# Decolonizing Democracy



*Intersections of Philosophy and Postcolonial Theory*

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For my mother, Nurten Güven, the most courageous, compassionate, and thoughtful person.

*and*

To the memory of my aunt Yüksel Inankur, who had been a second mother and taught me how to think.

# Contents

# Preface

Democracy without Christian values is unthinkable.

—Angela Merkel[1]

1789, 1798: The difference between these two dates is an almost imperceptible reversal. Yet it would not be an exaggeration to say that the entire problematic of this book lies within the logic of this reversal. The first and better known date is that of the French Revolution. It is the historical and conceptual inauguration of modern European political philosophy. Historically, the French Revolution marks the beginning of what Milan Kundera calls "the Grand March" of Europe towards ever more increasing and spreading of freedom and democracy. Conceptually, it marks the triumph of modern European subjectivity as a discourse and its impact on the political sphere.

The year 1798 is the lesser known one. It marks the beginning of Napoleon's colonial expedition to Egypt. The date symbolically represents the conceptual relationship between Europe and what it constitutes as its other. While the French Revolution points to the birth of modern European political thinking, which ostensibly emerged within the geographical and conceptual boundaries of Europe, Napoleon's expedition disrupts this interiority and enacts a reversal or a displacement of this narrative. These two dates inaugurate two distinct conceptual treads that are heterogeneous to each other.

The French Revolution captures the limits of the imagination of Western political thinking. While it is recognized in its historical context as the revolution of the middle class, it constitutes one of the two conceptual limits of contemporary Western political philosophy. The other limit is marked by the ghost(s) of the Holocaust. The conceptual possibilities opened up by the French Revolution are closed off in the twentieth-century totalitarianism, and

European political philosophy is trying to come to terms with this problem ever since. Western political philosophers consider the French Revolution either as the beginning or the promise of the proper political unity while they regard the Holocaust as the ultimate political evil.

Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, on the other hand, is what I would call the inauguration of the colonial problematic. Obviously, Napoleon's expedition to Egypt is not the beginning of the European colonialism. However, Edward Said points to Napoleon's expedition to Egypt as a significant turning point in the history of colonialism, because for the first time with this expedition colonial project became "the very model of a truly scientific appropriation of one culture by another, apparently stronger one. For with Napoleon's occupation of Egypt processes were set in motion between East and West that still dominate our contemporary cultural and political perspectives."[2]

Hence, like the French Revolution, the significance of 1798 is not only historical. The problem Napoleon's expedition presents is a conceptual one: the European philosophy that conceptualizes the notion of *the political* from within a unity (of *polis*) is immediately disrupted and problematized by this relationship to the outside. This step to the outside is not simply a historical contingency that can be assimilated into the political system, but rather requires a different way of thinking of the political that I call the postcolonial disruption.[3] However, these two conceptual threads are not necessarily opposed to each other as a binary. Rather, the 1798 expedition provides the inspiration for a different historic-conceptual movement, which is heterogeneous to the movement of modern Western political philosophy. Conceptually, I imagine 1798 as a *disruption* of the movement of the Hegelian dialectic that determines the shape of the movement of the European philosophical thinking.

The contemporary problems of democracy can only be understood if such a conceptual movement is recognized that is heterogeneous to the movement of European politico-philosophical spirit. Today's dominant democratic discourse is based on an understanding of the political that is in line with Hegelian dialectic. Democracy as a European ideal as well as political imagination "moves" within the Hegelian dialectic of incorporating its other, by first defining it as "nondemocratic" and consequently by incorporating it into itself, by transforming the identity of the other. Wendy Brown identifies this dialectical dimension:

> Now what if instead of defending politics and democracy against Nietzsche's critiques, which most democrats, radical or liberal, are understandably wont to do, we allowed these critiques the force of a partial and provisional truth—a discomforting, undemocratic truth and attempted to discern how they might enrich democratic political projects? "Whatever doesn't kill me makes me stronger," Nietzsche taunts, perhaps providing a clue about how criticism might invigorate rather than demolish its object.[4]

Nietzsche's critiques of democracy are "undemocratic," so they are allowed a partial and provisional truth; in fact the point here is to incorporate the truth of these critiques into the movement of democracy. Brown's suggestion does not usually happen historically because democratic regimes almost always protect themselves undemocratically and with violence. However, even if democracy could invigorate itself, as Brown suggests, by incorporating the critiques from its other (undemocratic) the conceptual problem of democracy would not be resolved, precisely because these critiques of democracy are labeled as "the other," "the opposite" of democracy (i.e., the undemocratic). This Hegelian dialectical approach to its other as the opposite, or negation, is precisely the problem and tyranny[5] of democracy. What if, continuing with Brown's invocation, the critique of democracy was not reducible to "undemocratic," what if, instead, it were a postcolonial disruption of this Hegelian dialectic?

For me, the concept of *the postcolonial* indicates the necessity of disrupting this Hegelian structure. The aim of this work is to demonstrate that the concept of democracy is the culmination of Western European philosophical thinking and its conceptual problems can only be properly understood if they are thought within a postcolonial framework. Accordingly, this work tries to demystify and decolonize the concept and the discourse of democracy by exposing its paradoxical and tyrannical nature and to demonstrate that it is the continuation of a (neo)colonial world order.

I recognize that there is perhaps an inherent contradiction within a work that proposes to engage in a radical disruption of the concept of democracy. Is the very idea of writing, opening oneself to be judged by the others not a quintessential democratic presupposition? Do I not, in other words, presuppose the democratic dictum in the very act of my writing, all the while trying to articulate the possibility of disrupting the idea of democracy? In addition to this initial presupposition, the very idea of writing, the attempt to communicate also requires that I write in a way that it is accessible to a populace in a democratic way. This is not to say that the audience of this work has to be democratic, but that I have to communicate in a democratic way (i.e., in a way that is accessible to the most, if not all, of the populace). In other words, the immediate expectation from a work is its comprehensibility, and the demand of comprehensibility is the result of a democratic imperative. We expect a work to be immediately comprehensible, clear and intelligible, and take a position. Yet what happens if one is trying to problematize this desire for instant clarity? How can one articulate such a problem in a comprehensible fashion? The desire for immediate comprehensibility is the political and intellectual effect of democratic discourse that I will try to explore in this book.

The democratic demand from intellectual activity has a peculiar impact on it. Democracy demands and promises to deliver a world that is possible to

navigate. Therefore, to disrupt democratic discourse is in a sense an act of resisting the desire for simplification and for immediate intelligibility of the world. Democratic politics and its impact on intellectual activity are structured by a capitalist "market-model" of ideas. In such a model, competing ideas are envisioned to occupy a homogeneous space simultaneously. They are expected to be equally accessible to a rational subject occupying the central position of the consumer. These ideas compete with each other through the medium of common intelligibility. As a result of this competition, the idea that defends itself the best survives and contains the present form of "truth." This model of truth is problematic for various philosophical reasons. However, it is immediately clear that such a model contributes to the democratization of the intellectual space. This hegemony of democratic discourse on intellectual space takes two forms: first, the defense and promise of democracy (in one form or another) is the common convergence point of almost all contemporary intellectual projects. Second, democracy demands all intellectual projects to compete at the level of common intelligibility. A project, or political idea is accepted only if it is in principle marketable and commonly accessible to most, if not all, consumers. Evidently, this is a difficult problem to escape. As I said above, there seems to be an inevitable democratic impulse in the very act of writing. One writes and thinks in order to be present to others. Yet, what if this inevitable presence of the other also functions against democracy rather than for it? In other words, is it not equally possible to imagine the act of writing as a resistance to democracy?

Jacques Derrida raises the relationship between this democratic desire for intelligibility and writing (thinking) at various places in his corpus. In the opening pages of "Force of Law" Derrida invokes a certain duty to address himself to the audience in English: "If I want to make myself heard and understood, it is necessary that I speak your language."[6] This is one of the senses of what he considers to be his "duty" in speaking.

> It is more just to speak the language of the majority, especially when, through hospitality, it grants speech to the stranger or foreigner. We are referring here to a law of which it is hard to say whether it is a rule of decorum, politeness, the law of the strongest, or equitable *law of democracy*.[7] (my emphasis)

What Derrida addresses here is similar to the problem I am trying to articulate. He makes it clear that the question of intellectual activity is not separable from the question of democracy. However, Derrida does not extend his observations to the problem of how the intellectual space is colonized by appeals to democracy. This is because, as I will show, Derrida himself participates in the colonization of the future by democratic discourse. Therefore, I will extend the critique of democracy to what Derrida calls "democracy-to-come."

Wendy Brown articulates the relationship between theoretical activity and democratic politics in a different way. Even though Brown recognizes that democracy is profoundly anti-theoretical, she says that it still needs to be theorized because democracy "paradoxically requires theory, requires an antithesis to itself in both the form and substance of theory, if it is to satisfy its ambition to produce a free and egalitarian order."[8] Despite the fact that this is an important observation, namely that democracy requires nondemocratic elements such as theory to be "healthy," for Brown, theory ultimately serves the ends of democracy even if democracy rejects theory. Of course, if one's aim is to bring about democracy as Brown's is, this relationship between theory and democracy is acceptable. Yet what if one's aim is not to save democracy but theory,[9] what if one is trying to deconstruct democracy itself? My claim here is that there is a democratic impulse that affects theory in the sense that there is a demand on theory to be immediately intelligible. The most widespread marketability of ideas is not only the economic demand of capitalism, but also the political demand of democracy. In this case, one cannot be simply satisfied with a tension between theory and democracy. One needs to study the implications of this tension for both sides.

The discourse of democracy makes it almost unavoidable that one promises democracy within the political sphere. The hegemony of democracy manifests itself in the form of colonization of the future. Democratic discourse always proposes democracy to be without alternatives. This is the very manifestation of the tyranny of democratic discourse. The main problem for the political left today is that it is incapable of engaging in a critique of democracy. As a result, the main critique of democracy comes from the right wing and conservative political ideologies, which leave a certain ideal of democracy completely intact even if this right-wing ideology might not be committed to democracy in practice. The aim of this book is to confront the tyranny of democracy from what one would call a "political left." In other words*, my contention is that one of the reasons for the decline of the left-wing thinking today is its inability to engage in a critique of the concept of democracy*.

While conceptual problems of this book emerge from multiple philosophical works, the more immediate existential impetus for it came from a cultural, historical, and personal experience in Turkey. Belonging to a polity, which tries to negotiate the intersection of a "non-Western" Islamic society, and a democratic form of government informs this work in multiple ways. The merits and problems of democracy have been an integral part of everyday public discourse in Turkey for a long time. Democracy has always been questioned on a daily basis, not only as a political system but also as a concept. While it is not assumed that Turkey "possesses" democracy, the concept itself functions in a complex and paradoxical way both as a goal to be achieved and a value that is imposed from without. Democracy is a part of

a larger project of Westernization in Turkish history. However, the relationship between Westernization and democracy is a complex one. Modern Turkey was explicitly conceived as a project of modernization. Since the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkey implemented a number of reforms, which were not only political, but also cultural. Yet a democratic form of government did not accompany such cultural, social, and political transformations, even though the term democratization was sometimes used in connection with the process of Westernization. The process of democratization was initiated in the mid-1940s, more than twenty years after the foundation of the republic. However, the process of democratization did not smoothly supplement the process of Westernization as expected. Democracy came into conflict with the reforms of modernization, most notably with the secularization of the social, political, and cultural life. Hence, self-determination exposed several conflicts among the different Western democratic-liberal values. Secularization of the state, the adoption of the Latin alphabet, and a ban on certain articles of clothing were all implemented within the general desire for Westernization. Inevitably this project produced its critics and dissidents, the most forceful of which is Islamists. Islamism resisted Westernization not only on the basis of it being foreign and alien, but also because it was not universalistic enough. In the eyes of Islamists, Westernization was a culturally specific project, which did not have the global appeal of Islam. Yet, from its inception, the modernization of Turkey was not conceived simply as Westernization, but also as globalization. That is to say, the founders of modern Turkey argued that Turkey's cultural, political, and religious transformation was necessary for its participation in the world political economy, sidestepping the potential tension between globalization and Westernization. The critics of the West regard globalization in its liberal democratic form as a fundamentally culturally specific Western process. It is also crucial to emphasize that there is a similar desire for globalization within Islamist discourses. One should not assume that there is only one globalization that is happening outside of Muslim societies that then has an impact on them. Such an approach fails to see the local demands for (as well as resistances to) globalization in Muslim societies.

No doubt these tensions between globalization and identity exist in other societies, yet the situation of Turkey is culturally, geo-politically, and politically idiosyncratic. Turkey is the only predominantly Muslim country (99 percent of its population) with a long tradition of democracy. It lies geographically both in Europe and Asia, between the Western world and the Middle East. It is located where the roots of Western civilization lie (Asia Minor) while containing the capital of what once was the greatest enemy of Europe (the Ottoman Empire). However, the most striking element of belonging to a double civilization is its cultural and intellectual life. In this kind of double consciousness one not only observes the most interesting clash of

the global and the local, but also the painful intellectual effort to reconcile the Occident and the Orient, the religious and the secular. Therefore, Turkey is a unique place to observe the paradoxical nature of democracy.

In this work I try to show that the globalization of democracy has to be theorized as a post/neo-colonial and post/neo-imperialist phenomenon. Post-colonial studies enables us to understand the relationship between the Western philosophical tradition and the Western colonization of the globe. There is, therefore, a parallel between the recent critiques of the Western colonization and the critiques of Western philosophy. Consequently, any critique of globalization requires an understanding of the philosophical presuppositions of modernity. The critiques of globalization have two premises: (1) globalization is the political, economic, and cultural product of the Western intellectual tradition, and (2) there is a growing critique of this Western tradition from within the West itself. Those who resist globalization take these Western criticisms seriously, and engage in a critique of the Western ideals that sustain globalization. Therefore, to understand the functioning of democracy today requires a rigorous, yet unorthodox, analysis of the philosophical presuppositions that underlie it. Thereby one can see that the same philosophical foundations that supported modern colonialism also support the spread of democracy. Hence, global democratization is not, as it first appears, the end of colonialism, but its new phase.

To engage in a critique or even deconstruction of democracy does not mean that one cannot defend certain values, which are associated with democracy such as freedom and equality. Moreover, the fact that democracy has philosophical and political problems does not render it necessarily inferior to nondemocratic systems. However, an uncritical affirmation of democracy under all circumstances, makes us overlook meaningful distinctions among the so-called democratic values, and renders us incapable of realizing how democratic practices turn into the very nondemocratic procedures that they fight against.

