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Some Thoughts on the (Extra-)Ordinary.

*Jayan Nayar**

In this essay, I am interested in the philosophical appropriation of the 'street'; much recent critical theory fixes on the 'events' of the 'street' as portending ruptural becomings –into Being - of the new in the world. I argue that such readings of the 'extra-ordinary' are founded upon an heroic ontologic-epistemology of 'resurrection' that defines colonial-modern Eurocentric philosophy. Against this ruptural/ evental preoccupation with the extra-ordinary, I present a decolonial view which reads in the events of the street the ordinariness of the perceived extra-ordinary and the extraordinariness of the (often invisible) ordinary decoloniality of the home as the site of Already-Being.

The Philosopher and the Street (and the Home).

The street excites and enchants; it is a place of a moment's passing, of a public presence and expression – of anger, joy, of coming together and promises – a place of movement, spectacular, transitory.¹ The home, wherever that might be, is where the street ends, even if, as it is for many, the street itself is home: the home is a place of return or of settlement, ordinary, a place of faith and solidarity and relationships, of hard work, tenacious and persistent in its presence however make-shift, extraordinary in its everyday insistence on surviving, and on, somehow, thriving.

Indeed, it is a peculiar enterprise that we 'critical intellectuals', engage in.² We assume an audacious capacity to contemplate the world and read its signs, to interpret our present and

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¹ The 'street' (including the 'square'), as I use the term in this essay, is a reified 'public' space of abstract, depersonalised appearances. It is, as we will see, the location of thought for much 'critical' affirmations of the political as ruptural praxes. The 'home', on the other hand, is intrinsically and contextually personal, even as it may be collective (contra public) existential spaces of relationality. Interesting confluences arise when efforts are made to transform the street into the home – the transitory experiments of the 'Occupy' movements is an example, the existential relationalities of street dwellers being an altogether different one.

² I direct my thoughts in this essay to those who would identify with my use of 'we' and 'us' in this context – professional(ised) thinkers, 'radical/critical' philosophers, scholarly 'intellectual insurrectionaries' and the like. I don't claim any competence to speak to any wider 'activist' audience, who may or may not share similar afflictions of intellectual presumptuousness.

imagine better futures, mostly from our locations of thought within institutionalised and permitted spaces of thinking and voicing, implicated as we are ourselves within the worlds that we purportedly critically think out of. We think, perhaps, this a worthwhile social endeavour, a necessary intervention against the established and asserted ‘norm-alities’ of the present, a creative projection out of and against the present into the possible. In this, the assumption is that the critical thinker, the ‘activist-scholar’, the ‘insurgent philosopher’ – however ‘we’ prefer to regard ourselves – occupies an historic role to (re)interpret the present, to see through the smokescreens of dominant ideologies and power/knowledge diagrams, to unveil the myth-making of present normalities and normalisations, in order that in turn history may be allowed its progressive march, and humanity urged on towards a yet-to-come, possible future. The ‘thinker’ therefore serves as the catalyst to identify, to instigate, to provoke otherwise merely latent potentialities of suppressed insurgencies against the ossification of the future in unsatisfactory and captured presents.³

With this self-assumed sense of importance perhaps it is understandable that many of us seek out the ‘event’, the momentous, that marks, as we see it, a rupture, the moment of catharsis, a transformation, the ‘new’ born into the world. For this purpose, it is to the street that many philosophically turn. We see this tendency to philosophise the street clearly in recent critical/radical intellectual work. Reading ‘uprisings’, ‘resistance’ and ‘revolutions’, interpreting the happenings of irruptions in the squares and bazaars of anger, ascribing meaning to voice as voiced in a multitude of vernaculars in multiple locales as these ‘events’ are gazed-upon and made audible to consuming eyes and ears (‘ours’ included), investing hope and dispensing disappointment; indeed, we observe that much political-legal thought of the ‘critical/radical-Left’ thus is moved by the (variously conceived of) ‘political’ projects to open up possible pathways of rupturing the ascription of docile subjectivities and bans.⁴ In this fashion, the street has indeed come to be the primary locale from which philosophical contemplations are undertaken in this “age of resistance” as Costas Douzinas has named our present time:

³ For such articulations of critical function and responsibility, see for example Costas Douzinas, “A Short History of the British Critical Legal Conference or, the Responsibility of the Critic,” *Law & Critique* 25, no. 2 (2014); José Medina, “Toward a Foucaultian Epistemology of Resistance: Counter-Memory, Epistemic Friction, and Guerrilla Pluralism,” *Foucault Studies*, no. 12 (October 2011); and Andreja Zevnik, “Sovereign-less Subject and the Possibility of Resistance,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38, no. 1 (2009).

⁴ See Costas Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis: Greece and the Future of Europe* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013); Slavoj Žižek, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* (London: Verso, 2012); Alain Badiou, *Rebirth of History: Times of Riots and Uprisings*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2012). See also, Illan Wall, “Tunisia and the Critical Legal Theory of Dissensus,” *Law & Critique* 23, no. 3 (2012); Oscar Guardiola-Rivera, “A Jurisprudence of Indignation,” *Law & Critique* 23, no. 3 (2012).

“revolutions start only after people have taken to the street, stay there and challenge the established order. Whether radical change follows and what type it takes depends in most cases on the *emergence of a political subject* as well as on unpredictable events and contingencies. ...A sequence of uprisings will dominate the world political landscape in the next period. Ours is an age of resistance. The possibility of radical change has been firmly placed on the historical agenda.”⁵

We observe that what inspires such fervour, such ecstatic celebration of the street, is a perceived, hoped for, *emergence*: that of the political subject in an historical moment of happening/becoming as a ‘new’ to the world. Here, the extra-ordinary ‘event’ is, therefore, the harbinger of (all) hope, marking the (possible, nascent) becoming – as ‘liberation’ – of a ‘subject’, as the one who emerges into the street, and out from the street, breaking free from the shackles of extant sovereign-biopolitical diagrams, heralding (with ‘fidelity’), as Alain Badiou would have it come to be, the ‘rebirth’ of History.⁶ This, we see, is thinking that is fixated by the spectacular, the heroic, the extra-ordinary of ‘radical change’. All manner of ecstatic proclamations thereby are enunciated, as a matter of a faith strong, to herald this new dawn of liberation. It is this tendency – the philosophical appropriation of the ‘street’ as the ecstatic site of extra-ordinary becoming – that interests me in this essay.

Before I elaborate, let me also make clear what I am not concerned to do; I do not aim here to shed light on, or to chart, ‘strategies of rupture/resistance’ that might lead the march of historical struggle in whatever direction towards the unfinished project of enlightened futures. Unlike the many contemporary (philosophical) prophets and witnesses of rupture, I have no such delusional

⁵ Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance*, 9 (emphasis mine). Douzinas, is a prominent witness and fervent advocate of the revolutionary significance of the street; the claims he makes are bold. They are also, both trite and, quite simply, meaningless. Some cursory questions are sufficient to demonstrate the point: *ours* is an age of resistance, so it is claimed; fabulous, but as opposed to which other age that was not? According to whom, and seen from whose vantage point? *Ours*, meaning whose? The European? Based on some assumed normality which was an *age* based on what, whose, consensus? Would this sweeping generalisation apply also to the non-European worlds? This matter of generalisations aside, if it is the case, that in any case, radical change is subject to ‘unpredictable events and contingencies’ – whatever this means – then on what concrete ‘historical’ evidence is the present moment, and the ‘next period’, ascribed such momentous historic import? We will return to the point about the bombastic nature of such claims of revolutionary rupture later in the discussion.

⁶ Badiou, *Rebirth of History*, 68. Badiou defines the ‘event’ thus: “An event is signalled by the fact that an in-existent is going to attain genuine existence, an intense existence relative to a world”; Unlike Douzinas, Badiou is rather more hesitant in observing a fundamental changing of worlds; Badiou sees the present more as an ‘intervallic period’, insisting caution as he presents the typologies of ‘riots’ as ranging from the immediate, to the latent, and finally, the historic. It is this birthing of the historic that interests Badiou. Contra, Raul Zibechi, “The rising power of slum democracy,” *New Internationalist*, October 2010: “[t]wentieth century history is full of births of worlds that embody ‘old’ social relations. This tumultuous reality has brought disastrous consequences ... they have not been able to create new worlds.”

desire. Mine is not an intervention to inform some project of salvation, although I might have views on some inescapable implications of what might be thus entailed. Instead, what I want to do through this essay is to explicate the philosophical-political heritage from which obsessions with thinking extra-ordinary becomings originate, and to question the implications of such thinking. Intrinsic to this task is an interrogation of the norm-alities of the lenses with which ‘we’ who purport to view the world do the viewing, and of the frames and categories of understanding with which ‘we’ purportedly see and understand the present of, and those present in, the world.⁷ The arguments I develop in this connection are informed by a radically-other decolonial reading of the presents (and presence) of the ordinariness of the extra-ordinary, and the extraordinariness of the ordinary. We will see that this is an attempt to return philosophy, from the reified abstract ‘subject’ that is the key protagonist of Eurocentric emancipatory thinking, to the conditions and experiences of embodied beings-in-the-world.⁸ Simply put, I am concerned here to return our thinking from the seemingly spectacular extra-ordinary events of the street, as it were, to the mundane (extra)ordinariness of the homes of (Already-)Being.

On the Ontology of (Abandoned) Extra-Ordinary Becoming.

We begin by directing our attention to the constitutive categories of post-Enlightenment ontologic-epistemology. By this I mean the fundamental ontological concepts that found the epistemological ground from which (Western) thought is thought and the premises from which ‘critical’ discoveries are imagined to be made;⁹ examples relevant to the present discussion include (Human)Being, sovereignty, the political, constituent and constituted power, subjectivity etc. Various, the attempt to reclaim some emancipatory meaning and content for these foundational categories of (presumed) human-being-ness in the world characterises much of the preoccupation of ‘critical’ theory/philosophy. We should note that there is a ‘history’, as History no less (and, obviously, as a continuing present) to this cosmology of the ‘Modern’ whereby the

⁷ Santos’ notion of the sociology of ‘absences’ and ‘emergences’ is to the point here; Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “The World Social Forum: Toward A Counter-Hegemonic Globalisation (Part I),” (presentation, XXIV International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Dallas, March 27-29, 2003).

⁸ I distinguish the ontologic-epistemological location of the radical ordinariness of decoloniality from the ‘ordinary’ that are indeed constituted by the diagrammatic ascriptions of subjectivities. For example, whilst the ‘ordinary’ violence of ‘far-right’ subjectivities may well be the violence of ordinary people, they are indeed the normalised actions of subjects within the diagrams that constitute the subjectivities respectively of licence, containment and bans; see Jayan Nayar, “On the Elusive Subject of Sovereignty,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 39, no. 2 (2014).

⁹ We are here usefully reminded of Ashis Nandy’s argument on the ‘imperialism of categories’; Ashis Nandy, “History’s Forgotten Doubles,” *History and Theory* 34, no. 2 (1995).

radical, enlightened potentiality of human-being-ness emerged into the (Enlightened) World. I would suggest that we can best understand this past and present of post-Enlightenment ‘critical/radical’ political-legal philosophy as being founded upon an ontology of abandonment and resurrection; it might be worth clarifying that we are here addressing the philosophical anguish that follows the abandonment of the ‘subject’, as perceived by – and this is the crux of the matter – the *abandoned philosopher*.

