a bit complicated. I don't know, precisely, because... The book that I wrote, even the one that is going to come out called "The intolerable of the present, the urgency of the revolution", because I think that the revolution is here, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, but it's a bit to provoke. Why has the concept of revolution completely disappeared from the political debate? So I try to understand why. In fact, the weakness of the movements was revealed once the revolution was defeated, once the revolution was put aside. For 50 years we've only suffered, which has never happened in the history of revolutionary movements, of political movements, because there was always the possibility of revolution, it was always there, even when we were defeated, revolution was always possible. Today, what they have succeeded in doing is to take away even that possibility. The most fundamental thing that neoliberalism has done, in my opinion, is to erase the memory of the revolution.

I see that it is beginning to emerge again, in a very timid way. In Chile, finally, it has been rising since 2019. When they broke away from capitalist subjugation, the first thing they did was to return to the revolution that had been defeated. Allende's songs were sung everywhere, from Allende's time. We try to find a relationship with the revolution, because it is the only one... it is still very fantastical, it is very weak, as a relationship. And I think that the most interesting movements are still in the South. You must know that the 20th century, and this is very surprising, the 20th century was the century of revolutions. There have never been so many revolutions in human history as in the 20th century. Of all the

revolutions there have been, most of them have been in the South. In the North, no revolution has succeeded. There have only been failures. It worked on the margins of capitalism, in the Soviet Union, and then in the South: China, Vietnam, Algeria, South America, Cuba and all that. So we should ask ourselves. Why was there a century of revolutions, and why, afterwards, did it disappear? This is a big problem.

So we had a century where there were never so many revolutions, and at the same time, there was a historical defeat of the revolution. There was a certain continuity of the French Revolution afterwards, through 48, the Paris Commune, the Soviet Revolution and then all the revolutions of the South. There was a certain continuity from the French Revolution. One has the impression that it has been interrupted. So, why? I don't know, I'm trying to... It's too long, now... I don't understand why. But I don't think you can rebuild, from a political point of view, without reinventing the concept of revolution. Besides, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, even the struggles that were not really revolutionary, the wage struggles, the solidarity struggles and all that, always had a direct or indirect link with the revolution. Now that the revolution has disappeared, we find ourselves in a defensive posture, we are still suffering. We can't determine the terrain of the confrontation. It's the others who determine where to fight, how to fight, all that... We arrive late and we almost always lose.

So here I am trying to see, to ask the question, rather. I don't have any proposal, I am not in a position to decide. But when we look at what has happened since 2011, especially in the South, in North Africa and in South America, there is a revival of feminist movements that are very important in Latin America, there is a revival of the themes of rupture. I don't know what it is, but my fundamental thesis is in this book, it's not worth discussing it now, but I think we have to rethink why the revolution was very important, why it failed, and why it disappeared. If we don't take stock of that, I feel like we're leaving it hanging... So in my opinion, we have to... I don't remember the question very well? Was it about this?

Bernardo Jurema

Yes, yes. It was what form of social mobilization do you have in mind when you talk about the war to liberate the human and the machine.

Maurizio Lazzarato

Yes, so I have no idea, but I say that if it's true that the war of conquest is part of the organization of capitalism, etc., we have to take into consideration that we can't just... That's it, we have to make a balance. It is said that the revolution is finished forever. Well, they say it's over forever, but what do they put in its place? For the moment, we have nothing. The alternatives are not credible. We can't find an effective way to oppose capitalism, I think. We have techniques and strategies that are very weak. So maybe the revolution is no longer relevant, maybe... So, in this book, I ask the question: why has it disappeared? And what should we do instead? That's it.

Bernardo Jurema

You write that the “basic function” of “governmentality” is to prevent, neutralize, undo ‘revolution’; you define it as “a politics of the anorganic”, by which you mean that “It is not just what intervenes in the life of the species, looking after illness and health, life and death, but, much more fundamentally, what decides concerning the possible and the impossible” (Lazzarato 2021: 170-1). We know the solutions to the most pressing problems of our time - we must relinquish intellectual property rights to vaccines to expand access worldwide and fight the pandemic; we must stop fossil fuel production to deal with the climate emergency. The problem is not technical - it's clear what needs to be done - but

rather political. Is this what you mean by "governmentality", a "politics of the anorganic" that "decides concerning the possible and the impossible"? How do you think your book can help us think about this relationship between what is possible and what is impossible?

Maurizio Lazzarato

Yes, this sentence is a bit complicated, but I wanted to say something very simple. First of all, governmentality is a process of normalization. Governmentality happens, as I said earlier, once a distribution of power has been determined. So we have winners and losers. There, we will introduce the norm. But the norm only arrives when there is a normalization that has already taken place. In Chile, it is obvious that the norm arrives once the normalization has been produced by Pinochet. Pinochet will normalize the situation. At that moment, a normativity is introduced and it is governmentality. Governmentality is a form of pacification. It will manage the pacification. Once the peace of power has been imposed, new forms of subjugation will be constructed, new forms of norms will be constructed, etc. So for me, governmentality is that, and therefore this ideology that functions a lot at the moment, following Foucault, has this function of normalization. I think that... The question was the possible and the impossible... I think, on the other hand, that I was only saying that what governmentality controls, what it decides, what it imposes, is what is possible and what is impossible in a situation. It is possible to become a human capital, it is possible to become a self-employed person. That is possible. The impossible is indeed the revolution, so that determines what is possible and what is impossible. The reality is, fundamentally, that of governmentality. It's possible to get into debt, you have to get into debt. It is possible to have access to the economy, to integrate it, not only through work and welfare, you can forget that. To integrate it, you have to go into debt. You have access to school, to health care through debt. This is possible. It is even imposed. The new normativity is that. What's impossible is to get out of that. Thatcher said it very clearly: there is no alternative. So basically, I say that what we need to do is to change the possibilities. That's the problem: inventing new possibilities. I think we need a rupture to do this. The revolt in Chile, the days that determined the revolt in Chile, fundamentally, they created new possibilities, they opened possibilities. They finally created time where there was nothing, there was only governmentality, they opened possibilities, and therefore it is the impossible that becomes possible, for the first time. It was a bit of a literary thing, but basically it means this. Very pragmatically, it is the ruptures, the revolts that will interrupt the normal course of time, which is that of governmentality, which is that of neoliberalism. The interruption of time is what happened in Chile, what happened in North Africa, what is happening with the feminist movement. Interrupting a normal course of time to open a new temporality. This new temporality is not the revolution. It is the march of something new. Here, then, is effectively to bring to life once again the impossible, what neoliberalism has erased. By erasing the revolution, it has erased the impossible. So the only possibility is that it is the government that decides. It is governmentality that decides what is possible and what is not possible. That's it.

Bernardo Jurema

That's really interesting. I thank you very much Mr. Lazzarato. You gave us so many elements to think about the subjects that we work on regarding climate politics.