In 1966, Martin Heidegger was interviewed by the German weekly magazine *Spiegel*. This interview was not published until after Heidegger's death in 1976. Heidegger makes two remarks in this interview that are suggestive and illustrative of the problem that I am trying to articulate here.

> In the meantime, during the past thirty years, it should have become clearer that the planetary movement of modern technology is a power whose great role in determining history can hardly be overestimated. A decisive question for me today is how a political system, and which political system, can be assigned to today's technological age at all, I have no answer to this question. I am not convinced that it is democracy. [10]

While commenting on this passage in his *Heidegger, On Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*, Reiner Schürmann concentrates on the

nature of Heidegger's admitted ignorance.[11] Schürmann wonders whether it is sincere or feigned, but claims that in any case this question cannot be answered through a reference to the consciousness of Heidegger, the person. Schürmann associates this question with Heidegger's idea of the unthought. "The greater the work of a thinker all the richer is what remains unthought in that work, that is, what emerges for the first time thanks to it as having not yet been thought."[12] The status of the unthought in Heidegger's thinking is difficult to explain. However, Schürmann is right in thinking that this question is related to the notion of democracy, in a way that is not accessible to Heidegger.

The interesting aspect of Heidegger's diagnosis of modern society here is that while he does not consider democracy the adequate political response to modern technology, he does not regard it as an integral part of the rise of modern technology either. If democracy were the only possible political system that *enables* the planetary movement of modern technology, the question whether it can be assigned to modern technology as a political response would be meaningless. Yet Heidegger considers the problem primarily in terms of modern technology and he does not take into account that democracy is actually the problem itself. In other words, while Heidegger does not see democracy as a solution, he does not seem to explicitly consider it as the problem either.[13] If he had, he would have explained the ways in which democracy, far from being inadequate, is ironically the only political system compatible with modern technology.

Responding to Heidegger's critique of modern technology, his interlocutor on behalf of Spiegel remarks: "One could naïvely object to you: What should be come to terms with here? Everything functions. More and more electric power plants are being built. Production is flourishing. People in the highly technological parts of the earth are well provided for. We live in prosperity. What is really missing here?" Heidegger's response (or nonresponse) to this question is a fundamental reversal of our assumption: "Everything functions. That is exactly what is uncanny. Everything functions and the functioning drives us further and further to more functioning, and technology tears people away and uproots them from the earth more and more."[14] Of course, to all pragmatics, including those who saw a parallel between Heidegger and Dewey, such an answer is incomprehensible. How can a solution be a part of the problem? To put it differently, what if democracy itself was the problem in its very functioning? Perhaps the question is not how we can solve the problems of contemporary society by exercising more democracy, but rather how democracy enables certain problems of contemporary society. What if the unthought of our age were the tyranny of democracy? What if the burning question of our age was neither the ontological difference as Heidegger claims, nor the sexual difference, as Irigaray modifies, but rather the tyranny of democracy?

# NOTES

1. "Demokratie ohne christliche Werte undenkbar," *Rhein-Zeitung*, June 11, 2005.

2. Edward Said, *Orientalism: 25th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Vintage, 1994), p. 43. I will return to this passage later in the work.

3. What I mean by "postcolonial disruption" will be clear throughout this work. In general conceptual terms, it is the imagination of the interruption Hegelian dialectic, which I believe defines the structure of democracy as neocolonialism.

4. Wendy Brown, *Politics out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 133.

5. By tyranny, I mean the attempt of democracy to propose itself as the only alternative for political legitimacy.

6. Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law," in *Acts of Religion*, edited by G. Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 232.

7. Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 232.

8. Wendy Brown, *Politics out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 122.

9. I do not use the term "theory" here as a narrow activity engaged by scholars or professionals. But rather "theory" is a particular way of thinking that resists the market conception of ideas.

10. Martin Heidegger, "Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten," *Der Spiegel*, May 31, 1976, pp. 193–219, p. 206. The interview with Rudolf Augstein and Georg Wolff took place on September 23, 1966.

11. Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger, On Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 2.

12. Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund* (Pfullingen: G. Neske, 1957), pp. 123–124, Schürmann, *Heidegger, On Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 2.

13. Of course I am aware of the increasing literature since the mid-1980s on Heidegger's anti-democracy positions. Yet most of these critics do not seriously engage with the content of Heidegger's political thinking, but rather merely ascertain these as problems because of Heidegger's national socialist involvement. One of the most notable exceptions to this trend was Reiner Schürmann.

14. Heidegger, "Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten" p. 206

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# Abbreviations

CD: Mitchell, Timothy. *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*. London: Verso, 2011.

CE: Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

CP: Schmitt, Carl. *The Concept of the Political*. Trans. by George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2007.

CPD: Schmitt, Carl. *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*. Trans. Ellen Kennedy. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1985.

DP: Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1979.

HoS: Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1978.

HSS: Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso, 2001.

M: Plato. *Menexenus* from *Timaeus; Critias; Cleitophon; Menexenus; Epistles*. Trans. Robert Gregg Bury. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929.

PT: Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology*. Ed. George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005.

SM: Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994.

TDP: Mouffe, Chantal. *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso, 2000.

# Introduction

## *The Tyranny of Democracy*

Tyranny consists in the desire of universal power beyond its scope.
Tyranny is the wish to have in one way what can only be had in another.

—Pascal, *Pensées*, Section VI, 332. [1]

During the last days of January 2011, the images of people in Tahrir Square of Cairo filled the screens of virtually every media outlet in the world. In the Western media, the analyses of these demonstrations were mostly superficial and abstract or strategic at best. These usually hasty analyses regarded the Egyptian revolt as part of what was dubbed as the "Arab Spring." Of course, the term is particularly significant as it alludes to 1848 European revolutions and the 1968 Prague Spring. It not only suggests a kind of emergence from the "winter-like" oppression of the previous regime but also attributes a European teleology to the Arab politics. It seemed as if the West was reminiscing the streets of Paris, Prague, and Budapest, in Tahrir Square. These uprisings were not compared to more recent demonstrations in Europe against austerity measures, which were considered to be mostly economic in logic, but rather to the image of "Grand March" of old Europe towards democratization and freedom. One theme that was common to otherwise diverse analyses of the Arab Spring was *democracy*. It was as if the West was watching its past in the other, an attitude with a distinct colonial and narcissistic flair. The Western response to the Arab Spring in general and Egypt in particular was self-congratulatory (they are finally becoming democratic like us), patronizing (it will take a long time for them to be democratic), and nervous (democracy might lead to Islamist governments who will be against Western interests). Almost no one, at least in the popular media mentioned,

let alone analyzed, Egypt's colonial history. It became clear, however, Egypt's political destiny was not to be understood as a retracing of a European trajectory, but in terms of a confrontation with its colonial history.

The self-congratulatory tone of democratic discourse concerning the Arab Spring was hardly surprising because contemporary political and intellectual discourses are almost exclusively dominated by invocations for various forms of democracy. Even the most undemocratic governments and institutions attempt to legitimize themselves by appealing to either democracy or to the possibility of a future democracy. Democracy has become the dogma of our times. In Alain Badiou's words, "democracy is the dominant emblem of contemporary political society."[2] Even when there is a great deal of reflection *on* the role of democracy in politics, its ideality and desirability are almost never questioned. The occasional critiques of democracy mostly take the form of identifying and criticizing the shortcomings and inadequacies of existing democratic regimes. These critiques usually imply that existing regimes cannot adequately display the ideal characteristics of democracy. In this assumption, these ideal characteristics themselves are not questioned, and even in the expression of the shortcomings of these political organizations, the ideals of democracy are implicitly affirmed and strengthened. On the other hand, while one observes that democracy cannot be exported to certain societies, the underlying assumption is that there is something wrong with those nations and societies rather than the principles of democracy themselves. While the Western liberal discourse recognizes that democracy cannot easily be spread by force and from outside, this very recognition affirms the possibility and even necessity that the nondemocratic (or insufficiently democratic) regimes will be able to achieve democracy in the future by an internal development. Consequently, such critiques, far from being a genuine questioning of the concept of democracy, are ways of affirming the ideals of democracy.

The purpose of this work is to question democracy both as an intellectual discourse and as a political project. My scope will not be limited to present forms of inadequate democracies, but rather I will concentrate on democracy as an idea, or set of ideals, including the concept of "democracy-to-come." Mostly the problem of democracy is considered to be that it is not sufficiently widespread around the world. My contention is that the problem of democracy is not that we do not sufficiently approximate to what might be considered a regulative idea of democracy, but rather that the idea of democracy itself is tyrannical, in the sense that it expresses a desire for universality beyond its scope. The reason that we cannot conceptualize an alternative to democracy as a political system is that we do not sufficiently understand or acknowledge the intellectual and philosophical problems associated with democracy. In this work I will attempt to discuss some of these problems. I will start with the observation that democracy presupposes most of the metaphys-

ical assumptions and contradictions of modern philosophical thinking concerning the human subject and the structure of the world.

Most philosophers who are otherwise critical of human subjectivity still accept democracy as the only possible conceptual possibility for politics. My surprise here is similar to that of Lefort who asks in *Democracy and Political Theory*: "I am, as I said, surprised: how can they handle ontological differences, with such subtlety, vie one another in exploiting the combined resources of Heidegger, Lacan, Jakobson and Levi-Strauss, and then fall back upon such crass realism when the question of politics arises?"[3] Yet, unlike what Lefort implies, the problem is not only being blind to the problems of Nazism and Stalinism, but rather to the problems of the very idea of democracy. This book tries to put the "tyranny" of democracy into question. Why is it that as soon as we open our mouths we promise democracy? In other words, why is it that democracy does not seem to have an alternative, both as a political system and as a discursive practice? I will try to address these questions of democracy in many different senses of the term such as a political system, a cultural conviction or project, a philosophical ideal.

Such a radical questioning of democracy, including the promise of an ideal democracy in the future is necessary, because *democracy today functions as a global, political, and intellectual form of colonization*. In the contemporary political world order, democracy is the intellectual and political value that enables and justifies the neo-colonial globalization. To put it differently, democracy is the political, social, and cultural framework of the globalization and homogenization of the world. Yet this is not a perversion or an inadequate application of the form of democracy, but rather its very realization. Intellectually, democracy functions as a tool to colonize the future of thinking as well as the political imagination. It is presented as the only viable political and intellectual project. There is rarely any (political) philosopher who does not subscribe to one form of democracy. Democracy occupies and colonizes the political space that is supposed to be open to the future. By appropriating the space of openness democratic discourse always tries to escape the possibility of contamination. It purports to never fully be appropriated by any specific project. It is projected as an open-ended, not determined infinite idea, an idea that escapes every determination, or rather has the possibility of being infinitely determined. To put it playfully, the expression of "but that is not democracy" is the perpetual defense of democratic discourse against any form of criticism. It is this idea of democracy that also underlies Jacques Derrida's conception of democracy-to-come. Democracy-to-come is not here, it is not present, it will never be present, it is not even *democracy*, and it will never *be* democracy. Thereby, democracy becomes impossible to criticize without being appealed to. One cannot think of an alternative to democracy because democracy occupies the space of thinking

the alternative, it occupies the possibility of any alternative, "alternativity" as such. *This is the tyranny of democracy*.

Democracy is always perceived as the only political alternative for any type of government. As soon as one raises doubt about democracy, the response is either to raise a suspicion of totalitarianism, despotism, elitism, etc., or to indicate the lack of alternatives to democracy. More importantly, democracy is proposed to be the only possible cure for racism, sexism, economic injustice, cultural hegemony, and religious intolerance in society. However, even when one recognizes that these ills exist in democratic societies and nations, one *never* imagines the possibility that these ills exist *because* of democracy and are never going to be eradicated by democracy. Because of this reason there is no strong "leftist" critique of the philosophical problems of democracy and the leftist thinking has no convincing critique of these ills to the extent that it remains uncritically committed to democracy. The possible alternative to democracy is certainly a complicated question. It might be that democracy is the only possible regime that is compatible with capitalism, racism, sexism, and religious intolerance. One cannot adequately speak of alternatives to democracy without understanding the relationship between democracy and structures of contemporary society. The specific focus of this work is to articulate the conceptual relationship between democracy and neo-colonial globalization.

In a well-known passage from *Orientalism* that I mentioned above, Edward Said identifies Napoleon's 1798 expedition to Egypt as a literal, as well as metaphorical origin of the present form of colonialism: "For my purposes here, the keynote of the relationship was set in motion between East and West that still dominate our contemporary cultural and political perspectives."[4] Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, while certainly not the beginning of Western colonization of the Middle East and Africa, represents a specific configuration of it. Unlike the previous colonial invasions, Napoleon wanted to take the whole of Egypt. His preparations were schematic and textual. Said identifies Napoleon's expedition as "the first in a long series of encounters with the Orient in which Orientalist's special expertise was put directly to functional colonial use" (p. 80). Napoleon's ostensible admiration of Islam made it possible for him to "render [Egypt] completely open and make it accessible to European scrutiny" (p. 83). In the words of Fourier, "Napoleon wanted to offer a useful European example to the Orient, and finally also to make inhabitants' lives more pleasant as well as to procure them all the advantages of a perfected civilization."[5] It is this aspect of colonialism that helps us establish the connection between democratization and colonization. Colonialism is neither a simple series of acts of domination, nor an unqualified exploitation, but rather a process and discourse of disciplining, ordering, rendering visible, unveiling, and making comprehensible. Said writes:

> To restore a region from its present barbarism to its former classical greatness; to instruct (for its own benefit) the Orient in ways of the modern West; to subordinate or underplay military power in order to aggrandize the project of glorious knowledge acquired in the process of political domination of the Orient; to formulate the Orient, to give it shape, identity, definition with full recognition of its place in memory, its importance to imperial strategy, and its natural role as an appendage to Europe . . . to establish new disciplines; to divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index, and record everything in sight (and out of sight) . . . these are the features of Orientalist projection . . . itself enabled and reinforced by Napoleon's wholly Orientalist engulfment of Egypt by the instruments of Western knowledge and power. (p. 86)

Colonial power is a much more complex process than domination and exploitation. Similarly, democracy is also a power of disciplining, ordering, rendering visible, and making comprehensible. Thus, the process of democratization (and not its perversion) is an integral part of contemporary neo/postcolonial power. Thus, in order to resist this neo-colonial process, the concept of democracy, as a value, has to be disrupted from this postcolonial perspective.