We turn to the so-called French Revolution for a useful starting point into our journeys into the ontologic-epistemology of the abandoned critical philosopher of post-Enlightenment (Eurocentric) hope. We observe that no critical, transformative, engagement with the worlds of politics, of law, of democracy, of hope for better human futures in short, is possible, it would appear, without some return and reference to that *glorious* moment of European human imagination and enactment, presented, as it often is, as an originary, and original event in History.¹⁰ This is the great birth – and greatness is essential – of Man, post-God – ‘degodded’ as Sylvia Wynter put it – as ‘subject’ and ‘citizen’, that is the universal-particular ‘human’ made sense-of in the world as sovereign and subject, as ruler and ruled, as author and authored, as the potentiality of the appearance into the world – as Being – that enraptures, perplexes and terrifies post-Enlightenment Eurocentric political-legal philosophical thought.¹¹ Thus is the French Revolution, for the ‘Enlightened’ philosopher of the western tradition, a constitutive ‘Event’, for with it, through it, is consolidated in political philosophy, the advent of a becoming-‘Man’ heralded by the ‘Renaissance’, of a necessary rupture, from emptiness and abandonment into fullness and belonging, the emergence from the disenchanted Void of Godless-ness into the secular ‘Word’ and ‘World’. This is a momentous becoming indeed. With the invention of the ‘French Revolution’ (as a philosophical ‘Event’), attached as it is with its momentous, spectacular enunciation of the ‘Rights of Man and the Citizen’,¹² the ‘citizen’ thus replaces the ‘believer’, the ‘children of revolutionary sovereignty’ thus replaces the ‘children of God’, the violent ‘evental’

¹⁰ We concurrently observe that this is a fixation and a need for the critical philosopher. Philosophers content with the normalities of the present demonstrate no such tendency to hark back to the French Revolution in such nostalgic ways; theirs is more elaborations of ‘ends’ – of history, utopia and such like.

¹¹ Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation – An Argument,” *The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003).

¹² I stress the point about invention here. The persistent recourse to the ‘French Revolution’ as the evental foundations of ‘enlightened’ philosophy serves as an example of how philosophy has built for itself a floor from which to make its leaps into the future – it is astounding that these references to the ‘French Revolution’ in literature purportedly critical and universal in its emancipatory aspirations simply assume the universal relevance, presumably as some form of civilisational and evolutionary maturation, this particular, even if significant, local happening to the peoples of the non-‘European’ traditions of philosophical myth-making! For all the consequential grandeur of thought, this is merely philosophy inventing History in order to invent Philosophy through the ascriptions of meanings upon meanings on a human experience in time.

revolutionary-becoming thus the portend of the (im)possible secular resurrection of the human-as-citizen into the world of words and meaning absent mediation by the divine ascription of place-ments.¹³ Indeed, a ‘becoming’ into the world through an extra-ordinary (im)possible ‘event’ – a counter-resurrection as it were – is necessary to birth the ‘rupture’ and bring into ‘being’ the secular promise of deliverance-salvation, necessary to relegate the claim of God (and His priests) on humanity to the fringes of ‘pre-modern’ superstition.¹⁴ Simply put, the ‘French Revolution’ – as invented by the repetitions of political-legal philosophers – marks the recurrent moment, and provides the repeated enunciation, for a spectacular send-off for (the Western version of the Judeo-Christian) God by the philosophy of a new (En)Light(en)ment. With this point of origin for ‘Becoming’ is an universalist interpretation ascribed to an occurrence of a ‘local’ irruption, and from such a meaning invested is a ‘new beginning’ for (Modern) ‘sovereignty’ invented, and the ontological moment of rebirth for post-Christian ‘universal’ (European) ‘Man’ delivered.¹⁵

Given this past, this legacy, we thus see that the ‘modern’ philosopher of hope has long been conditioned to seek out the extra-ordinary event that re-enacts, and witnesses, the re-emergence of the subject out of abandonment; such an ontology of Becoming lies, after all, at the very heart of the secular faith of post-Enlightenment philosophy. The ‘liberation’ and ‘freedom’ of sovereign ‘Man’ – an ontological invention of Western philosophy grappling with the ‘death’ of God – necessarily involves such a magnificent (re)birthing.¹⁶

This is all well and good, no doubt significant for an understanding of the evolving cosmologies and philosophoscapes of the emerging ‘European-Man’ out of his ages-dark. But more has been the presumed and enforced import of this particular local happening. We recall (or rather, mostly

¹³ Ranciere’s ‘theses of politics’ and specifically his definition of ‘democracy’ – understood as the rule by those with no claim of qualification to rule – explicitly points to the significance of this ‘rupture’ in post-Enlightenment philosophy; Jacques Ranciere, “Ten Theses on Politics,” *Theory & Event* 5, no. 3 (2001): 21. Of course, all of this is true as a becoming and a rupture in a ‘philosophy’ of the world, whatever the materiality of that world.

¹⁴ It would of course be sensible to pause and note that such grand readings of philosophical ruptures served the new priests of sovereignty rather more than they did the masses of the intended ‘subjects’ of liberations for whom the matter of life and death in violence and impoverishment (as ever always in the histories of ‘events’) returned to their normal course of philosophical insignificance. For a contemporary account of grand birthings and consequent disenchantment, in this instance, in the case of post-Apartheid South Africa, see, Grant Farred, “The Not-Yet Counterpartisan: A New Politics of Oppositionality,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103, no. 4 (2004). The struggle, quite simply, continues, in the everyday.

¹⁵ For a discussion on the (colonial) ‘modern’ invention of sovereignty, see Jayan Nayar, “On the Elusive Subject of Sovereignty,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 39, no. 2 (2014).

¹⁶ That Agamben throws a spanner in the philosophical works by his assertion that rather than salvation, abandonment is retained at the core of sovereign-becoming serves of course as an unfortunate twist in the Enlightenment tale; Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford Uni. Press, 1998).

we don't) that we are not merely recounting a 'European-modern' tale here. Instead, what is presented as a universal truth of becoming is, in its co-constitutive underside, an ontological birth whose origins lie in the violent gestations, both material and cosmological, of colonial-modernity. I don't intend to repeat the readings of the history of History through a colonial-modern lens; this has amply been done effectively elsewhere.¹⁷ My aim is more to draw-out the constituting premises that connect the 'modern' preoccupation of extra-ordinary 'Becoming-Being' of (Western-ised) Man as 'citizen-subject' in the 'political' with prior colonial philosophies of 'Being' that sought to deny and thereby annihilate the manifold actuals of Already-(Other-)Being-ness that constitutes the worlds of being-human.¹⁸ This opening up of ontology to a decolonial correction is necessary for the arguments to follow.

We remind ourselves of the foundational premises that inform the constitutive categories of 'critical' Eurocentric ontologic-epistemology:

- That human-being-ness is the possibility of Becoming-Being out of Non-Being. We see this defined by the duality of the believer and the heathen under Occidental Christianity, traced to an earlier distinction between the (political-)sociality/civilisation of *bios* and the 'naturalness' of *zoe* in more 'classical' rationalisations; thus may be understood the classical roots of the ontological premise of Christian colonial brutality in the name of 'universal Humanity'. (It is a fascinating feature of contemporary 'critical' Eurocentric literature this constant re-invocations of classical Grecian thought.)
- That being-ness – as being-self as self-with-others – is, as such, haunted by the inherent and perpetual threat of abandonment to non-being, from *bios-community* (of believers-political society) to *zoe* (*heathens/savages/barbarian*)-bare life. It is the (constantly strived for) universal potentiality and responsibility of Man therefore to Become into the 'public' as (ethical-)political-subject.¹⁹

¹⁷ See for example, Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America," *International Sociology* 15, no. 2 (2000); Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton Uni. Press, 2000); Ramon Grosfoguel, "Transmodernity, border thinking, and global coloniality: Decolonizing political economy and postcolonial studies," *Eurozine*, July 14, 2008, <http://www.eurozine.com/pdf/2008-07-04-grosfoguel-en.pdf>; Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality." Also, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "The topology of being and the geopolitics of knowledge," *City* 8, no. 1 (2004).

¹⁸ See Jayan Nayar, "The Philosopher's Elusive Subject: On the Problem of the 'Present' in the 'Political'," *Journal of Critical Southern Studies* 1 (2013).

¹⁹ The anxiety of Being – between abandonment and being 'together' – underpins much anguished philosophical work following the disenchantment with 'Modernity' and its genocidal logics. This we see is the underlying anxiety that informs much of Arendt's work. On a different understanding of the anxiety of being – seeking rescue from the

- That this Becoming is a process filled with ontological labour-pains as the birthing out of Non-Being (being-in-bare life/zoe) into the World of political-Being-subject is (philosophically) enacted; the ‘social contract’ thus serves as the ‘Modern’ philosophical vehicle for this transformation.

We see therefore the ‘modern’ construction of human being-ness as a Becoming that is emplaced within the union of the ‘political’ (replacing that of the spiritual) as the sphere of Being. The big-bang of the French Revolution provides, crucially, the ontological originary moment for this new faith: a ‘new’ philosophy which invents the passing of the subject from the ‘spiritual’ – as the domain of Being-in/with-the ‘public’ – to be replaced by the sovereignty of the ‘political’. With this shift, this rupture that is the ‘Enlightenment’, becomes possible the birthing and baptism of a secular ontology of the subject: from the abandoned void of God-lessness, into/under the communion of ‘sovereignty’.

As noted, this philosophical turn into the ‘age of reason’ was not merely to serve the civilisational maturation of a ‘white’ epistemology; with these foundational assumptions and constitutive categories – of Being, sovereignty, subject, political – have the imperial worlds of colonial-modern politics and law, the ‘state’, ‘citizenship’, ‘territory’ and ‘property’, ‘rights’, notions of ‘democracy’ and ‘constitutionalism’, ‘nationality’ and ‘nationalism’, inclusion and exclusion, belonging and non-belonging, all, been thought and enforced.²⁰ And yet, for the critical philosopher of Eurocentric hope, this promise of the secular resurrection of the new ‘Man’ in sovereign political society remains marked by a constant indictment of abandonment, betrayals and incompleteness. The universality of the acclaimed birth of Man (and the resurrection of the ‘subject’) was, from the very moment of its philosophical invention, never without its underside of coloniality; the invention of the ‘subject’ we find is accompanied by the following two inter-related rationalities of governmentality – of ‘populationisation’, and of ‘individualisation’ – both the actual material experiences of the Enlightened (b)ordering of the ‘subject’ (citizen) in the ‘political’.

loneliness of abandonment into a being as being-with-other – we find Levinas’ ‘face’ seeking commune with the other.

²⁰ For important exposes of the colonial underpinnings of the (b)ordering of the world through the categories of international law, see for example, Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (New York: Cambridge Uni. Press, 2005); China Mieville, *Between Equal Rights: A Marxist Theory of International Law* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2006).