We should distinguish this disruption from a critique of democracy from a cultural perspective. There is a widely known critique of democracy, which claims that democracy is a Western value and other cultural and religious perspectives including Islamists are somehow incapable or unfit for democracy. Therefore, Western societies are politically superior (more mature compared) to other cultures. The other side of this argument contends that contemporary Western democratic societies exhibit irresponsibly pluralistic, potentially egalitarian yet chaotic characteristics. Therefore, non-Western societies are superior to them. This logic works in two opposite ways: from the perspective of the West it explains the political and economic "inferiority" of other nations. From the perspective of the non-Western countries, it identifies democracy with the West, and hence regards democracy as an "inferior" Western value. Yet ironically, both of these critiques of democracy implicitly affirm the idea of democracy itself. Some non-Western critics claim that their values capture the will of people better than the democratic institutions. Therefore, the argument goes, the West cannot achieve "real democracy" (rule of the people, just rule, etc.) because the Western countries are morally inferior and their commitment to democracy is not genuine. Both of these perspectives (as symmetrical opposites) are problematic in that they do not engage in decolonizing democracy. Thereby, democracy as an idea becomes the dogma of the contemporary discourses in the West as well as in the non-Western world. What is needed instead is a critical understanding of Western political thought with respect to the status of contemporary democracy.

My claim in this book is that Western political imagination is defined by two events, the French Revolution and the Holocaust. Neither of these

"events" should be regarded merely as historical or contingent, but rather they conceptually define the limits of what is thinkable from within a Western political perspective. I argue that the issue of postcolonialism cannot be thought within this framework, or more precisely, since the Western political imagination always operates from an ethnocentric political imagination, it is incapable of considering the concerns of the "non-Western." The difference is not simply concerned with different historical situatedness, contingent differences, neither are they "worldviews" or "ways of life," etc. *The difference concerns a conceptual, theoretical anchorage that determines the limits of what is thinkable*. Obviously, I do not say that this is a cultural given and only those who are born, raised, lived on one side can understand it. Indeed the very idea of colonization undermines such an assumption of cultural specificity. Yet, in contemporary scholarship the desire to rethink the political, and the concept of democracy has usually been associated with a European theoretical commitment. All the thinkers I will discuss in this book take the European political problematique as their starting point. Hence, they are incapable of thinking the issue of democracy from a postcolonial perspective.

My focus is not a "non-Western" critique of democracy. I claim that given the problems associated with globalization and history, it is necessary today to rethink *the political* itself from a postcolonial perspective. European thinkers, I discuss in this book, are theoretically incapable or unwilling to take the postcolonial perspective. This is not because they did not think the problem of the postcolonial, but because they have entrenched in the theoretical framework that enables them to think a notion like the postcolonial in a particular way. The starting point of European political thinking is the problem of the unity of the *polis*. The question of the political always concerns either how to bring the margins closer to the center or how to keep the margins at the margins. The problematic is always that of unity. However, the question of the political has never been thought from the margins. This marginality is not simply a historical, economic, political, cultural inferiority, but rather a theoretical position that is radically different than the European political imagination. It is not the discourse of victims, not the ones of the oppressed etc., but the discourse of difference, that does not *manage* difference, does not, like every single political subject, ask the question of how to construct a unified political field. It is the theoretical space of *resistance*. To characterize this theoretical space, the image of the immigrant as an alien might give a clue. I use the term "immigration" as a theoretical site. Hence, by immigration, I do not simply mean an alien in a foreign society, but rather the idea of occupying the political space as an alien. The space of the immigrant does not think from *within the unity* of society, it does not ask the politico-philosophical question of how to create a just *polis*, nation, or system. The immigrant is at the margin, but not necessarily outside of the political unit. She is not necessarily in "another land" either. In fact, by virtue

of colonization one can be an immigrant in one's so-called "native land." Conceptually, therefore the marginal space of the immigrant is neither coextensive nor co-temporal with the center of the unity. The conception of justice in this space is not a reconstitution of unity by integrating the other, but it is *the radical displacement of distribution*. Indeed, what distinguishes the resistance of the margin is a different conception of justice than the proper functioning of a political system. Justice for the marginal is *the event* of disconfiguration rather than a smooth functioning of a unified system. It is important to underline that this is a theoretical position that tries to inaugurate a different way of thinking, rather than another form of identity politics that privileges one form of subject over the other. Theoretically, the position of the immigrant is a potential site of decolonization, rather than being a culturally or politically superior subjectivity.

The necessity of this theoretical position is historically crystallized in the United States after September 11. For those who were at the margin of the society, it has always been a possibility that their existence will lose all the "privileges" and "rights" lent to them. One could argue that this is would be a loss of democratic rights. However, it was precisely the enactment of democracy and the reconstitution of the political unity that led to such losses. One could always live in a "democratic society" if there is no threat to it. Yet in the presence of a threat, only a democratic society can implement policies that can be more repressive than those of a "properly" totalitarian state. Hence, xenophobia, racism, and homophobia are properly democratic values in the sense that they can flourish in a democratic space rather than being imposed from outside. The emergence and flourishing of xenophobia, racism, and homophobia in democratic societies is not a reason to surrender the idea of democracy. However, it is necessary to understand how certain forms of exclusion are executed within democratic space. In order to understand these forms of exclusions we need a critique of democracy from a postcolonial perspective.

## WHICH DEMOCRACY?

It is clear that democracy can be conceptualized in multiple ways. However, initially it would be useful to concentrate on two distinct ones. The first concept is a political one. Democracy is a political system of ruling states, holding elections, representing human preferences to the government, etc. The second concept is a cultural one. Democracy is a cultural conviction supported by various institutions and laws: independent judiciary, freedom of expression, interest groups, etc. The first is usually associated with the democratic tradition whereas the latter with the so-called liberal tradition. While the first is proposed to exist in several countries, the second manifests itself

in the "Western democratic countries," even though it is also regarded as an ideal that can never fully be achieved. This ideal sometimes regulates our conduct, yet it is mostly in conflict with the requirements of realpolitik. Evidently, these two aspects of democracy are inextricably related to each other. The ideal of democracy is almost always used to justify it in the face of its practical complications. However, the relationship between the ideal of democracy and its manifestation in the world proves to be much more complicated than the application of a theoretical framework to practice. Democracy is said to be not only the best possible political system, but also a particular, and presumably good way of life. Citizens are (and should be) educated, disciplined to act, think and interact democratically in every (or many) aspect of life. This kind of overlapping of the political with every other aspect of everyday life is usually considered to be the sign of a totalitarian political system. However, in the case of democracy the relationship between political rule and a democratic lifestyle is considered to be a merit. Yet it is precisely this democratization (a particular way of politicization) of life that is problematic today.

In *Carbon Democracy*, Timothy Mitchell argues, "If democracy is an idea, then countries become democratic by the idea getting into people's heads. The problem of democracy becomes a question of how to manufacture a new model of the citizen, one whose mind is committed to the idea of democracy."[6] This model of citizenship is something that needs to be produced by several disciplinary and cogitological strategies. Before such processes are established, the idea of democracy must be articulated and established.

## PRESUPPOSITIONS OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy as an idea includes a number of *interrelated* assumptions. The defenders of democracy do not always explicitly articulate these presuppositions. Since most of these presuppositions are metaphysically problematic, many theorists reject these assumptions and try to conceptualize the possibility of democracy without them. However, instead of simply avoiding these presuppositions we need to think through them in order to fully understand the paradoxes of democracy.

I. Democracy presupposes that human beings who participate in politics are ideally rational, self-transparent and capable of understanding their own thoughts, desires, and interests. This conception presupposes that human beings are either present to themselves (or potentially present) so that they make decisions and engage in political actions, and also remain present through (or emerge at the end of) their decisions and actions in order to confront the consequences of these actions. Since

such metaphysical assumptions concerning the political subject are problematic, some theorists of democracy try to formulate the viability of democracy without such presuppositions. For example, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe argue that there are no subjects but only subject positions and that subjects are always relational. Even though this formulation seems to avoid the problem of subjectivity by admitting the discursive constitution of subject positions, it still suffers from the same problem of unity as subjectivity. The problem of the individual subject is transformed into the unity of the so-called discourse that produces these subject positions. I believe that such a unity, however incomplete or nonhegemonic it may appear, is still colonizing when it is utilized to defend the idea of democracy.

II. Democracy postulates an empty space of relative neutrality for human beings prior to their political decisions. This apriority is not a linear temporality, but a "metaphysical" condition for the possibility. There is, on this view, a theoretical empty space that the human subject occupies prior to coming to his or her opinion, preference, decision, or interest. However, "political subject" is never created out of such an empty theoretical space. One always already finds oneself in a political space that is created by what Carl Schmitt calls a friend-enemy distinction.

III. Democracy relies on the assumption that political opinions either emanate from within the subject or they are deliberated, weighed, analyzed, appropriated, or evaluated by the subject. When we notice the remarkable uniformity of political opinions in contemporary society, which democracy designates it as the "common sense," "moderate view," we recognize how democracy disciplines political thinking. Democracy is impossible without the assumptions of the model of subjectivity that emerged and developed between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century. This model of subjectivity has been criticized and deconstructed in the twentieth-century philosophy. However, the effects of this subjectivity are very much alive in contemporary politics. Contemporary discourses on responsibility and individualism are attempts to revive this model of subjectivity. Therefore, far from being novel, such discourses are reactionary.

IV. Democracy (the ideal democracy) requires that the expression of ideas can happen in an ideal fashion, and that they are not always shaped by "external" considerations, such as economic privilege, status, race, gender, etc. The discursive creation of this interior space for ideas is necessary for democracy to function. Hence, in a sense, democracy for its smooth functioning requires a fundamental division between the ideal and the real. This space also allows democracy to negotiate what

it considers to be "external" factors and keep them below the threshold of crisis.

V. Finally, democracy is based on the idea that "truth" is formed through the struggle of simultaneously existing opinions or positions. The strongest opinion or position is accepted to be true. Yet this is not exactly the majority opinion, as the defenders of democracy claim that democracy is not simply the rule of the majority. My claim here is that democracy is the extension of a worldview that the truth can be reached by the battle of differing opinions. In other words, the assumption remains that truth will eventually be accepted by the majority. It is the result of a century's long philosophical conviction that truth is to be found in the best-defended belief. I believe this philosophical conviction has been undermined by post-Hegelian philosophy. As long as we insist on believing that truth and correct political rule based on the survival of the best-defended opinion where we overlook the intimate connections, dependency, and symmetry between opposed opinions, we cannot formulate the problems of democracy let alone imagine creative solutions to the problems of the political.

However, democracy could never function even if all these presuppositions of the ideal conception of democracy were to be fulfilled. Even if all these conditions were satisfied, it would lead to the contradiction, and ultimate self-destruction of democracy in the political sphere. If all human beings were to be motivated solely by their own desires, if they were not organized around public discourses, if they were to make their decisions on the basis of independently formed interests, then it would be impossible to sustain democracy as a political system. *Therefore, democracy in practice relies on presuppositions that oppose its ideal articulation*.

One can raise the question, however, of how democracy functions today if there are problems with modern subjectivity. Does not the "practical success" of democracy negate all the conceptual critics and deconstruction of subjectivity? I will address this question in the second chapter: democracy relies on the conception of a human subject which is produced by a discursive and bio-disciplinary power. A human subject that is necessary for democracy to function effectively is produced by specific political practices. Therefore, one can consistently argue that while political agency imagined by democracy is not a metaphysical reality, it is still possible, in fact necessary, to manufacture such an agency. Foucault's conception of a disciplined subject is an adequate starting point for explaining the formation of a subject for democratic rule. The way Foucault explains the relationship between the juridical subject and the disciplined subject is also an appropriate way of

explaining the relationship between the democratic subject (and the ideal of democracy) and the disciplined subject (constructed by democracy).

## PARADOXES OF DEMOCRACY

The problem of democracy is that it embodies a series of interrelated paradoxes. The first one is the relationship between democracy and other popular forms of political government. If democracy is fundamentally to be the expression of the will of people, it is possible that people will choose democracy to be replaced by another rule of governing (e.g., an Islamic political structure). Hence, democracy faces the paradox of incorporating that, which may aim its destruction. This paradox is also the reason of its strength in the sense that it immunizes democracy against its enemies. This is what Derrida calls the "suicidal autoimmunity" of democracy. Yet what Derrida does not explicitly state is that the success of any democracy depends on how well it covers up, avoids, or negotiates this contradiction. In practice, democracy *never truly incorporates* conflicting political views. In that sense, as a political system democracy is not different than any other system. To the extent that differences arising from class conflict, racial injustice, radical political opposition, and economic crises are suppressed, democracy can be successful. Democratic systems incorporate these differences only at the level of "political opinion." Hence, the real differences are reduced to differences of the ideas of different subjects and thereby rendered in a sense "private." Hence, in parts of the world where one confronts threats from these divisions on a regular basis, democracy is and has always been an impossible and undesirable possibility.

The paradoxes of democracy are mostly formulated within the terms of democracy: the paradox between equality and freedom, between civil rights and security, between abstract individual of the universal suffrage and concrete individual within social stratification, etc. Yet, while these paradoxes are important they ironically (or should I say paradoxically) turn out to be productive aspects of democracy that contribute to its "progress." In fact, the movement toward an (admittedly) unknown and unattainable democracy (that which gives us a direction, a kind of regulative idea) is the single most powerful and insidious formulation of democracy. Democracy, unlike other forms of political systems, is supposed to have a different relationship to its opposites. While the totalitarian regimes "take power by destroying all oppositions" (Lefort, 13), within democracy oppositions are allowed to survive. Yet, and this is the beginning of a paradox, this opposition is either formulated from within a democratic system (e.g., a party with different tax policies, social programs, etc.), or more importantly, an opposition that accepts the rules of democracy, participate in the representative body, etc. This gives the

idea that democracy is the best system that negotiates political oppositions because "the locus of power is an empty place" (Lefort, 17). Anybody and everybody are in principle allowed to rule so long as they accept the rules of democracy. Yet it is clear that this is not always empirically the case. Democracy protects itself undemocratically by banning, excluding, and censoring political movements that are "undemocratic." Yet this is the ultimate paradox of democracy, because at the moment that it is expected to deliver its distinguishing aspect (from other political regimes) it folds (and becomes indistinguishable from any other system which could say that you can only participate in politics to the extent that you can accept the fundamental rules). This is also the conceptual paradox of democracy: it rightly operates under "the dissolution of the markers of certainty" (Lefort, 19). This uncertainty is related to the future. We cannot know the future; we should leave the locus of power to accommodate the possibility that the future will be different. This is the temporal dimension of the paradox of democracy: the future might be radically different, but it will not be so different that the rules of democracy will change. Hence, democracy regulates the future by pretending not to regulate it. Democracy must not be undermined in the future, must be protected even undemocratically if necessary, democratically if possible, but it must never be undermined even in a democratic fashion. That is, even if people desire the transformation of democracy, that desire *would have been populism* rather than democracy, because a group of people that gives up their sovereignty voluntarily must be irrational.

In terms of this paradox and temporality one can speculate that democracy today functions in a perfectly Hegelian-dialectical fashion. Its inside is presumed to be empty, without any essential characteristics (of course this is theoretically the best possible formulation, in actuality the center is occupied by the Western white, colonial, rational, subject-ideal). Democracy is a movement toward an ideal that we know we may not ever reach, but it is regulative. Yet this is a dialectical movement; if there is an opposition to this movement *it is produced* by the movement, and ultimately will be incorporated into this movement. If there is an opposition that might seem to undermine the movement itself we either try to transform this antagonism to agonism (Mouffe) or render it irrational, radical, or terroristic. Here a significant aspect of democratic temporality manifests itself. The oppositions of democracy can temporarily be excluded undemocratically, they can be repressed in the name of freedom, security, etc., but a successful democracy has to subsequently incorporate the demands of these oppositions once they do not pose a threat to democracy, because incorporating former threats is a much more effective way of protecting the march of democracy. Moreover, being incorporated into the democratic system is also good for these oppositions themselves. *This is what I would call the tyranny of the future in a democracy.* The way in which the ideal of democracy works is that it promises a demo-

cratic future. On the basis of this theoretical conviction of the (future) correctness of democracy one can legitimize the anti-democratic practices of the present. Defenders of democracy claim that they will return and incorporate the demands of the oppositions, and thereby pretend to produce a sense of justice for all. Thereby, democracy established a perpetual hegemony over the future as well as the present and the past. So this dialectical movement of the democratic consciousness allows perpetual injustice in the name of a future justice.

Such a dialectical conception of democracy is also the way in which its paradoxes are overcome by formulating them in terms of tensions between equality and freedom, between security and liberty, etc. Let us take the example of security versus civil liberties. If certain people are detained without being charged or going through any legal procedure because they are considered to be a threat to the security of a nation, state, and democratic government, their rights are violated. In such a case a certain segment of the population might express disagreement with the undermining of certain civil liberties in the name of security. They might even acknowledge the interdependence of liberty and security rather than their opposition. Thereby, they criticize the government for being hypocritical at best, or undermining the democratic principles at worst. What they do not admit, however, is the fact that democracy can only protect and has always protected itself *undemocratically*.[7] The refusal to admit this relationship renders these critics complicit in the injustice against those who are systematically or temporarily excluded. Yet in democracy there is an alibi of temporality in this paradox. The anti-democratic measures can be lifted in the future if and when the danger of the outside is eliminated. Yet those who were held in detention undemocratically will either be forgotten which is bad, or become the alibi that democracy is progressing by recognizing its mistakes (and a hollow promise that it will never happen again), which is worse (obviously it will happen again or we will obviously do it again, because we have to). Hence, democracy only works when it is not required to perform what happens to be its raison d'etre, namely to negotiate opposing political differences. Whenever democracy is in a position to perform its function, it fails necessarily because of its inherent contradiction. A democratic system is ideal if the class conflict, racial injustice, radical political opposition, and economic crises are either missing or suppressed.[8] Therefore, democracy both grounds and protects itself undemocratically. *In this sense, anti-democracy is its founding origin and reigning principle.*

Wendy Brown exemplifies a perfect case of such a dialectical aspect of democracy. She writes:

> What if democratic politics, the most untheoretical of all political forms, paradoxically requires theory, requires an antithesis to itself in both the form and

substance of theory, if it is to satisfy its ambition to produce a free and egali-
tarian order? What if democracy requires for its health a nondemocratic ele-
ment, both because democracy is not an end in itself and because such an
element is necessary if democracy is to avoid the most damnable things for
which Plato, Nietzsche, and its other philosophical critics blame it? What if the
anti-theoretical tendencies of democracy actually express a peculiar constitu-
tive relation within democratic practice, an ambivalent relation of antagonism
and dependence between democracy and theory that must be thematized and
addressed directly if it is not to be corrosive of democracy?[9]

Wendy Brown expresses the relationship of democracy to theory. Theory
is undemocratic, and precisely as an antithesis of democracy it contributes to
democracy. This is both a perfectly dialectical and a Nietzschean relationship
to one's antithesis. Democracy in that sense invokes the Nietzschean dictum
as Brown observes, "'Whatever doesn't kill me makes me stronger,' Nietzs-
che taunts,[10] perhaps providing a clue about how criticism might invigorate
rather than demolish its object."[11] Yet democracy does not really incorporate
that which can kill it in the sense Derrida understands auto-immunity, be-
cause for Brown,

> In the form in which he offers it, Nietzsche's critique of democracy is largely
> unlivable. No matter what its modality-socialist, liberal, or communitarian-
> modern democratic life in state societies cannot be conducted with shuttered
> rooms and aristocratic practices that disregard most of humanity; it cannot be
> allied with contempt for the many nor with reduction of all egalitarian doctrine
> to envy and resentment. So rather than embracing this critique, could we
> employ it as a provocation, an incitement?[12]

By identifying the weakness of Brown's argument, Zizek also points out the
main strategy of how democracy functions today:

> The weakness of Brown's description is perhaps that she locates the undemo-
> cratic ingredient that keeps democracy alive only in the "crazy" theoreticians
> questioning its foundations from "unliveable" premises but what about the
> very real undemocratic elements that sustain democracy? Does therein not
> reside the major premise of Foucault's (Brown's major reference) analyses of
> modern power: democratic power has to be sustained by a complex network of
> controlling and regulating mechanisms?[13]

Starting with the second chapter I will develop precisely this insight of Zi-
zek's, which he himself does not really advance, namely that democratic
power not only has to be sustained by a complex network of controlling and
regulating mechanisms, but also that democracy today is only possible
through such mechanisms. Democracy needs these mechanisms in order to
function but also in order to transform its fundamental paradox into an inter-

nal tension within democracy, namely the opposition between democracy and liberalism.

## DEMOCRACY AND LIBERALISM

Several contemporary critics emphasize the difference between liberalism and democracy.[14] Yet, liberal democracy is not simply a notion where these terms complement each other. Quite to the contrary, the term "liberal" delimits and becomes a disciplining aspect of democracy. It is an interesting phenomenon that today the term democracy is rarely used by itself. It is always qualified as "pluralistic democracy," "liberal democracy," "deliberative democracy," "radical democracy," "democracy-to-come," etc. It is not the case that the first term in these designations simply provides precision for the concept of democracy. What they do, however, is to cover over the paradox of democracy by limiting its conceptual extension. They also obviate a critique of democracy by constantly shifting democracy away from its own paradoxes. The seemingly straightforward "definition" of democracy as the rule of the people, where the ultimate ground of the rule has to be in the *demos*, where the ruler and the ruled are the same, is constantly, persistently, and paternalistically denied. Democracy is not "democracy"; it is not the simply the power (*kratos*) of the people (*demos*) because there is always the danger that "the people" could only be the majority, and not all, of the people. If democracy becomes the rule of [majority] people, it ceases to be democracy. This is a fundamental paradox of democracy that various qualifying designations are supposed to avoid. Democracy, Lefort says, is not the rule (and power) of the people, but "the locus of power becomes an empty place" (*Democracy and Political Theory*, p.17). Yet how does this place remain empty? Is this emptiness guaranteed through liberalism, or pluralism? Therefore, it is a fundamentally misguided attempt to write a critique of democracy, as it is an impossible concept, which ironically strengthens its case for legitimacy, by becoming a moving target. Perhaps the attempt to write about the concept of democracy itself is misguided.

It seems that various conceptual problems associated with the idea of democracy apply to Western liberal democracy. Yet this focus does not weaken my contention concerning the paradoxes of democracy itself. "Modern democracy," according to its defenders, is not simply a state that is governed by popular sovereignty, but a politically liberal, juridical state (*Rechtsstaat*) that protects the basic freedoms (speech, association, religion, etc.). I claim that this juridical modern democratic state protects itself undemocratically and nonliberally. Here, the paradox is that a liberal right such as freedom of speech can never be a protection against the possible destruction of democratic state. Democratic state always invokes free speech when

free speech itself is not perceived to be under attack. Hence, the political, be it democratic or liberal always protects itself by abandoning its principles.

Yet is there not a further problem in my argument? If democracy always protects itself undemocratically, why is it that democratic regimes do not always (empirically) protect themselves by suppressing, their opposition? Here one should make a distinction between the discourse of democracy and the actual decisions made within democracy. First, even when democratic discourse never explicitly defends the repression of opposition (in fact it sometimes does, but this is mostly a sign of weakness), democratic societies always exclude what they consider to be outside the rules of democracy. Moreover, such exclusions always occur violently. Nevertheless, the question still remains: why do we find more repression in non-democratic regimes compared to more democratic ones? The answer to this question will be the focus of my next chapter. My initial response, however, is that *democratic societies do not always need to be repressive, because they consist of politically disciplined citizens that are produced through "a complex network of controlling and regulating mechanisms."*

## NOTES

1.  Blaise Pascal, *Oeuvres Complètes*, edited by Michel Le Guern (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

2.  Alain Badiou, "The Democratic Emblem," *Democracy In What State?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 6. It seems that for Badiou, "contemporary society" is an exclusively European one.

3.  Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1989), p.10.

4.  Edward Said, *Orientalism: 25th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Vintage, 1994), p. 42.

5.  Jean-Baptise-Joseph Fourier, *Preface historique*, *Description de l'Egypte*, Vol 1, p.1, as cited by Said, *Orientalism*, p. 358, n75.

6.  Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London: Verso, 2011), p. 3.

7.  Hence, since 9/11 the United States is confronting the fact that democracy can only be protected by anti-democratic measures.

8.  Throughout the twentieth century, democratic governments protected themselves almost always with undemocratic means: The United States, during the 1950s and 1960s and now, as well as Turkey during the 1980s, are examples. France, Spain, Italy, Israel, and England are examples as well.

9.  Wendy Brown, *Politics out of History*, p.122.

10.  Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 23, as quoted by Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 185.

11.  Brown, *Politics Out of History*, p.133

12.  Wendy Brown, *Politics out of History*, p.13.

13.  Slavoj Zizek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London: Verso, 2008), p. 105.

14.  Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, and Norberto Bobbio, *Liberalism and Democracy*, among others.

## Chapter One

# The Genealogy of Democracy

## *From Plato to Schmitt*

> For an expert on democracy, democratic politics is fundamentally the same everywhere. It consists of a set of procedures and political forms that are to be reproduced in every successful instance of democratization, in one variant or another, as though democracy occurs only as a "carbon copy" of itself. Democracy is based on a model, an original idea that can be copied from one place to the next. If it fails, as it seems to in many oil states, the reason must be that some part of the model is missing or malfunctioning.
>
> —Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* [1]

In order to demonstrate how democracy functions as a neo-colonial ordering of modern societies, we need to see how political power intersects with the question of exclusion and subjectivity. Democracy, as a particular organization of the political sphere, becomes global, not because the idea of democracy is a universally valid one, but because the process of universalization is, both politically and intellectually, a colonial project. The political always consists of a life-death relationship to the other (i.e., an irreducible existential dimension), and democracy inevitably functions within these aspects of the political. The relationship between the political and the question of life and death is a classical one established by Plato. While the *Republic*, as Plato's major work, contains the classical philosophical critique of democracy, a lesser-known dialogue, *Menexenus*, opens up the space where the political, democracy, and death intersect. In *Menexenus*, Plato anticipates Carl Schmitt's observations concerning modern democracy and its paradoxes. After a discussion of the themes of democracy, friend-enemy, and death in *Menexenus*, I will turn to Schmitt's problematization of modern democracy, and demonstrate the ways in which Plato anticipates this critique.

## PLATO, *MENEXENUS*

*Menexenus* is a dialogue on (or of) funeral speech. The text opens up as Socrates meets Menexenus who is on his way from a council chamber meeting at the *agora*, which was to select someone to make an oration over the dead. Socrates and Menexenus engage in an exchange concerning the spontaneity of funeral speeches. Menexenus claims that whomever will be chosen the next day to deliver the funeral speech has to improvise his speech. Socrates disagrees and claims that every rhetorician has speeches ready-made. Even if he did not, it would have been easy to deliver such a speech because the orator seeks the approval of those who he is praising. "For if it were a question of eulogizing Athenians before an audience of Peloponnesians, or Peloponnesians before Athenians, there would indeed be need of a good orator to win credence and credit; but when a man makes effort in the presence of the very men whom he is praising, it is no difficult matter to win credit as a fine speaker."[2] By this observation, Socrates explains the logic of the political by stating that it necessarily presupposes a distinction between those who belong (friends) and those who do not (enemy). The way in which this opposition is established is through the fidelity to, and the communication with, the dead. In his subsequent speech, Socrates makes it clear that the political always entails a special relationship to death, and to one's dead ancestors. The constitution of a *community*, especially of a political community, takes place through the *communication* with the dead. Death differentiates those who belong to our community from those who do not. Since there is no universal notion of death, a political community beyond the friend and enemy distinction and consequently the idea of universal equality, is conceptually as well as politically meaningless. We never relate to death of the others in the same way. Alternatively, the way we relate to the dead differentiates friends from enemies. Those whose death contribute and constitute our community can never be treated politically in the same way as those who do not.

Menexenus inquires whether Socrates can deliver a funeral speech. Socrates proceeds to deliver a speech that he attributes to his mistress, Aspasia. It is not a "properly" philosophical speech for Plato. Socrates' speech is an exercise in rhetoric yet it is supposed to be better than those of the other rhetoricians. While the speech is awkward, and enigmatic, it is not insignificant for Plato's philosophy. I will concentrate on three moments in the speech that are crucial in understanding Plato's relationship to democracy as well as the fate of the democratic theory since Plato.

Socrates' speech is a tribute to the dead, which he structures in a "natural" order: "Let us first praise the goodness of their birth; secondly, their nurture and education; and then their actions and how worthy they were of their education" (M, 237A). While praising the birth of the dead, Socrates states

that their forefathers were not of immigrant stock. They, as well as their ancestors were native to their country. The country that nurtured them was not a stepmother to them, but rather a "true mother." Yet the same indigenousness does not apply to the citizens of other countries. One could expect that the members of other countries would have the same relationship to their own soil. However, Socrates claims that only Athenians were "nurtured also by no stepmother, like other folk" (M, 237C). Actually, it is not clear whether Socrates is referring to the nonnative members of Athens or all the other citizens of other states. It seems that the latter is the case, because, "Socrates' country is deserving of praise, not only from us but from all men, on many grounds, but first and foremost because she is god-beloved" (M, 237C). The principles governing a political space like Athens can be universalized, not because they are generally valid for (or even negotiated by) all, but rather because these principles that emerge within a specific context are regarded to be the best and deserve to be praised by all. This passage is particularly important in understanding the political implications of Plato's thought. It indicates that the universalism associated with ideas or forms is not a purely philosophical attribute that can be determined by rational argument, but it is a political attribute that is attained by the expansion of native principles politically. Socrates makes this point clear when he proceeds to describing the politics under which their ancestors lived.