With regard the former it was realised from the very beginning that the universal Man of the Enlightenment was constructed on a whole array of geo- and body-political ‘disqualifications’;²¹ for all the assertions of the sovereignty of Man, it was the ‘population’, as Foucault understood well, that marked the advent of the ‘sovereignty’ of (biopolitical) ‘government’.²² And so, alongside the triumphalist assertions of European ‘civilisation’ we find the western philosophical tradition informed also by a pervasive ‘crisis’ of the ‘Western Man’ familiar to us still, exacerbated less by slave and anti-colonial uprisings, no doubt, and more by the atrocities wrought upon by the very ‘modern’ ‘World Wars’, Jewish holocaust, Stalinist gulags and the countless other experiences of atrocity, against ‘populations’ in the name of humanity, replicated time and time over in the various locations and institutionalisations of ‘exceptions’ that Giorgio Agamben has come to identify as constitutive of the present.²³ Indeed, a matter of anguish for the Eurocentric philosopher of the Enlightened subject is the continuing realisation that the inflicted and perpetuated suffering upon the majority of the human population is a matter of everyday and ordinary reality, that the ‘exclusions’ and deprivations that are daily witnessed as defining the ‘actual’ of human-beingness under national and global orders of (b)ordered populations are a constitutive feature of the condition of (colonial-)modernity; precarious beingness and being ‘precariat’ thus very much the ‘normal’ conditions of modern subjectivity presently.²⁴

This on the one hand; on the other, whilst the cruelties of populationisation are clear to see, the effects of the governmentality of individualisation are less obvious, and perhaps, more damaging to the aspiration of universality that underpins the critical Enlightenment project. The problem for the philosopher, simply put, is the unsatisfactory (and complacent) condition of Being that apparently defines the ‘post-political’ present. As Zygmunt Bauman pointed out, the ‘imagination’ that underpins the ‘post-political’, ‘post-modern’ consensus of neo-liberal ‘liquid modernity’ is one whereby the much-vaunted ‘subject’ is concerned more with the ‘mining’ of

²¹ See, for example Walter D. Mignolo, “Citizenship, Knowledge, and the Limits of Humanity,” *American Literary History* 18, no. 2 (2006): 312; Walter D. Mignolo, “The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 1 (2002); Maria Lugones, “The Coloniality of Gender,” in *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, eds. Walter D. Mignolo and Arturo Escobar, 2010, Reprint (London: Routledge, 2013): 369-90.

²² See Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Enquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982). Whilst Foucault’s insights into ‘biopolitical governmentality’ may have been a revelation to the Eurocentric philosopher, peoples the world over subjected to European colonialism had little cause to doubt that they existed as nothing but categorised ‘populations’ to be collectively made-subject and subjected. Before Fanon, after all, we learnt from Mohandas Gandhi, Babasahib Ambedkar, Franz Fanon, and Steve Biko, for example.

²³ Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: Uni. Of Chicago Press, 2005).

²⁴ For discussions on the precarious present, see, Judith Butler, *Precarious Lives: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004); and Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

‘disengaged’ happiness and less with any historic mission for an Enlightened Humanity.²⁵ This abdication by the (post)modern subject of her ‘historic’ responsibility of Becoming-Being is quite simply a slap in the face for the philosopher who takes the universal promise of the Enlightenment seriously; this is an abandonment most grave, for it is the denial, by embodied, actual, beings, of the philosophically-ascribed role of Being-as-subject to be the maker of History! Recovery of this most critical promise of the Enlightenment is, therefore, for the radical post-Enlightenment philosopher of rupture, imperative. And so, we find familiar critical refinements to the original birth-story of the ‘subject’ in the ‘political’ circulating amongst critical philosophical types presently:

- That to be denied being-(in the)‘political’, is to be either in abjection or in stupor, in ontological Nothingness as inexistent or Non-Being, or in ontological meaninglessness as a commodity, a thing not worthy of the legacy of Eurocentrism. The former is the state of ‘rightless’ exclusion that concerned Arendt and her philosophical progeny, it is the condition of abandonment that preoccupies post-Agambenian philosophers of biopolitical sovereignty. The latter is the perceived condition of the contemporary biopolitical subject-object of governmentality, ‘policed’, in Jacques Ranciere’s terms,²⁶ within the ‘sensible’, the ‘counted’ and the ‘accounted-for’, self-disciplining, held docile and domesticated (and despised by such radical philosophers as Zizek and Badiou), to be nothing useful other than as ‘entrepreneurial citizen-consumers’, always subject to being, as a condition of being-subject, precariat. And so, the crisis of the present necessitates efforts to rescue the (philosophical) ‘subject’ from either abandoned deprivations, or hedonistic automatonity and consumptive banality.
- That Becoming-Subject, therefore, is the continuing ontological potentiality of ruptural emancipation. ‘Becoming’-subject, thus, is an ever incomplete (enlightened) project of Becoming-Being, in (elusive) History.

Thus, we have the ontological ground from which contemporary critical Eurocentric ‘thought’ is thought and from which ‘discoveries’ now are imagined to be made. Also, thus we understand the significance of perceived ‘events’ of extra-ordinary rupture; Badiou’s insistence that the role

²⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, “Utopia with no Topos,” *History of the Human Sciences* 16, no. 1 (2003).

²⁶ Ranciere, “Ten Theses on Politics.”

of philosophy is to ‘invent’ the ‘new’ problem of the present may be more fully appreciated in this light.²⁷

Returning our attention back to current philosophising of the street, we see therefore that ascriptions and assertions of ruptural becomings are central to the secular progress-narrative of Enlightened ‘Humanity’, the necessary moments in ‘History’ that marks a before and an after; they mark after all the resurrection of the de-deified (still reified) ‘new’ subject, out of the void, into the word-world. As such, ‘Becoming’ is indeed an heroic and ‘extra-ordinary’ event. Various, the intention to reclaim some presumed emancipatory content to these related foundational assumptions of human-beingness permeate through the vast majority of critical thinking on the subject of the ‘subject’ in the political. The (heroic) question that is addressed in such contemplations of the present is: how to rescue the emancipatory potentiality of the subject from the normalisations, and banalisations, of the present?²⁸ Badiou, for example:

“How are we to be faithful to changing the world *within the world itself*? This becomes: How are we to weave in the world the political truth whose historic *condition of possibility* was the event, without it being able to be the realization of this possibility? How are we to inscribe politically, as active materiality under the sign of the Idea, a reawakening of History?”²⁹

The quest indeed is a heroic one, seeking out the extra-ordinary that harbours the potential for subject-becoming as a resurrection – changing the world from within the world as it were. And so we observe a popular trend in learned intellectual-activist circles nowadays – even if Badiou himself is less keen on such exuberance; everywhere that there might occur eruptions of anger and presence against extant orders of normality are quick to follow philosophical ascriptions of meaning to these happenings as eventual ‘emergences’ of presence out of ‘absence’, as ‘taking speech’ out of ‘silence’, as public Becoming out of private non-being, of becoming ‘subject; in

²⁷ Alain Badiou, “Thinking the Event,” in Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek, *Philosophy in the Present*, ed. Peter Engelmann, trans. Peter Thomas and Alberto Toscano (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 2.

²⁸ A somewhat different type of ruptural thought, equally extra-ordinary in its expectation of Becoming, is Sergei Prozorov’s restatement of a Foucauldian ‘ontology of freedom’, an interesting attempt to think out of the box of ‘subjectivity’ through a radical reclaiming of ‘bare-life’; see Sergei Prozorov, *Foucault, Freedom and Sovereignty* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). For other, more earnest, and to my mind rather silly, articulations of the emancipatory path of ‘bare-life’ following on from Agamben’s notion of ‘whatever being’, see Jenny Edkins and Veronique Pin-Fat, “Through the Wire: Relations of Power and Relations of Violence,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 34, no. 1 (2005); and Zevnik, “Sovereign-less Subject.”

²⁹ Badiou, *Rebirth of History*, 67 (emphases in original).

short.³⁰ We witness the incessant search, by philosophers of radical hope, for such evental and heroic happenings; so is the world scoured for ruptural articulations, so are peoples' struggles ascribed meaning *vis a vis* the constitutive categories of 'modern' political-legal philosophy. From the past are the French and American Revolutions (and their enunciations of universal subject-beingness) tracked through to the Russian and Chinese Revolutions (less so the Haitian and Mexican), then the revolts of 1968, to now (jumping a few decades) and the anti-globalisation movements post Seattle, the Occupy Movements, the 'Arab Spring', all grist to the mill of the philosopher in search of signs that faith in the 'subject' of the 'political' may be redeemed, all are indeed sought to be revisited, read repeatedly, and referred to, in their many and varied interpretations, as (potential) instances of Becoming: as Badiouian 'Event', as Rancierian 'dissensus', as Zizekian 'Truth-Event/Act', as Douzinasian 'resistance/insurrection', and so many other variants of (lesser) becomings!

It is clear that much excitement and hope is manifest in such philosophical readings of 'protest' and public 'appearance'.³¹ Yet, notwithstanding the philosophical attention these instances of disobedience and anger provoke – hailing the coming subject out of rupture (whatever the favoured philosophical term-of-art for such rupture might be) – life, in this view, persistently disappoints, inevitably, so it seems – and this is the other striking and persistent feature of contemporary, critical literature. The 'event', in its materiality, is never quite as pure as its philosophical version, never quite enough to transform 'History' sufficient for the philosophers' satisfaction; moments of exalted extra-ordinary emancipation seemingly tires into languid returns to imperfection and corruption, domesticity, even 'failure'.³² If only people who struggle, who erupt, who promise such excitement to the philosopher, could be truer to their calling, possess greater 'fidelity' to their evental cause, be as animatedly firm in their resolve to the promise of the Enlightenment; thus Zizek observes:

³⁰ See for example, Peter Nyers, "Abject Cosmopolitanism: The Politics of Protection in the Anti-Deportation Movement," *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 6 (2003); and Christina Beltran, "Going Public: Hannah Arendt, Immigration Action, and the Space of Appearance," *Political Theory* 37, no. 5 (2009).

³¹ Even thinkers who might be regarded as being decolonial in orientation are not immune to this general euphoria of seeing subjects-becoming, to interpreting present expressions of anger, disgust, 'indignation' to past legacies of (Eurocentric) dreamings; see for example, Guardiola-Rivera, "A Jurisprudence of Indignation."

³² Ashis Nandy's insight is pertinent here; what we observe in much of the critical philosophy of contemporary priests of rupture pertain to the needs of the philosopher – to find in life a reflection of the philosopher's articles of faith – rather than that of the would be 'subject' that is the subject of contemplation; see Ashis Nandy, "Shamans, Savages and the Wilderness: On the Audibility of Dissent and the Future of Civilizations," in *Asking, We Walk: South as New Political Imaginary*, ed. Corinne Kumar (Bangalore: Streelekha Pub, 2012), 225-30.