Within the natural order of praise, the description of the polity comes after that of birth and of education. Their ancestors, Socrates claims, lived under a noble polity, which caused goodness in them. The same polity that nurtured his ancestors is the same one under which Athenian people live currently. Socrates continues: "One man calls it 'democracy,' another man, according to his fancy, gives it some other name; but it is, in truth, an 'aristocracy' backed by popular approbation" (M, 238D). Plato's opposition to democracy is well documented and at times passed over with slight embarrassment. Yet the exact reason of this opposition is not obvious. The received view is that Plato's opposition to democracy originates from his metaphysical convictions and his desire to preserve the purity of truth and good from the multiplicity of opinions. This view would be true only if we accept that Plato does indeed have a theory of forms and consequently an elitist conception of politics. However, such an interpretation is not accurate. In *Menexenus*, Socrates makes it clear why Plato would have problems with democracy. Under the Athenian polity, "while the most part if civic affairs are in the control of the populace, they hand over the posts of government and the power to those who from time to time are deemed to be the best men; and no man is debarred by this weakness or poverty or by the obscurity of his parentage, or promoted because of the opposite qualities, as is the case in other States" (M, 238DE).

It would be incomplete and misleading to confine the problem of democracy to that of practicality of governing. That is to say, one could argue that the principle of democracy is precisely the possibility of a few governing chosen by the populace, representing and governing that populace. Socrates continues:

> On the contrary, the one principle of selection is this: the man that is deemed to be wise and good rules and governs. And the cause of this our polity lies in our equality of birth. For whereas all other States are composed of a heterogeneous collection of all sorts of people, so that their polities are also heterogeneous, tyrannies as well as oligarchies, some of them regarding one another as slaves, others as masters; we and our people, on the contrary, being all born of one mother, claim to be neither the slaves of one another nor the masters; rather does our natural birth-equality drive us to seek lawfully legal equality, and yield to one another in no respect save in reputation for virtue and understanding. (M, 238D–239A)

There are multiple tensions within this passage that reveal the problematic nature of democracy. The equality at the birth has to be displaced in order to differentiate those who govern from those who are governed. In other words, while all are equals, those who govern are naturally better than those who are governed. Yet this is not the main paradox, because this tension can still be explained within the democratic principle. However, what cannot be explained within a democratic principle (i.e., a principle of democracy that is universally valid) is that the equality of "us" requires our inequality from "them" rendering the universal principle of equality impossible. The universal equality required by the democratic principle is already circumvented by the universal inequality among political units. The reason why democracy cannot become universalized is that "we" are always going to be unequal to the others in that "we" are all equal while others are not. Why is it impossible to universalize the principle of equality? Why could equality attributed to Athenians by Socrates not be generalized to other states? The answer to this question is crucial, because it complicates and renders impossible the universalistic aspirations of democracy. Socrates provides the answer. The equality requires homogeneity. It is only because Athenians is conceived of (or rather fictionally projected) as homogeneous by Socrates; it is possible to conceive them as equals. This is Socrates's explanation of why democracy can only function in Athens, because the main problem of democracy is that it treats not only equals equally, but also nonequals equally. To treat those who are unequal equally is unjust. Because in Athens, all men are by nature equal, only Athens can overcome the problem of treating those who are unequal equally, because there is natural equality among men in Athens. However, the principle of equality conceptually, as well as politically, is meaningless without being opposed to inequality. Conceptually, equality requires its op-

posite (its other) otherwise it would become an empty and meaningless idea. Therefore, any political principle of universality, including that of equality requires the delimitation of a political community as opposed to its other and thereby renders universality impossible.

It would be a mistake, a common one indeed, to defend the principle of heterogeneity against Plato in the name of democracy. That is to say, it would be misguided to claim that Plato's metaphysics (theory of forms, his commitment to truth as one) is the cause of his being anti-democratic, and defend democracy on the basis of pluralism and heterogeneity. The reason why Plato is opposed to democracy (if he is indeed opposed to it, that is, if it is not identified with aristocracy) is that democracy hides its own grounding principle. It masks its commitment to homogeneity by attempting to appear heterogeneous. However, democracy cannot justify its grounding principle by what it appears to be, namely heterogeneously. Democracy does not admit that its ground is violent, exclusionary, and metaphysical, that is, its ground is philosophical and can only be justified by philosophy, according to Plato.

The rest of the dialogue is staged within the opposition between friend and enemy: the Greeks (or more specifically Athenians) versus the barbarians. Socrates describes this relationship in existential-political terms by saying that the barbarians from Asia were enslaving Europe. These barbarians tried to destroy Greece. As the praise of the dead continues, the difference between friend and enemy becomes more complicated. Even other Greek city-states may fight against Athens, but they are never an enemy the way barbarians are.

> Later on when there was widespread war, and all the Greeks had marched against us and ravaged our country, most evilly requiting our city, and our men had defeated them by sea and had captured their Lacedaemonian leaders in Sphagia, although they had it in their power to destroy them, yet they spared their lives and gave them back and made peace, since they deemed that against their fellow-Greeks it was right to wage war only up to the point of victory, and not to wreck the whole Greek community for the sake of a city's private grudge, but to wage war to the death against the barbarians. (M, 242c–d)

The war against the real enemy is not simply a war for victory, but requires the destruction of the opponent. It is existential in that it threatens the very existence of the adversaries. It is precisely this relationship to death and to those who are dead that connects us to our friends and creates the homogenous space of democracy. Yet this space is not a static presence, but something that needs to be produced in terms of a relationship to the future. This production requires an intergenerational relationship among friends. This is reflected in a strange twist in *Menexenus*. Plato writes:

> Wherefore it is right that every man, bearing these men's children, just in time
> of war, not to fall out of ranks with their fathers nor to give way to cowardice
> and beat a retreat. And I myself for my own part, O ye children of valiant
> men,am now exhorting you and in the future, wheresoever I shall encounter
> and of you, I shall continue to remind you and admonish you to be zealous to
> show yourselves supremely valiant. But on this occasion it is my duty to
> record the message your fathers, at the time when they were about to risk their
> lives, enjoined us, if any ill befell them, to give to those who survived them. I
> will repeat you both the words, which I heard from their lips and those, which
> they would now desire to say to you, if they had the power, judging from what
> they actually said on this occasion. You must however imagine that you are
> hearing from their own lips the message, which I shall deliver. (M, 246c)

Socrates continues to quote directly from the dead, who are now present to
the living. The dead fathers demand the fidelity of their children. Yet this
scene is not simply a scene of fidelity among others, but the way in which
fidelity is constituted in the narcissistic self-relationship of a community.
Here the dead is speaking to those who *will* be dead. The praise to the dead
becomes the praise the dead impart upon itself, because ultimately by prais-
ing the dead, we are praising ourselves. Hence, Socrates's initial observation
about the inevitable success of the funeral oration because it praises Athe-
nians to Athenians is grounded. The death of our ancestor is not just a
generalizable event, but rather it is a unique existential self-relationship that
constitutes the homogeneity of our community, which is the condition for the
possibility of the functioning of democracy in the first place. Hence, the
conceptual problem of democracy is not that it leads to heterogeneity, diver-
sity, and openness, but rather it relies on the constitution of a homogeneity
that democracy itself cannot produce. Therefore, Plato's critique of democra-
cy cannot be reduced to self-serving (and mostly left-wing) interpretation
that Plato is philosophically opposed to pluralism and diversity. Plato's cri-
tique is that democracy is not a field of diversity and heterogeneity but that it
relies on a prior constituted unity that it cannot account for. This is also the
basis of Carl Schmitt's criticism of modern parliamentary democracy, to
which I now turn.

## CARL SCHMITT

Schmitt's definition of sovereign as "he who decides on the exception"
means that the political power does not rely in the application of a valid rule;
but rather it is the authority to suspend the law.[3] This definition is not based
on a conception of politics that belongs to a predemocratic, or monarchical
conception of state; "whether God alone is sovereign, that is, the one who
acts as his acknowledged representative on earth, or the emperor, or prince,
or the people, meaning those who identify themselves directly with the peo-

ple, the question is always aimed at the subject of sovereignty, at the application of the concept to a concrete situation." The sovereign produces and guarantees the situation in its totality. "He has the monopoly over this last decision" (PT, 13). Here Schmitt delimits the problem to concrete political actions rather than ideas of legitimacy. For Schmitt all law is "situational law."

Schmitt's conception of sovereignty is consistent with my contention that democracy institutes and protects itself undemocratically, because the institution of democracy as the set of the laws of a political unit requires an exceptional intervention. This intervention does not remain at the moment of "origin" as understood as the foundational moment that one leaves behind, but rather there is a constant need for intervention even when this is not executed empirically. Therefore, the claim is not simply an empirical or historical one, namely that existing democracies suspend and do not live up to the standards of democracy, but rather it is a "transcendental" claim, namely that undemocratic intervention is *the condition for the possibility of democracy*. The democratic discourse incorporates this necessity into the terms of democracy, namely in terms of oppositions or tensions between freedom and security or between individual civil rights and unity of the state. Thereby democratic discourse tries to reduce a conceptual problem to an empirical exception. One can observe how this incorporation takes place within the public discourse surrounding the "war on terror" in the United States. It would be an insidious ideological sleight of hand to claim that there is a well-functioning democracy, a historical sedimentation of democratic practices, and the state of war is merely a historical aberration. Even if one grants that there is always an empirical exception, one has to understand this idea of exception conceptually, because as Schmitt puts it:

> Precisely a philosophy of concrete life must not withdraw from the exception and the extreme case, but must be interested in it to the highest degree. The exception can be more important to it than the rule, not because of a romantic irony for the paradox, but because the seriousness of an insight goes deeper than the clear generalization inferred from what ordinarily repeats itself. The exception is more interesting than the rule. The rule proves nothing; the exception proves everything: It confirms not only the rule but also its existence, which derives only from the exception. In the exception the power of the real life breaks through the crust of a mechanism that has become torpid by repetition. (PT, 15)

Just as the state of exception therefore reveals the "essence" of sovereignty, the suspension of democracy (i.e., its exception), reveals the "essence" of democracy as a political system.

The success of democracies depends on their ability to incorporate what was once considered to be an exception. I will come to this problem of

temporality in democracy in the chapter on Derrida. For our present purposes, we need to concentrate on the relationship between the state of exception and its relationship to the unity of the (democratic/political) system. The relationship between the inside of democracy and what is considered to be its exception takes the form of a Hegelian dialectical movement. Democratic regimes not only legally exclude that which is exceptional, but it is considered to be their success when these exceptions are rendered harmless to the system and hence become parts of it.

Schmitt's reference to Kierkegaard in the following paragraph illuminates this conceptual problem in terms of the "Hegelian movement of democracy." Schmitt quotes Kierkegaard: "The exception explains the general and itself. And if one wants to study the general correctly, one only needs to look around for a true exception. It reveals everything more clearly than does the general."[4] For my purposes the idea of exception is to be interpreted as the exception (or the negation) to democracy. Within a Hegelian framework in which I have been interpreting and criticizing democracy, the role of the exception is that of negation. Schmitt's definition of the political as fundamentally constituted in terms of the distinction between friend and enemy renders such an interpretation credible, because the exception the sovereign decides is always contextual and concrete with respect to the enemy of the state. Hence, the exception is declared, when one is faced with the other, or more precisely the negation of the democratic rule. The other is the enemy. However, the specific character of democracy is not simply to annihilate its enemy, which it can do, but also incorporate it as a ghost, dead enough to not pose a danger to the state and yet alive as a reminder of the necessity of sovereign intervention. The issue here is again the problem of unity. The distinguishing character of the democratic state is not a crude exclusionary unity that requires the purging of heterogeneous forces, but the creation of homogeneity by incorporating the previously unacceptable alterity by transforming them into intra-system tensions. In that sense the democratic state functions as the interior space of a Hegelian dialectical unity. The outside of the system is its negation, its symmetrical other and only the negation of this negation is a "proper" way of integration. The public discourse surrounding any kind of non-European state as the "enemy" of Western civilization as such is the manifestation of this operation.

It is in this sense of a Hegelian system that democracy shares the same structure as God understood as the unity of the sovereign space. In the last chapter of *Political Theology*, Schmitt writes:

> All the significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development—in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became omnipotent lawgiver—but also be-

cause of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts. (PT, 36)

The fundamental concept in this analogy is the concept of the unity. Modern political theory relies on the concept of unity just as much as theology relies on the concept of God. Schmitt's discussion of the state as the political sovereign is not simply his expression of his preference, but his observation of how modern politics functions.

## THE CONCEPT OF THE POLITICAL

Equally important for Schmitt's understanding of the political is his conception of the state. The opening sentence of *The Concept of the Political* declares that "the concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political." This declaration establishes the connection between Schmitt's definition of the sovereign with his conception of the political. Schmitt establishes a criterion for the political that is distinct from the social, economic, religious, moral, and aesthetic.

"The specific distinction of the political, to which political actions and motives can be traced back is the distinction between friend and enemy."[5] Schmitt immediately notes that this is not a definition in the sense of being exhaustive, but rather a necessary criterion in order to resist the temptation of reducing the political to the social (or religious or moral, etc.). Schmitt treats the friend-enemy distinction as conceptually irreducible. His desire to "preserve" a space for the political is not one that defends the purity of the political. Rather, what he primarily objects is the very political desire to "delegitimize" the enemy as evil, immoral, terroristic, and ultimately to render it nonpolitical. This opposition, therefore, is not one that would be hostile to the deconstructive gesture of demonstrating their mutual interdependence, indeed dependence of the privileged term (presumably friend) on the underprivileged one (again presumably enemy). It is also important to note that Schmitt himself does not conceptually privilege friend as primary, at least not openly. I will come back to this discussion in the context of Derrida.

There are two fundamental characteristics of the political: the political concerns exclusively the state and the political is existential. First, for Schmitt the main question of the political is that of unity. He is not committed to a historically specific notion of the nation state (unity) as the essence of the political. He writes: "The numerous changes and revolutions in human history and development have produced new forms and dimensions of political groupings. Previously existing political structures were destroyed, new kinds of foreign and civil wars arose, and the number of organized political entities soon increased or diminished" (CP, 46). It is clear that for Schmitt, the modern nation-state is primarily a historical manifestation of political

sovereignty rather than a conceptual necessity as Hegel. The intersection between political sovereignty and friend-enemy axis is explained by the fact that "as long as the state is a political entity this requirement for the internal unity (*Einheit*) compels it in critical situations to decide also upon the domestic enemy" (CP, 46 translation modified). The sovereign, which coincides with the state in modernity, decides who the enemy is and distinguishes the friend from the enemy and thereby delimits the space of political unity by excluding the other. Later in the text, Schmitt rightly associates the "enemy" with the Hegelian negated otherness (CP, 63). Since such exclusion takes place in every political organization, for our purposes it is important to understand how such exclusion also takes place in democracy. For Schmitt, the desire of liberal democracy based on individualism is to substitute the economic and ethical for the political and deny its own political exclusivity. Democracy attempts to play a double and contradictory role. Democracy claims to be a political-existential procedure of negotiating between enemies. In this sense, democracy tries to come back from a Hegelian negated otherness and create a unity. However, such a procedure becomes politically impossible, because democracy defines its own friends and enemies and thereby rendering the role of negotiation meaningless at best, hypocritical at worst. In the former sense, an enemy of democracy would be a meaningless designation, because democracy purports to be more than merely a political position that is framed by friend-enemy distinction. Democracy tries to protect such a privilege of being a negotiation medium between enemies, by claiming to be "outside" of politics in the sense of reducing the entire possibility of the political to the democratic procedures. However, despite such an attempt, or precisely because democracy tries to reduce the political to the social, ethical, moral, or economic, it becomes another political sovereign space defining its inside and thereby its friends and enemies. This is, I claim to be the (double) tyranny of democracy: it reduces the political to the democratic, yet it does not deliver what it promises, namely a negotiation outside of the political.

The second characteristic of the political is its existential dimension. This is a difficult dimension to recognize, because the discussion of the state gives us the impression of a bureaucratic and impersonal entity. This impression is not incorrect, but such a Kafkaesque state is not simply distant and overwhelming but it is also the only association, as opposed to other social, economic, and religious associations, has the right to declare war and demand its member to kill and be killed. For Schmitt, this dimension of the political, "the friend, enemy, and combat concepts receive their real meaning precisely because they refer to the real possibility of physical killing" (CP, 33). It is in this sense that the political is existential for Schmitt. "War is the existential negation of the enemy" (CP, 33). This is not to say that the war is the aim, or the purpose, or even the content of politics, but it is "an ever

present possibility" (CP, 34). The structure of this argument reflects the one about political sovereignty. Just like the state of exception, as an ever-present possibility is a criterion for sovereignty, war, as an exception, explains the space of the political. All the strategic decisions that can be made, or all the rules of engagement presuppose "that the political decision has already been made as to who the enemy is" (CP, 34). This implies that the decision to wage war is the same one that declares the state of exception. Schmitt's conception of the sovereign in *Political Theology* and his criterion for the political in *The Concept of the Political* mutually presuppose and constitute each other. No other social or economic institution has this existential hold on people as the state, the sovereign. One cannot reduce, substitute, or eradicate this role without engaging in the dangerous game regarding the political, namely the game of erasing the political:

> To demand seriously of human beings that they kill others and be prepared to die themselves so that trade and industry may flourish for the survivors or that the purchasing power of grandchildren may grow is sinister and crazy. It is a manifest fraud to condemn war as homicide and then demand of men that they wage war, kill and be killed, so that there will never again be war. (CP, 48)

Schmitt's argument here is two-tiered: first, there is "no program, no ideal, no norm, no expediency confers a right to dispose of the physical life of other human beings" (CP, 48). Secondly, however, since people do engage in war and dispose the life of others, the only possible explanation for this is the presence of the political. Only the political sovereign can demand such an existential commitment from people. Hence, the political meaning of the concept of enemy is existential, that is, the only justification of physical killing is that the enemy is "an existential threat to one's own way of life" (CP, 49). Yet, even here Schmitt is careful to insist on the political nature of such an existential confrontation. The fact that the enemy might desire my destruction does not mean that I can interpret his or her position as either "purely political" or as inhuman. Schmitt's argument against depoliticization has the same rationale as his argument against dehumanization.

> The polemical character determines the use of the word political regardless of whether the adversary is designated as nonpolitical (in the sense of harmless), or vice versa if one wants to disqualify or denounce him as political in order to portray oneself as nonpolitical (in the sense of purely scientific, purely juristic, purely aesthetic, purely economic, or on the basis of similar purities) and thereby superior. (CP, 32)

The claim to be nonpolitical while denying the enemy the status of being a legitimate political actor would be the quintessential political move for Schmitt. Therefore, even when a religious organization demands its asso-

ciates to kill and be killed in the name of certain ideas, it is acting as a political association, because the "justification of war does not reside in its being fought for ideals or norms of justice, but in its being fought against a real enemy" (CP, 49). The same desire to escape the political manifests itself in the one that substitutes oneself and one's friends for humanity. However, "humanity as such cannot wage war because it has no enemy, at least not on this planet" (CP, 54):

> The concept of humanity excludes the concept of enemy, because the enemy does not cease to be a human being—and hence there is no specific differentiation in that concept. That wars are waged in the name of humanity is not a contradiction of this simple truth; quite contrary, it has an especially intensive political meaning. When a state fights its political enemy in the name of humanity, it is not a war for the sake of humanity, but a war wherein a particular state seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent." (CP, 54)

According to Schmitt's conviction concerning the status of humanity in the political realm, one can see the problematic nature of the designation of the "crimes against humanity." These crimes are always against certain people and obscure the fact that it is also crimes by humanity. It creates an illegitimate division *within* humanity and a dangerous conceptual confusion. "The worst confusion arises when concepts such as justice and freedom are used to legitimize one's own political ambitions and to disqualify or demoralize the enemy" (CP, 66). One can also observe a similar strategy in the so-called "war against terror" and political dehumanization and depoliticization of the so-called "terrorists" such as suicide bombers and hunger strikers. I will come back to this point in chapter 4.

Schmitt's understanding of the war as the ever-present possibility of the political is mainly an existential designation rather than a moral or religious one. None of the nonpolitical ideals can erase the possibility of the war, or the political, or the state. The fact that the wars "decrease in number and increase in ferocity" speaks to this desire to eradicate the war by associating oneself with humanity and waging war against all future wars: "The war is then considered to constitute the absolute last war of humanity. Such a war is necessarily unusually intense and inhuman because, by transcending the limits of the political framework, it simultaneously degrades the enemy onto moral and other categories and is forced to make him a monster that must not only be defeated but also utterly destroyed" (CP, 36). Thereby, Schmitt anticipates several subsequent thinkers such as Foucault and Agamben who see a particular configuration of bio-power in twentieth-century politics. Schmitt finds this genocidal war on populations to be motivated by the aspiration of identifying with humanity. This desire to identify one's political position with humanity is the fundamental trait of imperialism and it manifests itself

in the use of democratic discourse in this colonial expansion. As Schmitt puts it when a state usurps a universal concept, "at the expense of its opponent, it tries to identify itself with humanity in the same way as one can misuse peace, justice, progress and civilization in order to claim these as one's own and to deny the same to the enemy" (CP, 54). If we add "democracy" as a value to this list and be careful not to interpret the word "misuse" as an alibi for the possibility of a "proper use," then we can understand how democratic discourse functions within this bio-political colonial framework. "The concept of humanity is an especially useful ideological instrument of imperialist expansion, and in its ethical-humanitarian form it is a specific vehicle of economic imperialism" (CP, 54). Paraphrasing Proudhon, Schmitt claims, "whoever invokes humanity wants to cheat" (CP, 54). Yet the term "cheating" suggests the possibility of an honest political engagement with the enemy. Even though this might be Schmitt's desire to witness, one can also admit that one would invoke any kind of weapon against the enemy, including weapons of dehumanization and ideological delegitimation.

The interesting concept for my purposes is that of "the enemy of democracy." Such a concept seems to be a contradictory one: How can one become an enemy of democracy? How can one decide to be undemocratic? How can one decide not to decide? Once one is put at the center of a fantasized political unity, one cannot consistently make the political decision not to decide the political. Hence, whenever one is confronted with the question of "the alternative of democracy" one finds oneself in an impossible position. How can one decide that political subjects, people, should not make the political decisions? Therefore, discursively one is always put into the position of being against humanity, when one is labeled as an "enemy of democracy." In fact, one becomes an enemy to oneself if one were to decide to be an enemy of democracy. Therefore, it is not surprising that "the enemies of democracy" as Derrida calls them, substitute this tyrannical inside of the democratic discourse with a religious discourse where the decision belongs to the ultimate sovereign (God). Thereby, the political problem of democracy is far from being addressed but rather simply repeated at the domain of the religious. The religious domain itself becomes the political, which is different than the concept of "humanity" substituting the political. This discursive operation explains the way in which democracy functions as a neocolonial and imperial framework and how "the sworn enemies of democracy" remain caught up within this framework. Instead of being caught up in this framework, to resist democracy would mean to resist the question itself. In other words, once confronted with the question of "what is the alternative of democracy," or, "who should rule, if not people," one could invoke a different discursive strategy, not an individualistic place of resistance, but pointing to the very recalcitrant nature of the discourse that puts one in the position of the subject. To accept or even to refuse the question is already too late; one is

already at the center of the fantasized locus of power. This brings us to Schmitt's critique of parliamentary/liberal democracy.

> Every actual democracy rests on the principle that not only are equals equal but unequals will not be treated equally. Democracy requires, therefore, first homogeneity and second—if the need arises—elimination or eradication of heterogeneity. To illustrate this principle it is sufficient to name two different examples of modern democracy: contemporary Turkey, with its radical expulsion of the Greeks and its reckless Turkish nationalization of the country, and the Australian commonwealth, which restricts unwanted entrants through its immigration laws, and like other dominions only takes emigrants who conform to the notion of a "right type of settler." A democracy demonstrates its political power by knowing how to refuse or keep at bay something foreign and unequal that threatens its homogeneity. (CP, 9)

It is curious that Schmitt decides to take his example from Turkey, because at the time the Turkish Republic was not a democratic state. Moreover, probably the restrictions on immigrants by the Australian commonwealth had something to do with its British colonial past. However, Schmitt does not mention this issue either. It is interesting that Schmitt does not take his examples from more "Western-democratic" countries. Yet the conceptual point would not have been different: democracy inevitably takes place within the political distinction of friend and enemy. Democracy does not treat friend and enemy equally. Thereby, rather than becoming an arbitrator between friend and enemy, democracy relies on and perpetuates this distinction. Consequently, the democratic desire to eradicate the political by substituting the enemy as the opponent on a debate, or economic competitor remains impossible to fulfill. Schmitt's claim here supports the thesis that democracy institutes and protects itself undemocratically. Democratic state defines the inside of the sovereign space, just like any other distinctly political regime.

Schmitt's argument concerning the differences between liberalism, parliamentarism, and democracy exhibits the peculiar identity of democracy. As I indicated before, democracy as a concept is almost always modified by a qualifier: liberal democracy, socialist democracy, direct democracy, deliberative democracy, democracy-to-come, etc. These qualifiers serve two distinct purposes that are in tension with each other. On the one hand, by qualifying democracy these signifiers protect democracy from general criticisms. Today, it seems absurd to object to democracy, as there are multiple forms and meanings of democracy. If one has problems with parliamentary democracy one can defend it with another qualifier. At the core of this defense is the conviction that the ideal of equality of people and their rule cannot be denied. Hence, the task is to find the correct qualifier to bring about the ideal of democracy. On the other hand, all these qualifiers function as corrective for the idea of democracy, because the necessity of these qualifiers makes it

clear that democracy cannot manifest itself in its "basic" form, namely the identity of the rulers and the ruled. Such a definition has to be modified by the equality of all persons. Yet this modification cannot be achieved by democracy but rather by liberalism. "The equality of all persons as persons is not democracy but a certain kind of liberalism, not a state form but an individualistic-humanitarian ethic and *Weltanschauung*."[6] Democracy can also be defined as the manifestation of the general will. In addition to all the difficulties to define such a general will, democracy requires the delimitation of the internal space of the system such that those who do not belong to this general will can be excluded. To articulate a general will where all the persons are equal and somehow represented would be the end of the political and eradication of the principle of equality itself. This is because equality always takes place under a "sphere" or with respect to a qualifier, and such delimitation under a sphere inevitably undermines the equality under different spheres (e.g., political equality under a government erases the possibility of economic equality). Hence, the conceptual problem of equality exists not only with respect to those who are left outside (foreigners) but also within the group of equals as well.

Schmitt's discussion of parliamentarism in relation to democracy has far-reaching consequences, and it is not restricted to his critique of the Weimar Republic. Indeed, most of Schmitt's arguments are more applicable in today's liberal democracies. The basic idea behind parliamentary democracy is the recognition that the process through which people come to certain political convictions is a complicated process. Consequently, a simple opinion of the majority is not the best way of making political decisions. Therefore, the parliament is not only conceived as a representative body (which is a separate but related issue), but also a body where discussions and openness define the political process. Schmitt quotes from Bentham in this context, "In parliament ideas meet, and contact between ideas gives off sparks and leads to evidence" (CPD, 7). This kind of engagement with the political for Schmitt is an attempt to displace the radical existential dimension of the political. The connection between liberalism and democracy is neither purely historical nor is it necessary; rather, it is *conceptual*. Therefore, Schmitt claims "liberalism and democracy have to be distinguished from one another so that the patchwork picture that makes up modern mass democracy can be recognized" (CPD, 9). Yet, this distinction would not be demonstrated by exposing their merely historical coincidence. Their relationship is based on the liberal idea that "truth can be found through an unrestrained clash of opinion and that competition will produce harmony" (CPD, 35). The general metaphysical principle here is that truth is contained in the best-defended opinion, which ultimately produces political harmony. It is this idea of truth as a unity that is projected as the political solution for political harmony. Schmitt's attitude to this tendency is complicated. It can be argued that for him this unity is

primary and democracy complicates the emergence of this unity. However, one can also interpret Schmitt in a different way. For Schmitt, the very idea of unity itself is a problem, because such a unity emerges under coercive conditions and these conditions are masked by the idea of freedom. "Freedom of opinion is a freedom for private people; it is necessary for that competition of opinions in which best opinion wins" (CPD, 39). This metaphysical conviction supports both the idea of parliament where political opinions are debated and the public is educated. Schmitt is skeptical of this idea, not because of the fact that such an engagement does not take place empirically and historically, but because "the educator identifies his will at least provisionally with that of the people, not to mention that the content of the education that the pupil will receive is also decided by the educator" (CPD, 28).