“We should not be overly fascinated by sublime moments of national unity, since the key question is always: what happens afterwards? How will this emancipatory moment be translated into a new social order? As noted, over the few last decades, we have witnessed a whole series of emancipatory popular explosions which have been reappropriated by the global capitalist order...”³³

But even as Žizek cautions against over-excitement and premature celebration of the coming (impossible) future, he nevertheless upholds the ‘radical emancipatory core’ of recent uprisings, as he observes them.³⁴ And so the search for the event of Becoming-Being goes on, and with it, the work of the radical philosopher, and so it must; though often betrayed by the embodied folk who emerge, then disappear, from actual streets, this enthusiasm for reading the extra-ordinary derives after all, as we have seen, from the very fundamental ontological assumption of Becoming that defines the Eurocentric invention of the Enlightened subject. In this context, we might understand Badiou’s insistence differently; it is less fidelity to the event as a material happening in the world that is relevant to the philosopher, and more fidelity to the ontological imagination – the Idea – that is assigned to it as philosophical ‘Event’.³⁵ It is clear that what is sought to be salvaged through all of these various extra-ordinary rescues of the ‘subject’ from the grips of the ‘present’ is European philosophy itself. Various, we see, it is the Idea of ‘Europe’ that is sought to be rescued, salvaged, brought back to History, as the location and future of History. Douzinas makes this explicit; assigning especial place to ‘Greece’ in the Idea of Europe, he concludes his evangelistic survey of ‘philosophy and resistance as follows:

“The Europe to come is not some future utopia; it is happening here and now in cities and villages, in Greece, Spain and Italy, where we, tired old Europeans, link back again to *our beginning and birthplace*, to a *universalism that was never one and never can be a tool for the*

³³ Žizek, *Dreaming Dangerously*, 74.

³⁴ Ibid., 75. But of course, which ‘uprisings’ catch the attention, which become seen as ‘evental’, which attracts the attention of the ‘global’ media gaze which then become the object of philosophical ruminations by philosophers of rupture, all themselves pertinent ontologic-epistemological matters. How might an Adivasi uprising in rural India fit within the nomenclatures of ‘resistance and philosophy’ I wonder; see for example Malini Subramaniam, “An adivasi protest in Chhattisgarh is gaining strength – but not getting much attention,” *Scroll*, February 23, 2015, accessed February 2, 2015, <http://scroll.in/article/708704/An-ativasi-protest-in-Chhattisgarh-is-gaining-strength-%E2%80%93-but-not-getting-much-attention>.

³⁵ See Alain Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, trans. Bruno Bosteels (London: Continuum, 2009); and Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2002).

powerful. This is our responsibility today, as European, to the name and idea of Europe
 ...”³⁶.

The audacity of the assertion is staggering. This is a rescue of ‘Europe’, as Idea, absolved of its material history, surviving its constitutive pasts of colonialism and slavery, genocide and imperialism, thereby remaining pure, as Idea. Indeed for the Eurocentric ‘secular’ philosopher this rescue is a matter of philosophical salvation/damnation. Without the extra-ordinary resurrection of some mythologised ‘beginning and birthplace’, and the reified ‘subject’ birthed there, the post-Enlightenment, ‘modern’ philosopher of Becoming-Being is left devoid, absent a cosmology of human-beingness that is able to withstand the abandonment of God, without a rationale – the Idea – that makes such an abandonment of ‘degodding’ meaningful, deprived of an alibi for Europe’s incessant lust for violence; thus the significance of the extra-ordinary, ruptural Becoming-birthing of secular Man-as-subject into some invented Idea of universality. There is no doubting the sophistication of such narratives and constructions of human-being/becoming-ness. However, to non-believers of this parochial faith-system, for those of us less entranced by the advent of the secular subject of Becoming born out of the ‘Enlightenment’ of ‘Europe’ and the ‘French Revolution’, a different reading of the philosophical ‘situation’, of the present, of the ‘problem’, presents itself. With this un-enchanted understanding of History, we turn now to see and read differently the street and the home in the (extra)ordinariness of struggle.

On the Ordinariness of the Extra-ordinary.

Unintended it may be but radical readings of spectacular extra-ordinary ‘becoming’ are premised, still, on prior constructions of human-beingness based on a colonial-modern ontologic-epistemology of Being/Non-Being. What is assumed here is an ontological *Totality* that defines, as *totality-exteriority* – whereby what is ‘exterior’ is that which is excluded, inexistent in totality, yet to be(come) – the emplacements of both the ‘counted’ and the ‘abject-inexistent’ within the diagram of the present in both its senses of temporality and subjectivity.³⁷ Post-Enlightenment critical thought therefore flounders upon this abject condition and context of *exteriority*: the

³⁶ Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance*, 208.

³⁷ For a discussion of the difference between Totality and totality-exteriority as I here use the terms, see Jayan Nayar, “The Politics of Hope and the Other-in-the-World: Thinking Exteriority,” *Law and Critique* 24, no. 1 (2013).

perceived abandonment/betrayal/abdication of the ‘subject’ from the *political* whereby the ‘political’ has come to be the ontological standard of a post-divine, secular norm-ality of human-beingness proper, a life desired, a life full. Perceived exclusion from access to the political, from political belonging as commonly understood, is thus understood by ‘critical’ philosophers of the subject as abjection; as such ‘inexistence’ (Non-Being) in political-subjectivity is the underlying abandonment that defines the condition of the captured, non-political present that requires recovery and rescue. The ascription of extra-ordinary Becoming to events of irruption serves precisely, it appears to me, to enable such a rescue; the philosopher assumes that what is witnessed in these instances is the extra-ordinary ruptural assertion of presence-as-‘subject’ claiming a belonging in the political: out of absence, out of ‘inexistence’, out of Nothing-ness, into (extra-ordinary-)Being, a ‘liberated’ entity – the ‘subject’ – as the ‘new’ in History; Badiou is illustrative: “We shall then say that a *change of world* is real when an inexistent of the world starts to exist in this same world with maximum intensity.”³⁸ It is indeed noteworthy that the momentous nature of such Becoming is appropriately rendered by the grand claims and extravagant exaltations that mark the philosophers’ discovery, out of ‘inexistence’, out of non-being, of the extra-ordinary.³⁹ Nothing else is philosophically visible or recognised, all else (in terms of philosophical meaning) is ignored, if not erased, in this viewing of the ‘world’ of Being. Indeed, the blindness is the result of the very vantage point of (ontologic-epistemological) ‘sight’.

Against this, a simple counter-affirmation serves as our point of departure here: prior to the apparent extra-ordinary moment which draws the (critical) politico-philosophical gaze to rest upon the manifestations and expressions of rebellious life, persists the daily manoeuvrings of already-beings in their encounters with the totalising desires of appropriative power. In this decolonial view, what is witnessed as the extra-ordinary Becoming of the ‘new’ into the world is but the material and exigent continuation of persistent, if largely ‘invisible’ (to the eye of the

³⁸ Badiou, *Rebirth of History*, 56 (emphasis in original).

³⁹ Badiou is certainly circumspect in ascribing such momentous eventual truths to present ‘uprisings’ even as his aspiration for such is expressed in most ecstatic terms indeed. Douzinas, on the other hand, is less averse to grandiose assertions. Whilst it is perfectly understandable a hope for change, Douzinas’ reading of the political events and developments in Greece – that the popular occupation of the Syntagma in Athens in May 2011 (and onwards) has “created a legacy which has changed the meaning of politics” (Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance*, 150) – is flamboyant to say the least, even with the electoral victory of Syriza in Greece. The text is littered with exclamations of transformation and of new beginnings. Without wishing to detract from the recognition of expressions of refusal and anger against neoliberal appropriations of life-worlds, we note that such grandiose claims as those of Douzinas, for all their captivating fervour, mean very little in substance. Even as Syriza continues to battle (against the apparent victories of the *Troika*) to reclaim some space for Greece within the ‘European’ neo-liberal consensus, it is entirely unclear as to what a ‘changed meaning of politics’ – in the philosophically laden terms in which the assertion is made – actually means. We might, in my view, acclaim the struggle of the Greeks to repair some of the damage and humiliation of imposed ‘austerity’ without the need for such over-zealous ascriptions of philosophical and political rupture!

‘philosophical’ observer) being(-otherwise) whose everyday is the (extra)ordinary struggle against extant orders of asserted norm-alities. It is this that I here term Already-(Other-)Being. And it is this presence, and persistence, of a being already-Being, that is lost to ‘critical’ Eurocentric philosophers of rupture/resistance.

We observe the following: the critical philosopher’s discoveries of ruptural Becomings is informed repeatedly, to use Santiago-Gomez’s phrase, of a ‘point-zero’ perspective on human life-worlds based on an imposition of the philosophoscapes of the Enlightenment upon the world.⁴⁰ This we observe is commonplace in much recent thinking and writing on ‘resistance’; Illan Wall is an example. In concluding his analysis of the Tunisian uprisings which marked the start of the so-called ‘Arab Spring’, Wall reflects thus:

“In terms of strategies of resistance then, I want to underline the importance of learning to live together without loyalty, without the everyday presupposition that the state is naturally and inexorably there. It is the interruption of everyday authority that is crucial. ...this inoperativity is already there. ... Let me suggest then, that the point of articulation between the critical legal theory of dissensus and the Tunisian events is the question: how to unwork sovereign power on an everyday basis, without reinstituting the same logics once more?”⁴¹

Wall’s is a thoughtful, and respectful reading of ‘resistance’, rooted and influenced by Jean-Luc Nancy’s notion of ‘inoperativity’, stressing the significance of the ordinary as critical to the ‘rupture’ of norm-ality. However, as with all Eurocentric view-ings of the worlds of ‘rupture/resistance’, Wall adopts the location of the White mind’s (assumed) normal in his analysis; a perspective that identifies ‘dissensus’ in moments of ‘emergence’ out of absence or inexistence after all is one which emanates from the location of the (perceived) ‘consensus’, it assumes the norm-ality of that asserted consensus from which then the rupture is perceived, which then seeks out its other as rupture! From this zero-point of thought then, based on an ontologic-epistemology of ‘white ignorance’,⁴² are ‘strategies of resistance’ postulated, as a ‘new’

⁴⁰ Grosfoguel, ‘Transmodernity, border thinking.’

⁴¹ Wall, “Theory of Dissensus.”

⁴² I am here extending Charles Mills’ notion of ‘white ignorance’ to the ontological foundations of ‘(colonial-)modern epistemologies; See, Charles Mills, “White Ignorance,” in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, eds. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (New York: State Uni. of New York Press, 2007).

in the world, the philosophical ‘problem’ thus invented, as a discovery. But what if we do not assume such a vantage point of observation? For whom this normality of consensus from which dissensus is celebrated? From whose location of thought this reading of the new of rupture? For whom, and from which moment on, the novelty of the discovery? To whom is this exhortation to learn to live together without loyalty, and the question how to unwork sovereign power, directed to? It is this assumption of normality, of totality, that is precisely encapsulated by the notion of a zero-point perspective; a decolonial view instead would begin from a demystification of consensus and a cognition of the many undersides of persistent refusal against any such normality of consensus.

We see therefore that consistent with the ‘zero-point’ perspective of Eurocentrism which un-sees the decolonial presence in the gaze upon the world, Wall’s view and imagination suffers from an inability to comprehend that the “interruptions of everyday authority”, the non-reification of the state, are perhaps for social majorities the world over the everyday unsentimental normalities of the (extra)ordinary resilience of their ordinary being; for them, the “importance of learning to live together without loyalty, without the everyday presupposition that the state is naturally and inexorably there” may rather be better understood and realised than assumed by the critical philosopher who earnestly exhorts such based on some discovery of the event.⁴³ Indeed, such exuberance at fixing a meaning of extra-ordinariness – of becoming – to the refusal of being-subject might well be to impoverish rather than enrich understandings of the extraordinariness of the normality (rather than the exceptionality) of resistance and the rich tapestry of actually present consciousness and experiences of (Other-)Being.⁴⁴ I suggest therefore that we begin with an opposite assumption of ordinary human-beingness: that notwithstanding both the material infliction of violence and the ideological-biopolitical constructions of subject-ontologies, subjected human populations remain in their majority stubborn in their multiplicities of Already-(Other-)Being as other to the totalising ascription of being-subject that is the biopolitical project

⁴³ Such a condition of being – as being-together – however is rather less a discovery for the social majorities across the world, we can be sure.