Today, one can observe this tendency within the postcolonial structure of the world, where the spread of democracy implies the liberal education of the disciplined pupils to operate within a political system. This metaphysical understanding of truth also sustains the idea of the separation of power (the division and balance of power) within modern parliamentary systems. Yet this idea undermines the political because "in the domain of the political, people do not face each other as abstractions (persons with opinions), but as politically interested and politically determined persons, as citizens, governors or governed, politically allied or opponents—in any case, therefore, in political categories" (CPD, 11). The implications of this observation are important for the argument that I have been trying to develop in this book, namely, "a democracy demonstrates its political power by knowing how to refuse or keep at bay something foreign and unequal that threatens its homogeneity" (CPD, 9). In that context, Schmitt observes that American democracy does not allow "foreigners to share its power or its wealth" (CPD, 11). Therefore, it would be misleading to simply interpret Schmitt as the protector of homogeneity, but we should consider him as someone who would also be indispensable to understand the paradox of democracy in producing homogeneity while ostensibly fostering diversity. This desire for homogeneity is not simply a shortcoming where democracy fails to deliver the diversity it promises, but rather democracy functions by its very logic of "managing" diversity. Such a management may be considered necessary for someone within an enclosed political space (such as the European Union or a nation-state). However, such a production of unity and management of diversity is problematic within a postcolonial context because within a parliamentary democracy "a balance of opinions achieved through the contradiction and opposition of the parties can as a consequence never extend to absolute questions of an ideology, but can only concern things that are by their nature relative and therefore appropriate for this purpose" (CPD, 46). Hence, liberal democracy, far from producing diversity, requires homogeneity of citizens that it produces through the political categories of enemy and friend. In this juncture it

is important to note that other variations of democracy, such as deliberative democracy, relies on the same metaphysical principle concerning the production of truth, and therefore does not go beyond managing diversity in a more efficient way. There is, therefore, a conceptual tension between liberalism and democracy. "Modern mass democracy attempts to realize an identity of governed and governing, and thus it confronts parliament as an inconceivable and outmoded institution" (CPD, 15). This problem of the parliament can be extended to the entire ideology of liberalism. For liberalism "freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, freedom of discussion, are not only useful and expedient . . . but really life-and-death questions" (CPD, 36). Yet the problem here is not simply to make these values compatible with the democratic principle, because conceptually "if democratic identity is taken seriously, then in an emergency, no other constitutional institution can withstand the sole criterion of the people's will, however it is expressed" (CPD, 15). It would be wrong (actually hypocritical), therefore, to claim that the solution is to reconcile democracy with liberalism, because such a position ignores the inherent paradox of democracy as well as liberalism. The problem is that democratic principles, as well as liberal principles, are not undermined by the enemies of them, but rather by their proponents.

> Democracy seems fated then to destroy itself in the problem of the formation of a will. For radical democrats, democracy as such has its own value without reference to the content of the politics pursued with the help of democracy. If the danger exists that democracy might be used in order to defeat democracy, then the radical democrat has to decide whether to remain a democrat against the majority of give up his own position. (CPD, 28)

This paradox of democracy is primarily acute in the postcolonial world order. The suspension of elections in Palestine and Algeria may be considered to be temporary aberrations from the march of liberal democracy. However, they also expose the fundamental paradox of democracy within the political. The problem becomes more intricate when we consider that the fundamental principles of liberalism do not make sense without the democratic identity. This is because if freedom of speech, press, opinion, etc., could be values in themselves without reference to the political structure, one could argue that they could exist within an enlightened despotism, where they are exercised but the will that emerges as their consequence does not need to have political power. This argument demonstrates that even though democracy and liberalism are not necessarily connected, their conceptual dependence complicate both of their grounds.

It is important to note that Schmitt's understanding of the political is not necessarily couched in terms of a binary opposition. There are several qualifications to the friend-enemy distinction that resists a straightforward binary

opposition where the terms are purified from each other and occupy exhaustively the conceptual space of the political. For Schmitt, it is always possible that political friends transform themselves into enemies. It is possible to read Schmitt as resisting the liberal-democratic desire to transform the political into the homogeneity of friendship. That is to say, it is possible to interpret Schmitt in terms of an irreducible existential difference within the political that resists the universality of the homogeneous political management. Such an interpretation provides the basis for resisting the colonial expansion of democracy. To the extent that democracy requires a common and indisputable foundation for the oppositions to be managed, it cannot provide the foundations for radically different ideological and existential perspectives. Of course, here one should also confront the blackmail of democracy namely the question of "What else? Is there an alternative?" Perhaps we cannot find the answer in Schmitt here. All he is willing to provide is the problematic nature of this question. The very position that allows this question to be asked presupposes a common political space. Moreover, the very question situates the questioner at the center of homogeneous space, yet one is placed there as a disciplined cogitological subject who always aims to produce and reproduce the desire for political unity.

Even though Schmitt himself does not do it fully, we can follow Bakunin here when he writes: "The concrete individual, the social reality of life, is violently forced into an all-embracing system. The centralizing fanaticism of the Enlightenment is no less despotic than the unity and identity of modern democracy. Unity is slavery; all tyrannical institutions rest on centralism and authority, whether they are, as in modern democracy, sanctioned by universal suffrage or not" (Bakunin as cited by Schmitt, CPD, 67). Of course, we should be weary of Bakunin's invocation of the individual in this context. We should be mindful how the individual, à la Hegel, is produced in a way that is far from resisting the system and actually sustains it in a colonial fashion. Yet it is also true that "the bourgeois ideal of peaceful agreement, an ongoing and prosperous business that has advantages for everyone, becomes the monstrosity of cowardly intellectualism" (CPD, 69). One cannot resist such monstrosity by insisting on a problematic ideal of individual. The irreducible difference here is not that of the individual, not a moment of difference within the movement of the system, but rather a postcolonial disruption.

## CHANTAL MOUFFE

Mouffe's interpretation and engagement with Schmitt takes place within the problem of managing the antagonism at the heart of the political. Mouffe accepts Schmitt's basic definition of the political in terms of friend-enemy distinction as well as the idea of unavoidable exclusion at the heart of politi-

cal constitution of identity. Interestingly, Mouffe deploys the idea of "constitutive other" that she takes from Derrida in order to claim that Schmitt's idea of antagonism within the political cannot be overcome. Yet Schmitt's criticism of democracy, according to Mouffe, can still be countered because political identities, which are at the basis of friend-enemy distinction, are not fixed. Indeed, this is an idea that Mouffe and Laclau defended in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*: "The identities are purely relational, this is but another way of saying that there is no identity which can be fully constituted."[7] For Mouffe, Schmitt remains within the dilemma of denying multiplicity within a political unit.

What leads Schmitt to formulate such a dilemma is the way he envisages political unity.

> The unity of the state must, for him, be a concrete unity, already given and therefore stable. This is also true of the way he envisages the identity of the people: it also must exist as a given. Because of that, his distinction between "us" and "them" is not really politically constructed; it is merely a recognition of already-existing borders. While he rejects the pluralist conception, Schmitt is nevertheless unable to situate himself on a completely different terrain because he retains a view of political and social identities as empirically given. His position is, in fact, ultimately contradictory. On the one hand, he seems seriously to consider the possibility that pluralism could bring about the dissolution of the unity of the state. If that dissolution is, however, a distinctive political possibility, it also entails that the existence of such a unity is itself a contingent fact, which requires a political construction. On the other hand, however, the unity is presented as a factum whose obviousness could ignore the political conditions of its production. Only as a result of this sleight of hand can the alternative be as inexorable as Schmitt wants it to be.[8]

One can observe a more blatant sleight of hand in Mouffe's own response to Schmitt. While Mouffe accepts the inevitability of antagonism within the political realm, she sidesteps the conceptual problem antagonism poses for democracy by introducing what she calls "agonistic pluralism." Agonistic democracy takes place among the adversaries, not antagonists. Indeed, for Mouffe "we can . . . reformulate our problem by saying that envisaged from the perspective of 'agonistic pluralism' the aim of democratic politics is to transform *antagonism* into *agonism*" (TDP, 108). The political identities within a political space can be plural and this plurality does not necessarily undermine the unity of the political space. What we have to learn is the tolerance of opposing views.

> This is the real meaning of liberal-democratic tolerance, which does not entail condoning ideas that we oppose or being indifferent to standpoints that we disagree with, but treating those who defend them as legitimate opponents. This category of the "adversary" does not eliminate antagonism, though, and it

should be distinguished from the liberal notion of the competitor with which it
is sometimes identified. An adversary is an enemy, but a legitimate enemy,
one with whom we have some common ground because we have a shared
adhesion to the ethico-political principles of liberal democracy: liberty and
equality. But we disagree concerning the meaning and implementation of
those principles, and such a disagreement is not one that could be resolved
through deliberation and rational discussion. Indeed, given the ineradicable
pluralism of value, there is no rational resolution of the conflict. (TDP, 102)

The immediate problem is of course how one deploys the terms liberty and
equality. Are certain people against liberty and equality, in which case they
are not simply enemies but they do not even belong to humanity? What does
it mean that they are not "legitimate" opponents? Mouffe has an important
insight concerning the status of constitutive outside in the construction of
identity: "Let me point out that the 'constitutive outside' cannot be reduced
to a dialectical negation. In order to be a true outside, the outside has to be
incommensurable with the inside, and at the same time, the condition of
emergence of the latter" (TDP, 12). The constitutive relationship between
different identities within a political space creates the "chain of equiv-
alences" for Mouffe and this idea is the basis of pluralistic democracy jus-
tifying the march of modern European society towards equality and liberty.
Yet the question remains concerning the relationship between the idea of
constitutive outside and those who are not adhering to "the ethico-political
principles of liberal democracy." By introducing the ideas of liberty and
equality, Mouffe reduces the idea of constitutive outside to dialectical nega-
tion, something she explicitly warns against. Who are the enemies of agonis-
tic pluralism? Our conceptual problem here is not simply including those
who are excluded from the political sphere. Mouffe acknowledges that ago-
nistic pluralism "does not mean . . . that adversaries can never cease to
disagree, but that does not prove that antagonism has been eradicated. To
accept the view of the adversary is to undergo a radical change in political
identity" (TDP, 102). The main problem is how the transformation of antago-
nism to agonism takes place. The only possibility of a transformation of the
antagonists is to become agonists by a dialectical negation and accepting
ethico-political principles of liberal democracy. So, according to Mouffe,
liberal democracy does not mean that "we" will give up our identity, but
"they" are going to become just like "us" which is quintessential dialectical
sleight of hand. In Mouffe's version, we once again observe that democracy
cannot deliver what it is supposed to deliver, namely a negotiation of antago-
nisms. Rather, democracy becomes a property that properly belongs to me
and the other has to accept. In other words, I will not be the other; the other
will be me. There should not be antagonisms concerning the rules them-
selves. The implication seems to be the antagonism between the democratic

state and nondemocratic state is not a political confrontation. Mouffe clearly wants to resist that idea of foundational identity.

> Coming to terms with the constitutive nature of power implies relinquishing the ideal of a democratic society as the realization of a perfect harmony or transparency. The democratic character of a society can only be given by the fact that no limited social actor can attribute to herself or himself the representation of the totality and claim to have the "mastery" of the foundation. (TDP, 100)

Mouffe follows Lefort's idea that the dissolution of the markers of certainty characterizes modern democracy. Therefore, the site of power in a democratic society must remain empty. In Mouffe's words: "When we envisage democratic politics from such an anti-essentialist perspective, we can begin to understand that, for democracy to exist, no social agent should be able to claim any mastery of the foundation of society" (TDP, 21).

Yet Mouffe seems to consider the ethico-political principles of liberal democracy as the foundation of society because Mouffe, like many other thinkers, conceptualizes the political from the European-colonialist perspective. Why are willingness to engage or absence of physical violence enough for democratic society? Why do values such as liberty and equality distinguish those who belong from those who do not? Liberty and equality are as much subject to the idea of constitutive outside as identities within a pluralistic structure as any other. Therefore, liberty and equality exclude those who are not democratic or they are empty signifiers that all humanity subscribes to. *In either case, Mouffe does not address Schmitt's conceptual problem concerning democracy but pushes it one step further.* If equality and liberty are values that all humanity adheres to, then the distinction between antagonism and agonism would be impossible. What Mouffe does not admit is that equality and liberty become "universal concepts" through violence and colonialism. Therefore, the absence of violence can never become the precondition of the political. The antagonists have to accept liberty and equality in order to be transformed into adversaries. How is such a transformation possible? Mouffe's answer is ironically a disciplinary one.

> The view that I want to put forward is that it is not by providing arguments about the rationality embodied in liberal-democratic institutions that one can contribute to the creation of democratic citizens. Democratic individuals can only be made possible by multiplying the institutions, the discourses, the forms of life that foster identification with democratic values. (TDP, 96)

This is precisely the problem of democracy that requires disciplinary mechanisms and institutions in order to create citizens and instill certain values. I will discuss these disciplinary mechanisms in the next chapter. However, it is

important to note why Mouffe needs such democratic citizens. "The novelty of democratic politics is not the overcoming of this us/them opposition—which is an impossibility—but the different way in which it is established. The crucial issue is to establish this us/them discrimination in a way that is compatible with pluralist democracy" (TDP, 101). The problem Mouffe faces here is twofold: on the one hand, she wants to allow certain differences within the democratic space. Yet, not all oppositions can be accepted. In other words, agonistic pluralism accepts differences.

> However, such a view does not allow a total pluralism and it is important to recognize the limits to pluralism, which are required by a democratic politics that aims at challenging a wide range of relations of subordination. It is therefore necessary to distinguish the position I am defending here from the type of extreme pluralism that emphasizes heterogeneity and incommensurability and according to which pluralism—understood as valorization of all differences—should have no limits. I consider that, despite its claim to be more democratic, such a perspective prevents us from recognizing how certain differences are constructed as relations of subordination and should therefore be challenged by a radical democratic politics. There is only a multiplicity of identities without any common denominator, and it is impossible to distinguish between differences that exist but should not exist and differences that do not exist but should exist. (TDP, 20)

Mouffe needs such a distinction between differences because "extreme pluralism" which refuses any construction of collective identity "remains blind to the relations of power," and "ignores the limits imposed on the extension of the sphere of rights by the fact that some existing rights have been constructed on the very exclusion or subordination of others" (TDP, 20). Yet, how does one distinguish between differences that "should not exist" and those that "should exist"? The distinction Mouffe makes is a typical Kantian opposition between the empirical and moral. For Mouffe, the answer is liberalism; therefore even though she does engage with Schmitt it is because "shortcomings, Schmitt's questioning of liberalism is a very powerful one . . . Schmitt is an adversary from whom we can learn, because we can draw on his insights. Turning them against him, we should use them to formulate a better understanding of liberal democracy, one that acknowledges its paradoxical nature" (TDP, 57). Therefore, even if we take Schmitt's work seriously, and some do more than others, he is ultimately the enemy that needs to be defeated. The irony of this attitude, namely "let's take him seriously as much as possible, but not identify too much with him, because we might be contaminated by his potentially perverse thoughts," is that it affirms Schmitt's thought in its essential form. In other words, if we approach his work by a preestablished determination of rejection, we identify with him in a profound manner.