⁴⁴ On the fringes of mainstream ‘philosophy’ and ‘critical theory’ we find a rich and diverse literature that narrates such presents and presence of Other Being. Quite simply, Other-Being remains open to the world notwithstanding Eurocentric post-Enlightenment philosophical blindness to such ontological presents and presence. A particularly interesting, and significant, in light of the utter mess of ‘economic’ conception of sociality, ontology of being and social being-ness is presented in Genevieve Vaughan, *Women and the Gift Economy: a radically different worldview is possible* (Toronto: Inanna Publications, 2007).

of the sovereign assertion.⁴⁵ What is significant in this ‘other’ ontology of being is its rootedness in the histories and materialities of the everyday.⁴⁶

James C. Scott provides a profoundly insightful antidote to Eurocentric contemplations on, and assertions of, rupture.⁴⁷ Scott’s insight was to recognise the everyday ordinariness of resistance, in their many forms, amongst subjected populations, labelling it the ‘infra-politics’ of ‘hidden transcripts’ – the subaltern realm of variedly disguised and persistent opposition to the desires and reach of power. Rejecting the commonly held-view that the normality of ‘petty’ actions by subordinate groups to defy, thwart the smooth operation of, mock, negotiate through, and stretch the limits of permissibility and ‘(il)legality’ of power are little more than insignificant acts of relieving the pressures of subjugation, Scott presents these as vital everyday forms of resistance, of conscious and dignified praxes of living through, and denouncing the claims of power. In this way, Scott also returns the extra-ordinary irruptions of manifested and articulated anger/refusal/reversals, to their rightful place within the spectrum of the (extra)ordinariness of life in worlds of oppression/domination. Importantly also, Scott’s reaffirmation of the ordinary in this respect points to the presence of non-subjectivity (in ontological terms) and Other-Beingness as they are relevant to my argument:

“The limits of the possible are encountered only in an empirical process of search and probing.

The dynamic of this process, it should be clear, holds only in those situations in which it is assumed that most subordinates conform and obey *not* because they have internalized the norms of the dominant, but because a

⁴⁵ I suspect that such a position of thought that begins with ‘ordinariness’ as its point of departure may well appear wholly unsatisfactory for the chest-beating, heroic visionaries of post-sovereignty and post-capitalism. So be it. An example of a recent and quite astoundingly arrogant projection of a post-capitalist future that deems it ‘progressive’ to denounce as irrelevant and ineffective a source of possibility anything but the legacy of the modern-Enlightenment project, see Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, “#ACCELERATE MANIFESTO for an Accelerationist Politics,” *Critical Legal Thinking: Law & the Political*, May 14, 2013, <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/05/14/accelerate-manifesto-for-an-accelerationist-politics/>.

⁴⁶ The everyday, as I invoke it, needs to be distinguished from that which concerned Henri Lefebvre. Indeed, Lefebvre serves as a corrective to much of the gung-ho enthusiasts of radical rupture with his understanding that it is through the everyday that subjectification – commodification/consumerism – defines the human state. Thus Lefebvre asks: “Why wouldn’t the concept of everydayness reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary”; Henri Lefebvre and Christine Levich, “The Everyday and Everydayness,” *Yale French Studies*, no. 73: *Everyday Life* (1987). Lefebvre was right, therefore to insist on a critical analysis of such everyday, ‘banal’, conditions of ordinary (modern) human existence. This however, is an everyday, an ordinary, as already constituted by the diagram; thus Lefebvre’s concern was to examine, in and through the everyday, the condition of human being-ness, of subjectification. My interest in the everyday, however, is one of the ‘other’ actuality – an everyday, an (extra)ordinary, that remains rebellious to the colonising totalisations of ascribed subject-ed positions.

⁴⁷ See James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale: Yale Uni. Press, 1992).

structure of surveillance, reward and punishment makes it prudent for them to comply. It assumes, in other words, a basic antagonism of goals between dominant and subordinates that is held in check by relations of discipline and punishment.”⁴⁸

The connection Scott makes between the operations of the ‘hidden transcript’ and the moments of public eruption of rebellion is significant for our purposes for two reasons: first, it brings to prominence the non-totalisation of subordinated populations within the diagrams of ‘subjectivities’, be they of ‘inclusion’ or ‘exclusion’, even as they might appear to operate as docile subjects manipulated by the ideologies of naturalisation and normalisation that permeate through the biopolitical attempts at reconstituting purported ‘political belonging’ in the everyday; and secondly, in that it highlights the significance of the extraordinariness of ordinary being that is more creative and calculating in negotiating the risk/benefits of biopolitical rewards and punishments.⁴⁹ In contrast to the Eurocentric attempt to rescue the abandoned ‘subject’ through the post-Enlightenment birthing-Becoming of Being in the political, we see, with Scott, that it is not Nothingness, nor Non-Being, nor inexistence in abject abandonment, that defines the ‘excluded’ present when viewed through a decolonial lens. Rather, prior to, and concurrent with, the colonising and totalising advent of the Eurocentric-subject is an already vibrant presence in the world, cosmologically rich and vital, various and diverse. Being’-ness in this sense remains present, even in the face of colonial violence both corporeal and philosophical, invisibilised and silenced perhaps, silent often, made subaltern no-doubt, even self-doubting as it may be, yet tenacious in its perseverance and creativity. In this respect, it is less the heroic, extra-ordinary advent of the resurrected subject than the ordinary resilience and creativity of (already-)being that defines decoloniality.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 193 (emphasis in original, footnote omitted). Similarly, see also, Robin D.G. Kelley, “‘We Are Not What We Seem’: Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South,” *The Journal of American History* 80, no. 1 (1993). The important point here is not to oppose the apparent public and private modes of resistance, but to understand that the eruption of public anger is informed by a prior ontologies of resistance and refusal in this connection.

⁴⁹ For an excellent discussion of the creative rationalities and actions of struggle in the face of structures of governmentality, see Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia Uni. Press, 2004), especially ch. 3. Similarly, Steven Robins, Andrea Cornwall and Bettina Von Lieres, “Rethinking ‘Citizenship’ in the Postcolony,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 6 (2006).

⁵⁰ The point is well made by Carolyn Fick in asserting the primacy of the slave ‘masses’ in the Haitian Revolution against the commonly emphasised heroism of the revolutionary vanguard:

“The masses had resisted the French from the very beginning, in spite of, and not because of, their leadership. They had shouldered the whole burden and paid the price of resistance all along, and it was they who had now made possible the political and military reintegration of the leaders in the collective struggle.”;

But there is nothing exceptional, nothing out of the ordinary, that is being described in these observations. In contrast to thinking that originates from Eurocentric exceptionalism, this is a thinking which seeks no ‘historical moment’ to beckon the extraordinariness of human fortitude and creativity against the desires of colonising appropriation, either of bodies or of minds, one which instead denies the very foundational and totalising claim of the ‘sovereign’ assertion itself to construct ontologies of subject-being(ness). Life-worlds of oppressed peoples have constantly amazed in their resilience in the face of subjugation and their unpredictable resistance to seemingly inevitable and perpetual orders. Indeed, the significant lesson of the *infra-politics* and *hidden transcripts* of the social majorities and their being ‘other-wise’ lies in the very ordinariness of their extraordinary being-ness in struggle. As Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash remind us:

“For the most part, ... the main actors of the unfolding epic remain unknown to the world created by modern media; thereby still protected or sheltered from the forces that co-opt, tempt, or seduce those suddenly blinded by overnight fame and “front-page” limelight. In many cases, people’s reactions to the “Global Project” have not yet taken the shape of “a movement”: they have not a specific name or label with which they identify themselves or are identified by others. Their informal condition as the unnamed and the unidentified is an important aspect of their politics, often offering them the camouflage essential to their survival; as is their “failure” to adopt any “institutional structure”.⁵¹

And yet, as we well know, ‘they’ do surface from time to time, unleashing their anger, their refusal, their expression of being (already and other) as a refusal to continued subjectification, as a rejection of a naming/making-illegal within the constant reconfiguration of the diagram with its ascriptions of names, and place-ments, and ‘Bans’; indeed, the ‘subaltern’ does speak, even if otherwise than the comprehensible frames of speech that make them audible to colonial

Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: Uni. of Tennessee Press, 1990), 228. For powerful account in fiction similarly narrating the extraordinariness of everyday resilience, refusal and resistance, see, Évelyne Trouillot, *The Infamous Rosalie*, trans. M.A. Salvodon (Lincoln: Uni. of Nebraska Press, 2013).

⁵¹ Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash, *Grassroots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures* (London: Zed, 1998), 13.

listeners!⁵² Already-(Other-)Being, despite the best efforts of the philosophers of coloniality, therefore is not negated by the philosophical enclosures of the ‘colonial-modern’ invention of the ‘modern-(non)subject’, neither is it totalised by the assumption of beingness that is attached to en-placement (either as the included, as the ‘Banned’ or as the ruptural) within the ‘political’. This is to say that it really does not matter to the actual worlds of everyday ‘resistance’ and ‘inoperativity’ whether or not philosophers of rupture ascribe meaning and significance – as ‘constituent power’, as eventual subject, as truth-Event etc. etc. – to the infinite ways of (already-)being that constitute human-beingness. Such is the persistent truth of the ordinary: the ‘slave’ – the ontological non-subject that has fixated many a critical thinker – for all the philosophical negation that purportedly constructs the non-beingness of ‘slave’, still, as already-Being, other-than-slave, unceasingly rises up against the ‘master’; repeatedly and everywhere, thus are lived out the extraordinariness of the ordinary truth wherein the negated continue to negate the negater! Examples are plenty: the subjugated remembers and dreams a life otherwise; the ‘negro’ articulating the radical power of ‘black skins’; the women who were invisible standing at the forefront of a march; the indigenous refusing to be decimated by ‘civilisation’ through the simple refusal ‘Ya Basta’; the ‘alien’ affirming ‘no one is illegal’; the economically superfluous and disposable self-naming ‘indignados’; all of these are significant not for any eventual Becoming into the World – such would be the heroic reading that fixes, and thereby perverts, the moments of the (extra)ordinary in mythical Eurocentric time – rather, in that they voice the extraordinariness of ordinary desubjectification and refusal to be-subject, as an ever-present living of Being-otherwise, even amidst the grandest of colonising and totalising ambitions. Put differently, ordinary being in ways otherwise than prescribed and assigned by ‘sovereign’ assertions of authority and prescriptions of names and place-ments already contain within them not the nothingness of inexistence or non-being but the rich tapestry of existing social and philosophical resources of being, of refusal, of desubjectification. The following two declarations are illustrative:

“Our autonomy doesn’t need permission from the government: it already exists.”⁵³

⁵² Contra, Gayatri Cakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988), 271-313, http://www.mcgill.ca/files/crclaw-discourse/Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf.

⁵³ The words of a young Tzeltal woman from Morelia region in Mexico, as quoted in Shannon Speed, “Dangerous Discourses: Human Rights and Multiculturalism in Neoliberal Mexico,” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 28, no. 1(2005): 29.

“What do we have to ask forgiveness for? What are they to “pardon” us?... Who should ask for forgiveness and who can grant it?”⁵⁴

These examples of ordinary expressions of decolonial Being are indeed the stories of the ‘social majorities’,⁵⁵ as Esteva and Prakash describe them;⁵⁶ these are the material and psycho-social truths of Mignolo’s decolonial ‘border thinking’,⁵⁷ the everyday manoeuvrings and calculated negotiations of life described by Chatterjee as the ‘politics of the governed’,⁵⁸ the ‘everyday revolutions’ of creativity and resilience in reclaiming *horizontalidad* and autonomy by community and worker organisations as told by Marina A. Satrin,⁵⁹ the living pluriverse of the ecologies of knowledges and the epistemologies of the south explored by de Sousa Santos.⁶⁰ Tempting as it is to focus our critical philosophical attention on spectacular events (of perceived ‘rupture’), the everydayness that originates such visible and public enactments and enunciations, and the untamed consciousness of insubordination, disobedience and rebellion that nourishes and informs journeys of hope remind us that the sovereign assertion of totality and normality, and the biopolitical projects that are thus inflicted, are less successful in constructing identities of subject-beingness than either the masters of the universe or critical philosophers of rupture might assume. My argument therefore is that these are beginnings from which the *rupture of philosophy* itself might be necessarily contemplated.

Let us be clear. This distinction I am drawing between the notions of ‘extra-ordinary’ evental rupture on the one hand and the ‘(extra)ordinary’ on the other would matter little if all that is at stake here is a matter of philosophical word-play. I am suggesting however that the distinction is

⁵⁴ The ‘Zapatista’ rejection of the offer of ‘pardon’ by the Mexican government soon after the insurrection in 1994, quoted in Esteva and Prakash, *Grassroots*, 182-83.

⁵⁵ Note here that the location of enunciation, of theorisation, is the location of decoloniality, of refusal, of Other-Being. Contrast Tony Honore, “The Right to Rebel,” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 8, no. 1 (1988). Honore’s, although sympathetic to ‘the right to rebel’ (in exceptional circumstances of systematic state betrayal), coming from a perspective which assumes the norm-ality of the ‘sovereign’ location of theorisation, is laden rather with troubled qualifications.

⁵⁶ Esteva and Prakash, *Grassroots*, 182-83. Esteva’s and Prakash’s, in my view, remains an inspiring account of the many stories of creativity and struggle that define the ordinary lives of the social majorities. That such accounts of the (extra)ordinary’ is largely ignored by ‘critical’ thinkers of ‘rupture/resistance’ is an indictment against the continuing coloniality of political-legal philosophy.

⁵⁷ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*.

⁵⁸ Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*.

⁵⁹ Marina A. Satrin, *Everyday Revolutions: Horizontalism and Autonomy in Argentina* (London: Zed Books, 2012).

⁶⁰ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Another Knowledge is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies*, vol. 3 (London: Verso, 2007); also, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

critical to a decolonial correction of the way we read the problem in the present. The recognition and reintroduction of ordinary Already-(Other-)Being to philosophy returns the ‘extra-ordinary’ back to the everyday of decoloniality; such a de-privileging of the constitutive categories of Eurocentrism returns attention to the other-wise invisibilised and silenced truths of the decolonial consciousness. Importantly it focusses attention on the significance of the everyday, notwithstanding the many disappointments of the promises of ‘new births’, of the extraordinariness of the ordinary that define the persistence of struggles (and of hope), of the *home*, rather than the *street*, as the radical decolonial location of ruptural thought and action. Raul Zibechi puts it simply:

“the most revolutionary thing we can do is strive to create new social relationships within our territories – relationships that are born of the struggle, and are maintained and expanded by it.”⁶¹

On Decoloniality and the Extraordinariness of the Ordinary.

Eruptions of anger and refusal, of bodies emergent onto the street, of voice and song and chants, of dreams articulated against the decadent normalities of the present, these indeed are important occasions of celebration which remind ‘History’ of the utter unpredictability of futures regardless of presents however seemingly entrenched they might be. These are thrilling events no doubt; they portend passage and births often, and importantly so at that. However, the significant pathways of decoloniality are not charted by these moments of the street, they are laid before and travelled hence, after the thrill has gone, so to speak.⁶² My aim therefore is not to underplay the important expressions of human beingness that find articulations in moments of eruption. Rather, it is precisely to locate the irruptional within the normalities of being, that I insist on returning the extra-ordinary to the (extra)ordinariness of radical decoloniality. I argue that the error of the extra-ordinary in critical philosophy is that such quests for the resurrection of History’s reified ‘subject’ in the Event reinforces rather than ruptures a colonial, abject

⁶¹ Raul Zibechi, *Dispersing Power: Social Movements as Anti-State Forces*, trans. Ramor Ryan (Oakland: AK Press, 2010), 4.

⁶² See Grant Farred and Rita Barnard, eds., *After the Thrill is Gone: A Decade of Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Special Issue 4, *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004). It will always remain a treasured memory for me the moment when I was rightly reprimanded by Dwijen Rangnekar that the expression must first be attributed to the late, great, B.B.King!

ontological-epistemology of abandoned lifeless-ness, and thereby misses the significant imaginations and materialities of decolonial desubjectification.

My reading of the literature that purports to delve on the serious questions of rupture/resistance reveals very little guidance, to me at any rate, on the actual content and the implications of ‘rupture’ and Becoming, as envisaged. Instead, what we find, in abundance, is largely empty posturing. We turn to Douzinas again as an example. As we have already seen, for Douzinas, the ‘age of revolution’ is pregnant with a return to original promises, a return to Europe as (the) Idea. And for this purpose “[o]nly a *democratic counter-power* can initiate *radical change* in conditions of late capitalism and parliamentary democracy. We can call the *constituent power* of the squares, the *sovereignty of being together*, a non-sovereign anomic or *bare sovereignty*.”⁶³ The emphases are mine, to illustrate the kind of meaningless sloganeering that whilst possibly stirring of the soul of those eager for intellectual rousing, actually say very little indeed; what is the ‘radical change’ that is envisaged, and why would it, as such, be ‘radical’?; from what understanding of human beingness is ‘constituent power’ derived as an ontological truth of the ‘democratic counter power’ of ‘being together’?; what does ‘sovereignty’ mean here and why recourse to this philosophical invention?⁶⁴ We observe that whilst the extra-ordinary of the ‘street’ is so fervently exalted, whilst the new in History that this portends is so keenly sought, there is little but circular affirmations of past philosophical inventions of the Western mind in these examples of heroic thinking in contemporary critical philosophy. Worse still is an apparent blindness, the result of either (and both) ignorance and arrogance, to the existential experiences and diverse cosmologies of ‘Other-Beings’, other to the abandoned abject-subject of post-Enlightenment thought. Žizek, that alpha-male of the ‘radical-Left’, serves as a stark example.

⁶³ Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance*, 159-60 (emphases mine). It is interesting to observe (from a non-Eurocentric perspective on ontology) just how revolutionary, how much of a discovery, this idea of ‘being-together’ appears to be in much of recent critical philosophical thought! That being-together defines non-modern, ‘non-historical’ peoples (to use Ashis Nandy’s term) the world over, past and present, somehow registers little in these discoveries of the ‘age of resistance’. For all his bluster, however, Douzinas’ aspirations for the future in the present remain quite rooted in the usual ‘modern’ institutions and processes of state, democracy, party etc., thus his unsparing enthusiasm for Syriza in Greece, which he sees as portending not only the future of the European-Left, but of Greece, of Europe, and by implication of the Idea, presumably, the world; see Costas Douzinas, “Syriza can be the future of Greece, and for Europe too,” *The Guardian*, June 2 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jun/03/syriza-future-greece-europe-radical-left>. A different and non-institutionalised being together however is experienced as a new by the actual ‘disobedients’ in the everydayness of ‘Occupying’; see for example W.J.T. Mitchell, Bernard E. Harcourt and Michael Taussig, *Occupy: Three Inquiries in Disobedience* (Chicago, Uni. of Chicago Press, 2013).

⁶⁴ For discussion on sovereignty as a philosophical invention, and of the implications thereof, see Nayar, “Elusive Subject of Sovereignty.”

Zizek's anguish, frustration, impatience, with the state of the world and its thinking in the present is constantly repeated. As he is utterly dismissive of the European "left liberal morons" and their self-flagellation in "confessing Europe's own sins" and in "humbly accepting the limitations of the European legacy",⁶⁵ Zizek remains dissatisfied with the inadequacies of the uprisings that have so caught the imagination of others:

"[W]e should avoid the temptation simply to admire the sublime beauty of uprisings that are *doomed to fail*. ... What new positive order should replace the old one, once the sublime enthusiasm of the uprising has waned? It is here that we encounter the fatal weakness of the current protests. They express an authentic rage that remains unable to transform itself into even a minimal positive programme for socio-political change. They express a spirit of revolt without revolution."⁶⁶

Zizek continues:

"It is not enough, then, to reject the depoliticized rule of the experts; one must also begin to think seriously about what to propose in place of the predominant economic organization, to imagine and experiment with alternative forms of organization, to search for the germs of the new in the present. Communism is not just or predominantly a carnival of mass protest ... it is also and above all a new form of organization, discipline and hard work."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Zizek, *Dreaming Dangerously*, 44.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 78 (emphasis mine). An obvious question, even as we might agree with Zizek's insistence on more than the 'spirit of revolt', is how Zizek has come to acquire the crystal ball that enables him to see what is or is not doomed to fail?

⁶⁷ Ibid., 82. This said, Zizek is mindful, however, of hasty projections of future (im)possibilities, for he continues:

"However, following a properly dialectical necessity, this urge to *invent* new forms of organization should simultaneously be kept at a distance. What should be resisted at this stage is any hasty translation of the energy of the protest into a set of concrete demands. The protests have created a vacuum – a vacuum in the field of hegemonic ideology, and time is needed to fill this space in a positive fashion." Ibid. (emphasis mine).

It is only possible to square the circle of these two apparently contradictory wisdoms of Zizek if we understand that herein is the space reserved for the ilk of Zizek, to do the work of searching for the "germs of the new in the present", to criticise, to think, to dismiss, to fill that space, that 'vacuum', with "positive content", eventually, indefinitely postponed; thus the Zizekian assumption of the crystal ball, to sit in judgement of the good, the bad and the judged pointless of 'revolt' *qua* revolution. The standards set are indeed high. No accommodation with the 'moronic' appeals to a reclaiming of 'democracy'; at the same time, no concession to the wisdoms of other cultures or the dilution of the essential 'core' of the European legacy. Such is the extra-ordinary, heroic gesture of the radical philosopher. For an interesting, and 'leftist' critique of Zizek's purported radicality and relevance to 'progressive'

Thus, for Žižek:

“The only way out of this dilemma is to abandon the entire paradigm of “resistance to a *dispositif*”: the idea that, while a *dispositif* determines the networks of the Self’s activity, it simultaneously opens up a space for the subject’s “resistance,” for its (partial and marginal) undermining and displacement of the *dispositif* itself. The task of emancipatory politics lies elsewhere: not in elaborating a proliferation of strategies of “resisting” the dominant *dispositif* from marginal subjective positions, but in thinking about the modalities of a possible radical rupture in the dominant *dispositif* itself.”⁶⁸

Wonderful stuff! The problem however is that Žižek shows no signs that he might recognise such a rupture of the *dispositif* if it were to stare him square in the face.⁶⁹ Žižek’s reading of the ‘ambiguous’ nature of the rebellion of the Zapatista communities in Chiapas, Mexico, illustrates this well:

“we encounter here the same ambiguity: are these autonomous spaces [reclaimed by the Zapatista communities] germs of the organization-to-come of the entire society, or *just* phenomena emerging in the crevices and gaps in the social order? Marcos’s formulation that the Zapatistas are not interested in the Revolution but, rather, in a revolution that makes revolution possible is deeply true, but nonetheless profoundly ambiguous. Does this mean that the Zapatistas are a “Cultural Revolution” laying the foundation for the *actual* political revolution ... or does it mean that they should remain *merely* a site of

political action; see Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey, “The Ticklish Subject? Žižek and the Future of Left Radicalism,” *Thesis Eleven* 80, no. 1 (2005): 94-107.

⁶⁸ Žižek, *Dreaming Dangerously*, 106-07.

⁶⁹ Of a very different ilk to Žižek, but equally, and blindly arrogant in the assertion of wisdom is Seyla Benhabib; for example in criticising Hardt’s and Negri’s enthusiasm for the ‘multitude’ (which in itself is a worthy engagement), Benhabib finds no discomfort in making the following sweeping assertions:

“[T]he multitude, Hardt’s and Negri’s revolutionary subject, is not the citizen. The multitude is not even the carrier of popular sovereignty since it lacks the drive towards the constitutionalization of power, which has been the desiderata of all popular movements since the American and French revolutions. ... Theorists of the multitude seem to confuse politics with carnival. Only transnational institutions can build permanent structure to counteract the forces of empire.”

Seyla Benhabib, “Twilight of Sovereignty or the Emergence of Cosmopolitan Norms? Rethinking Citizenship in Volatile Times,” *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 1 (2007): 29; this advocacy for ‘cosmopolitan norms’ reads as little more than an exercise in idealisations, a wish-list for a nicer, kinder world, if only the leaders would heed the wise advice of Benhabib.

resistance, a corrective to the existing power (not only without the aim to replace it but without the aim to organize conditions in which this power will disappear)?”⁷⁰

The arrogance, and ignorance, implicit in this statement is simply dumbfounding. That, perhaps, it is the rupture of the *‘dispositif’*, of the very structure of meaning itself, that is at the heart of the Zapatista’s refusal – what Mignolo terms the ‘theoretical revolution’ – is entirely lost on Zizek as he sits in judgement on the future of ‘revolution’, of ‘Truth itself.’⁷¹

Zizek is no doubt entertaining. However, from a decolonial perspective which does not still cling on fervently to the moronic faith in the ‘lost causes’ of a mythical “European legacy”,⁷² Zizek’s Eurocentrism results in a negation of imagination itself, one which being fixed to some fantastical Truth-Event, is incapable precisely to see beyond the diagram, the *dispositif*, of coloniality. That the rupture of the ‘dispositif’ involves precisely the sacred cows of the ‘Enlightenment’ tradition of ontology/epistemology is in turn precisely what such ‘radical’ thinking cannot, or will not, contemplate.⁷³

We contrast guru Zizek’s notion of the ‘actual political revolution’ – and we await to know what is meant by this of course – with the path of ‘living’ (rather than death) that was chosen by the communities of the ‘Zapatistas’ (and the very many actual communities around the world that live their struggles for life); and here we see the essence of the ordinary that is the radical decolonial rupture, rooted in the materialities of life (and death) of embodied beings as opposed to those of reified (universal) ‘subjects’:

“rather than dedicating ourselves to training guerrillas, soldiers, and squadrons, we developed education and health promoters, who went about building the foundations of autonomy that today amaze the world.

⁷⁰ Slavoj Zizek, *In Defence of Lost Causes* (London: Verso, 2008), 310 (emphasis mine).

⁷¹ See Walter Mignolo, “The Zapatista’s Theoretical Revolution: Its Historical, Ethical, and Political Consequences,” *Review* 25, no. 3 (Utopian Thinking, 2002). I would stress more than the ‘theoretical’ and the ‘epistemic’ that dominates Mignolo’s engagement with the ‘decolonial’, the ontological-material delinking of being; this needs further emphases in decolonial thought and writings I believe.

⁷² It is also noteworthy that the actual historical veracity of the grand postulates of universal emancipation supposedly at the core of the ‘lost causes’ of Eurocentrism, is little substantiated with material evidence – mere repetition of the grand claims of the philosophical inventions (and their harking back to the Greek, Roman and Judeo-Christian roots) is deemed sufficient.

⁷³ A similar point is made by Harcourt by way of response to Zizek’s criticisms of the Occupy Movement; see Bernard E. Harcourt, “Political Disobedience,” in *Occupy: Three Inquiries in Disobedience*, eds. W.J.T. Mitchell, Bernard E. Harcourt and Michael Taussig (Chicago: Uni, of Chicago Press, 2013), 45-91.

Instead of constructing barracks, improving our weapons, building walls and trenches, we built schools, hospitals and health centers; improving our living conditions.

Instead of fighting for a place in the Pantheon of individualized deaths of those from below, we chose to construct life.”⁷⁴

This is but a simple articulation of the concerns of the *home*, of convivial and socially-rooted ‘beings’ actually living in the world. In articulating these everyday actions of ‘choosing life’ – not in some beautiful future to-come but in the very uncertainties and struggles in the present – at the same time is expressed the most profound substance of decoloniality; Subcomandante Marcos continued, in his ‘final communique’ to stress this, the ordinary, its radicality rooted in the lives of the ordinary:

“And the most important [change]: the change in thinking: from revolutionary vanguardism to ‘rule by obeying’; from taking Power Above to the creation of power below; from professional politics to everyday politics; from the leaders to the people; from the marginalisation of gender to the direct participation of women; from the mocking of other to the celebration of difference. ... Personally, I don’t understand why thinking people who affirm history is made by the people get so frightened in the face of an existing government of the people where ‘specialists’ are nowhere to be seen.”⁷⁵

Thus is the work of decoloniality in all its everyday, messy, mundane materiality: to choose life over death, to regenerate socialities and cultures of being, to re-member human-beingness. In these already present struggles of the social majorities are ways of being-otherwise the living experiments of decoloniality.

The ‘hard work’ of creating new forms of organisations (Zizek), the daily manoeuvres of unworking sovereign power (Wall), we might understand are less matters of the ‘strategies’ of resistance and more the normal and (extra)ordinary matters of survival, solidarity and regeneration. These are indeed matters of the home, as a location of decolonial rupture, before and after the thrill of the street comes to be and passes. Here ‘resistance’, ‘rupture’, the quest for a rebirth of History etc., become less spectacular, less heroic, but extraordinary nevertheless.

⁷⁴ Marcos, “Between Light and Shadow”, final communique, May 24 2014, *Enlace Zapatista*, <http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2014/05/27/between-light-and-shadow/>.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Moving our attention and focus back from the reified, abandoned, ‘subject’-being-ness of radical political-legal philosophy to the embodied ground of the thought of beings other-wise in the commons of the everyday, we see that this means the very material and existential matters of eating, learning, healing, playing, dreaming, dancing, even shitting, in other words, of ‘living’, in living communities of solidarity and hope.⁷⁶ This quite simply is what decoloniality boils down to, and here lies the radicality or otherwise of ‘ruptural’ thinking. As a matter both of philosophical and materialist correction, therefore, this entails overcoming the negation of Already-(Other-)Being at the altar of individualised subjectification and commodification (as public-citizen/private-consumer). What this means in existential terms is the re-membering of communities and socialities other-wise to those prescribed by the orthodoxies of contractualism and permitted market/commodity-based relationships of exchange (as producer/consumer). More than a delinking from epistemological coloniality, decolonial rupture pertains to what Wynter terms the ‘descriptive statement’ of the human – the very ontological assumptions of human-being-ness – that informs post-Enlightenment, colonial-modern subject-beingness.⁷⁷ Thus, in the materiality of the ordinary in this sense lies the extraordinary resilience of communities who, regardless of the presumed totality of colonial philosophical-political construction of (b)ordered subjectification past and present, built, and continue to build “the foundations of autonomy that today amaze the world”, those who, against the desires and blessings of ‘sovereigns’, “built schools, hospitals and health centers” to improve their living conditions, “chose to construct life”, outside of the embrace of ‘biopolitical care’, refused to ‘be’ what they were assigned to be in spaces, both geographical and cosmo-philosophical, remaining other-wise than ascribed and enforced. Simply put, this is how, largely invisible, and in the margins, are lived actual ‘horizontal’ and autonomous lives that are resistant and creative.⁷⁸ And in this resilience of the ‘ordinary’ lies the radicality of the decolonial consciousness and

⁷⁶ See Esteva and Prakash, *Grassroots*, for accounts of struggles of regenerate the ‘commons’ of convivial being-together. Also, for a discussion of the ‘logic of the commons’ against that of ‘development’; see Gustavo Esteva, Salvatore Babones and Philipp Babcicky, *The Future of Development: A Radical Manifesto* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2013). For long available critiques of the sacred cows of (colonial-)modern constructions of being-ness, see the various works of Ivan Illich; see for example, Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (Marion Boyars, 1995); Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (Marion Boyars, 2001); and Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health* (Random House, 1988). Literature that reveal such a ‘pluriverse’ of being-ness from the ‘exteriors’ of mainstream philosophy, abounds, telling of struggles of decolonisation that exceed the limits of possibility so elusive to the critical ‘Western’ philosopher. Strikingly, such works are seldom regarded as anything more than narratives of the exotic to the real content of philosophy. It is telling that these many examples of Other-Being are often dismissed as ‘romantic’ and ‘impractical’ in the real world of states, globalised economic relations, transnational corporate power etc. – this in itself is revealing of the extent to which the reification of the ‘modern’ categories of the possible have colonised the imaginations of the critical mind.

⁷⁷ Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality.”

⁷⁸ For an excellent account of ‘horizontalidad’ as a living and ever-changing, ever-vibrant praxis of the ordinary rather than the spectacular content of ‘revolution’; see Sitrin, *Everyday Revolutions*.

imagination, in the everyday creativity of Being-other-wise. Once we understand this ordinary wisdom – which we can rest assured does not quite require the critical philosopher’s learned elaborations of ‘strategies of resistance/rupture’ for affirmation or certitude – then we might begin seeing, and learning, ourselves, from the extraordinariness of ordinary being that define the decolonial actualities of the world’s social majorities. The question then is what do *we* make of such a realisation as we philosophise rupture.

Rupturing Philosophy and the Philosopher.

An underlying ontology of abandonment informs Eurocentric readings of extra-ordinary becoming, and it continues to haunt radical post-Enlightenment efforts to rescue the ‘Idea’ of the historical ‘subject’. This reified abstraction that is the figure of desolation symbolises the (continued) agony of the ‘Western’ mind, unhealed still from the wound of godlessness, betrayed by the promised land of Modernity. Appear Kafka’s ‘man from the country’, awaiting by the gate of Law in perplexity and longing: such a figure condemned to meaningless and perpetual abandonment perfectly personifies the horrifying spectre for the critical philosopher; indeed we might suggest that it is precisely the abandoned philosopher, waiting by the gates of the promise of History that the ‘man from the country’ actually represents!⁷⁹ From such despair is hope sought to be resurrected. Despite the repeated efforts to reinvent the glorious ‘revolution’ that birthed the ‘Enlightened’ subject, this is a pathetic origins for thinking; the abandoned subject, the poor soul from the country, in all the various accounts and interpretations of Kafka’s protagonist, has no life, no laughter, no love, no embodiment, no memory, no materiality, rather it is the very desolation of the subject that serves as the origins of thinking-Being amongst philosophers. No wonder then that critical philosophers of the street find themselves bereft of an understanding of the ‘home’ as rich ontological locations of resistance, regeneration, knowledge, life.

The coloniality of Being that is perpetuated through such a closure of ontology results in the philosophical non-cognisance of the truth of the ‘social majorities’; the embodied men and women ‘from the country’ worldwide live otherwise than the public-political lives of abandonment and eternal-waiting, in lives rather of belonging and conviviality, in locations of

⁷⁹ For an interesting reading and discussion of Kafka’s, *Before the Law*, and the significance of the (b)order, see Henk van Houtum, “Waiting Before the Law: Kafka on the Border,” *Social & Legal Studies* 19, no. 3 (2010).

embodied experiences of dangerous thought and hope, notwithstanding their everyday of inflicted suffering. Such are the ways of ‘radical exteriority’ i.e. ways of being that negate the negation of Totality.⁸⁰ The obsession with the extra-ordinary event and of the emergent subject thus Be-come, informed as it is by an ontologic-epistemology of abandoned Non-Being, does precisely the opposite of re-membling the imaginary of both the actual and of the possible. By its reification of the diagrammatic structure and processes of coloniality, Eurocentric philosophies, even if of the ‘critical’ inclination, operate by a fixing of Being-Becoming within a vectoral, uni-directional and monistic ontologic-epistemology that negates the multiplicities of presents and possible futures of human being-ness through its asserted universal truisms. To put it bluntly, the philosopher of spectacular ‘ruptural’ Becomings remains a colonising and colonised philosopher, shackled still to an invented figure of the abandoned, reified, subject. This philosophical invention might have served a particular historic and political function in the construction of ‘European’ consciousness (as it negated the colonial Other), but it serves the interests of decoloniality very little. Indeed, what is required instead, rather than a philosophy of rupture – that holy grail of contemporary critical philosophical quests – is a rupture of ‘philosophy’ itself.⁸¹

Thus I suggest the perspectival change, a decolonial correction. Rather than seeking out life (in its extraordinariness) to conform to some pre-figured philosophical category of extra-ordinary subject-becoming/being, a decolonial perspective would learn from the (extra)ordinary struggles of people from which to demythologise the ontologic-epistemologies of ‘white ignorance’. Two tasks are urgent. First a dismantling of the foundational architecture of post-Enlightenment diagrammatic philosophical structures (and thus, the normalities of ‘political’ (b)orderings), and secondly, an inversion of the decolonial interrogation upon our self-subject-beingness.

⁸⁰ See Nayar, “The Philosopher’s Elusive Subject.”

⁸¹ I don’t mean by this the sort of ‘liberation’ work undertaken by Enrique Dussel in developing his ‘Philosophy of Liberation’ – Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. Aquilina Martinez and Christine Morkovsky (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985) – whilst this is indeed an interesting re-viewing of the points of origin and the relationalities of thought that corrects the purported universalism of Eurocentrism, my discomfort with the ‘Philosophy of Liberation’ is that it retains still a universalist assumption of the ontology of being-becoming even as it sets out to be thought from the locations of the oppressed. My intention in elaborating a rupture of philosophy is less ambitious in universalist terms, and somewhat more in terms of asserting the radicality of Already-(Other-)Being; it is not to counterpose a philosophy of the oppressed to that of domination but to suggest a rupture of the philosophical categories of being-becoming themselves that I am concerned with. This is less an attempt to claim an extraordinary decolonial philosophy to sit alongside and in opposition to colonial philosophies of subjectification than to direct philosophical work to the decolonial radicality of the ordinary.

With respect the former, we begin by acknowledging the utter invention of the foundational categories of post-Enlightenment ontologic-epistemology. This involves the de-reification of such sacraments as ‘sovereignty’, the ‘subject’, the ‘political’, and with it the underlying conception of a propertied-self that serves as the ontological foundation of colonial-modern (b)orders. The result of such a correction might be that we seek no longer to reclaim some lost humanity from discredited (Enlightenment) institutions of the state (as liberal ‘reformers’ are inclined to do), nor to reclaim some Evental-Truth to mythologised Becomings that would transform/return ‘political-sovereignty’ and subjectivity (as are the inclinations of so-called radicals), but to de-name the very assumed ontological categories themselves. The point is simply this: a decolonial correction would begin the critical task of thinking against norm-ality, against the ‘diagram’, by taking, as the philosophical point of departure, the (extra)ordinary refusals of the ‘social majorities’ to be-subject. For this, we must first understand that indeed the (extra)ordinary peoples of the world are less colonised by the *‘dispositif’*, less totalised by the colonial-modern diagram, than we might assume, than we might ourselves be. Thus the task of the ‘critical’ philosopher is less one to educate ‘them’, out there, with our insurrectionary wisdom, but more, first and foremost, to enable an unlearning, ours included.⁸²

This connects to the latter implication of a decolonial correction of philosophy, one that is perhaps somewhat more discomfiting to the philosopher.

The tendency to think the spectacular extra-ordinary event of ‘becoming’ reveals an (heroic) obsession to contemplate, even if not to deliver, ‘emancipation/liberation’, howsoever envisaged. However, such thinking of the extra-ordinary is a deflected-thinking. The thinker thinks the ‘world’ out there, projecting thoughts and imaginations for liberated futures to an external realm of the ‘problem’. This is a ‘liberation’ of the ‘other’ from structures and process of the ‘world’ as a grand *idea*. Thus is the ‘event’ spoken of and the extra-ordinary read in certain moments, ‘epistemic insurrections’ and ‘strategies of resistance’ envisioned, all to transform the ‘world’, whilst the ordinary moments and the locations of the thinker-in-the-world, of the existential implicatedness of the professional(ised) philosopher of liberation, is excused the urgency of liberation, absented the ontology of colonisation and subjugation, denied the embodiment of subjugation itself. Jose Medina exemplifies such a position of self-important deflection:

⁸² An excellent guide is Madhu Suri Prakash and Gustavo Esteva, *Escaping Education: Living as Learning within Grassroots Cultures*, 2nd ed. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008).

“The critical task of the scholar and the activist is to resurrect subjugated knowledges – that is, to revive hidden or forgotten bodies of experiences and memories – and to help produce insurrections of ‘subjugated knowledges. ... Such insurrections involve the difficult labor of mobilizing scattered, marginalized publics and of tapping into the critical potential of their dejected experiences and memories. ... those subjects by themselves may not be able to destabilize the epistemic *status quo* until they are given a voice at the epistemic table...”⁸³

A clear demarcation of an ‘us’ and ‘them’ prevails in such imaginations of ‘resistance’. The ‘us’ appears not subject to the critical insurrections envisaged; in this, the ‘office’ of the critical thinker, the ‘salary’, the modalities and disciplines of ‘publication’, the ‘conferences’ and networking, the classroom and the commodified programmes of deliverable and delivered ‘knowledge’, the ‘recruitment strategies’ to lure the customers of certified disciplinary knowledges, all of these seldom factor as the ‘world’ of the diagram, as the ‘worlds’ of resistance and liberation are thought and proffered. A glaring omission indeed, and a convenient one; ‘liberation’ sells, competition is fierce, and from a survey of ‘critical ‘literature’ on the matter (published and copyrighted – and the irony of this is quite staggering), the market is healthy, with the ‘producers’ of ‘liberation’-thought ever more creative in their manufacturing enterprises; that such spaces for ‘radical’ thought and (permitted) enactments are themselves part of the ‘dispositif’ is seldom critically registered. In other words, it would appear that the thinker-thinking-liberation is the one ‘subject’ in and of the world that does not figure in critical theories of subjugation/liberation, whose everyday ordinary world does not confront the demands of ‘rupture’.⁸⁴

⁸³ Medina, “Toward a Foucaultian Epistemology,” 11. Such assumptions of critical work, we see, is based on a clear demarcation of an ‘us’ and ‘them’, whereby the us appears not subject to the critical insurrections envisaged. For similar assumptions of critical responsibility to think ‘possibilities’ of resistance, see Zevnik, “Sovereign-less Subject.”

⁸⁴ I consider this an inexcusable abdication of the responsibility to think – to change the world even – necessary for any purported engagement with thinking against the norm-alities of the present and towards other futures. I am often asked by students and colleagues (more by colleagues!), often in exasperation, why I insist on ‘navel-gazing’, by which presumably is meant bringing my engagements with ‘critical’ theory always back to the ordinary existential matters of being ‘what we are’ in our ordinary; consequently, I am usually advised I should cease demanding such tedious scrutiny for more important a role to be played by a ‘critical’ philosopher is think ‘revolution’ and rebellion (out there undertaken by others); it appears that we assume it proper for us to ‘critically’ analyse, interrogate, judge these instances of struggle by others with no sense of embarrassment or shame! Such ‘radical’ work interests me little; liberation, or at least, resistance, as far as I am concerned, really does involve a decolonial untangling of ‘Being’ from the messy (and profoundly socio-cultural) business – and it has come to be very big business indeed – of eating and shitting and working and healing and all the rest of it that make up our – even our – ordinary. It is through the capture, the commodification and biopolitical configuration, of such mundane matters of being that the ‘diagram’ – of care/discipline/punishment/rewards – is internalised. This we might recognise as philosophers of ‘rupture/resistance’. Yet, what is less philosophised about is our place within these ‘diagrams’ of

emplacements/bans, of subjectivities: how do we, critical thinkers who contemplate 'becoming' and 'strategies of rupture/resistance', eat and shit and work and heal? Can we handle the truth of rupture, inoperativity, revolution, even as we parade our radical credentials, as we conduct the business (and business it is too) of our critical intellectual labours?

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Let us be serious; these are indeed serious matters we contemplate. We are so easy in our conjuring up of critical philosophical engagements with the extra-ordinary. And in doing so, we project our visions and contemplations as if the peoples of the worlds, caught up in the diagrams we expose, need our wisdoms for their salvation. This, we think the role of the insurrectionary intellectual. Let us think otherwise for a moment. Let us imagine a possibility that it is us who are the ones utterly colonised, even as we pride ourselves with our endeavours of ‘thinking’ critically,

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our radical outpourings in (permitted spaces and processes of voicings) being just another commodity in a system of exchange where anything can be so. In this account of diagrammatic subjectification, we might begin to learn that the world over, regardless of our parasitic philosophical (even professional) appropriation of ‘resistance’, communities in struggle within the social majorities, in their being – already and other – do indeed live out their ‘strategies of resistance’; theirs is a life non-transfixed to the colonial-modern mythologies of the ‘Enlightenment’, being for better and for worse, non-subjects in precarious and daily struggle. The question is whether we have the capacity so to be decolonial non-subjects of biopolitical care, to ourselves rupture from the diagrams that secures us our ‘places’ in this world of rewards (and punishments) and care, whether we can contemplate that (extra)ordinary possibility of being other-wise. What other reason to think the (extra)ordinary?