Mouffe's relation to Schmitt is defined by the two main parameters of the European political philosophy, namely the tradition that starts with the French Revolution and obsession with the Holocaust that needs to be excluded. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe claim that "the key moment in the beginnings of the democratic revolution can be found in the French Revolution" (HSS, 155). For Mouffe and Laclau,

> The French Revolution is not a transition, it is an origin, and the phantom of an origin. What is unique about it is what constitutes its historical interest, and, what is more, it is this "unique" element that has become universal: the first experience of democracy.[9] If, as Hannah Arendt has said, "it was the French and not the American Revolution that set the world on fire,"[10] it is because it was the first to found itself on no other legitimacy than the people. It thus initiated what Claude Lefort has shown to be a new mode of institution of the social. This break with the ancien régime, symbolized by the Declaration of the Rights of Man, would provide the discursive conditions, which made it possible to propose the different forms of inequality as illegitimate and antinatural, and thus make them equivalent as forms of oppression. Here lay the profound subversive power of the democratic discourse, which would allow the spread of equality and liberty into increasingly wider domains and therefore act as a fermenting agent upon the different forms of struggle against subordination. (HSS, 155)

It is clear that for Mouffe and Laclau, the French Revolution marks the beginning of the democratic revolution of ever-increasing equality. On the other hand, for Mouffe the differences that should not exist within a pluralistic, agonistic democracy are the ghosts of National Socialism, which did emerge as a result of democratic paradox, and now Islamic-oriented politics is framed in terms of the same possibility of undermining democracy democratically. In the next chapter I will discuss this relationship between the Western European political philosophy and its relationship to Islamic oriented politics in the case of Turkey.

In order to conclude this chapter and prepare the conceptual ground for the next one, I now turn to Mouffe and Laclau's idea of identity in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. In a sense, this work shapes Mouffe's subsequent engagement with Schmitt even though there is not one mention of Schmitt in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. For Mouffe and Laclau, left-wing politics should turn into pluralistic democracy in order to address the question of recognition as well as redistribution as it was traditionally done in Marxist theory. The possibility and the necessity of engaging with recognition are based on their idea of identity of several groups with the political sphere. The left does not need to abandon identity politics for Mouffe and Laclau, but "to create a chain of equivalence among the various democratic struggles against different forms of subordination" (HSS, xviii). Such an intervention is possible because identity is not a fixed identity of a class as imagined by Marxist

theory, but "all identity is relational—even if the system of relations does not reach the point of being fixed as a stable system of differences" (HSS, 113). Since for Mouffe and Laclau identity is never fully constituted, the use of the term of the identity of the subject becomes crucial. They write: "whenever we use the category of 'subject' in this text, we will do so in the sense of 'subject positions' within a discursive structure. Subjects cannot, therefore, be the origin of social relations—not even in the limited sense of being endowed with powers that render an experience possible—as all 'experience' depends on precise discursive conditions of possibility" (HSS, 115).

In many ways their conception of identity, and consequently their understanding of the subject in terms of subject positions, constitute the crucial argument of Laclau and Mouffe's book. Since there is no static subject, the foundation of society cannot be fixed; subject positions that emerge through discursive practices are always relational and never fixed. The subject position of an individual in a society is never fully constituted but rather it is always negotiated in relation to other positions. This relational structure implies there is no positive identity. My question with respect to Mouffe and Laclau's analysis concerns the status of the discourse (or the system of differences) that provides the subject positions for social actors.

In one of the questions at the beginning of *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, Slovaj Zizek raises an interesting point that might help to illustrate the conceptual problem of subjectivity in Mouffe and Laclau. Zizek asks: "is the 'subject' simply the result of the process of subjectivization, of interpellation, of performatively assuming some 'fixed subject-position,' or does the Lacanian notion of the 'barred subject' (and the German Idealist notion of subject as self-relating negativity) also pose an alternative to traditional identitarian-substantialist metaphysics?"[11] Mouffe and Laclau reject the traditional conception of the subject as a rational transparent agent via Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger (HSS, 115). Yet they still rely on a subject as self-relating negativity, especially when they refer to subject positions constituted relationally. Now the question is not simply whether the system of differences that generate positions is closed or fixed. The question concerns the shape of the movement of the political. More precisely for my purposes the question is as to how democratic discourse moves as a self-relating negativity. The shape of this movement, as Zizek observes, is self-relating negativity, that is, it is dialectical. While this formulation is an alternative to traditional metaphysical subjectivity, it still is a very problematic metaphysical and political gesture. Democracy as the identity of a discourse and as a discursive identity moves in a dialectical fashion. Thereby, it generates its other, the nondemocratic, it defines its otherness as such and excludes it. However, it also tries to negate this negation and tries to incorporate the other once it is tamed. The problem of course is that the other of democracy is always defined as a negation and opposite of it. Thereby, democracy

assimilates all the disruptive elements of the other and domesticates the other into itself and performs the most conservative strategy possible: it does not perform this by simply preserving the status quo, it does not exclude change, but rather colonizes the future of any possible change and dictates the shape of the movement of the change. In order to move in this dialectical fashion, however, democracy requires a highly disciplinary set of mechanisms and rules and has to produce a "demos" to incorporate into its movement. Therefore, the answer to Zizek's question should be both yes and no: It is true that the subject as self-relating negativity is different from an atomistic subject conceptualized as constant as simple self-identity throughout the movement. And no, the concept of the subject as self-relating negativity is also equally subject to the metaphysical and political problems associated with the issues of subjectivity.

## NOTES

1. Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London: Verso, 2011), p. 2. Reprinted with the permission of Verso.

2. Plato, *Timaeus; Critias; Cleitophon; Menexenus; Epistles*, trans. Robert Gregg Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), 235D. Hereafter abbreviated as M followed by the page number.

3. Schmitt, Carl, *Political Theology*, ed. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005), p. 9. Hereafter abbreviated as PT followed by the page number.

4. Kierkegaard, *Repetition*, as quoted by Schmitt in *Political Theology*, p. 15.

5. Schmitt, Carl, *Der Begriff Des Politischen* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1996), p. 26, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2007), p. 26. Translation modified. Hereafter abbreviated as CP followed by the page number.

6. Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*. trans. Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1985), p. 13. Hereafter abbreviated as CPD followed by the page number.

7. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 2001), p. 11. Hereafter abbreviated as HSS followed by the page number.

8. Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), pp. 53–54. Hereafterabbreviated as TDP followed by the page number.

9. François Furet, *Penser la Révolution Française* (Paris: Fayard, 1978), p. 109. As cited by Mouffe and Laclau, HSS, p.155.

10. Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (London: 1973), p. 55. As cited by Mouffe and Laclau, HSS.

11. Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), p. 9.

## Chapter Two

# Foucault, Bio-disciplinary Power, and "Cogitological Power"

What kinds of education, enlightenment, training or experience are required to engender forms of economy based on agents who act according to their rational self-interest rather than corruption or cronyism? What produces forms of politics based on mutual trust and respect for opponents rather than suspicion and repression? In short, these debates ask, how can people learn to recognize themselves and respond as subjects of new forms of power? What forms of power, conversely, can engineer the liberal or democratic political subject? Democracy is an engineering project, concerned with the manufacture of new political subjects and with subjecting people to new ways of being governed.

—Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*[1]

The current ruling party (AKP) in Turkey is a reincarnation of a previously banned political party named Refah (Welfare). On July 31, 2001, the European Court of Human Rights upheld, by four votes to three, the judgment of the Turkish Constitutional Court to close the Islamic-oriented Welfare Party. The European court ruled that the Turkish court's decision did not violate Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association) of the European Convention on Human Rights and ruled unanimously that no separate issues arose under Articles 9 (freedom of thought), 10 (freedom of expression), 14 (prohibition of discrimination), 17 (prohibition of abuse of rights), and 18 (limitations on use of restrictions on rights) of the Convention and Articles 1 (protection of property) and 3 (right to free elections) of Protocol No. 1.

The European court declared that "political parties whose leaders incited others to use violence and/or supported political aims that were inconsistent with one or more rules of democracy or sought the destruction of democracy and the suppression of the rights and freedoms it recognized could not rely on the Convention to protect them from sanctions imposed as a result." The

court held that the sanctions imposed on the applicants could reasonably be considered to meet a pressing social need for the protection of democratic society, since, on the pretext of giving a different meaning to the principle of secularism, the leaders of the Welfare Party had declared their intention to establish a plurality of legal systems based on differences in religious belief, to institute Islamic law (the Sharia), a system of law that was in marked contrast to the values embodied in the convention. They had also left in doubt their position regarding recourse to force in order to come to power and, more particularly, to retain power. The decision is particularly interesting because three years before, in 1998, Turkey was condemned for closing the pro-Islamic Welfare Party. Critics claimed that no action "highlighted the deep gulf that separates Turkey from its allies more than the Turkish Constitutional Court's January decision to ban the pro-Islamic Welfare party, the country's largest political movement."[2] Apparently, the decision was welcome in Turkey or did not get much attention, "but abroad, the move drew tough rebukes from the United States and the European Union, which fired off separate statements warning that the decision cast doubts on Turkey's commitment to democracy and the freedom of expression. Americans have difficulty reconciling this with America's concept of democracy," one senior U.S. official in Washington said shortly before the U.S. statement was made public.[3]

It is too tempting to conclude from these two conflicting positions three years apart that the European Union and European Court are not committed to the true spirit of democracy. It is too easy to accuse the European Union of being hypocritical (which it no doubt is) and to limit our cynicism to the inevitable space between the inadequate practices of democracy that are contaminated by opportunist politicians and uncommitted intellectuals, and the ideal of democracy, which is never accessible to imperfect humans. Democracy is an ideal form of government and imperfect political agents are obviously incapable of living up to the true meaning of democracy. However, such conclusions would end up affirming what is precisely to be put into question. Is there such a spirit of democracy? Is there a problem of thinking of democracy as an ideal state, or a promise? When one restricts one's criticism to the currently existing forms of democracy one ends up affirming "the promise" of an ideal (or better) democracy in the very act of lamenting its absence. Yet, neither the lamenting for its absence nor criticizing its current presence, which in the last analysis are one and the same strategy, explain how the "ideal of democracy" functions within the discursive practices of democracy.

I contend that Foucault's conception of power that he develops in *Discipline and Punish* (disciplinary power) and *The History of Sexuality* (bio-power) provide an adequate starting point for understanding the functioning of the ideal of democracy. Such an argument aims to demystify our unreflec-

tive fascination with democracy today and sets the concept of democracy into a critical context. My argument has two dimensions: first, democratic discourse produces citizens through bio-disciplinary claims and these citizens themselves further produce claims concerning other political systems. Second, the power relations that exist within democratic structures and institutions are bio-disciplinary and cannot be reduced to claims of emancipation or freedom. This obviously does not mean that there are no claims for freedom and resistance to oppression within democratic discourse. However, these claims do not function outside of bio-disciplinary logic; indeed these claims are the concrete manifestations of bio-disciplinary power. Hence, my claim is not that democracy functions in a totalitarian or oppressive way. For the most part, it does not have to, though occasionally it seems that it is necessary. However, the functioning of democracy cannot be explained in terms of the discourses of emancipation and freedom either. In fact, both of these arguments are trapped within the problem of sovereignty and the sovereign subject. A good example of this is Noam Chomsky, who in his *Manufacturing Consent*[4] is trapped within a conception of a possible autonomous and free subject. His critique of the functioning of democracy attributes the same kind of sovereign subjectivity to multinational corporations and media. Consequently, his analysis, while empirically very useful and interesting, theoretically suffers from a commitment to the very same structures that he criticizes, which is exploited by his critics. My analysis of democracy relies neither on some kind of conspiratorial "thought control" strategy nor on a liberal commitment to the sovereign subject, who cuts through the darkness associated with evil forces in society and reaches the light through struggle. I do not say that this discursive subject does not exist, but I claim that it functions in an entirely different way within democratic discourse.

Foucault's notion of bio-disciplinary power also explains the difference between modern democracy and the ancient Greek conception of democracy without appealing to the classical conception of sovereignty. This conception of sovereignty presupposes a unity. Consequently, a critique of democratic structures, such as Chomsky's, presumes the same kind of unity when he criticizes the "power elite," "agenda-setting media," etc. What is manufactured within democracy is not consent, but a unity of a political subject. Therefore, we cannot simply criticize this system by appealing to the same unity without being trapped in it. The bio-disciplinary power does not function as a unified system, in a comprehensive and exhaustive fashion. It, therefore, does not rely on a unified theory of sovereignty. The distinction between ancient and contemporary democracy is not that the former is participatory and the latter is representative, but rather that the latter manufactures obedient, disciplined, and what I will call cogitological subjects. Democracy is impossible to conceptualize without this modern notion of subjectivity.

## DISCIPLINARY POWER

In *Discipline and Punish*,[5] Foucault distinguishes between two distinct conceptions of the subject, the juridical and the obedient. Each of these is based on a different technology of power: the former on juridical power and the latter on disciplinary power. Although Foucault develops these concepts in the context of transformations within the penal system, he also claims that the disciplinary power spread throughout the whole social body, and formed what might be called a disciplinary society (DP, 209). Both of these conceptions of power are developed as a reaction to what Foucault calls "monarchical power." Monarchical power consists of the law of the king. Punishment under monarchical power is understood as the revenge of the king, as the crimes are considered to be committed against his body. Foucault makes it clear that the attempt to transform the penile system from the arbitrariness of the power of the king to the juridical system had little to do with a concern for humaneness or justice, but was rather aimed at the optimum utilization of the penal apparatus. The reformers criticized the lack of efficiency rather than the unfairness of the old system. Unlike authoritative power that displays (makes visible) the power of the king and considers crimes to be committed against the sovereign, juridical power regards crimes as committed against society. The juridical subject corresponds to the Enlightenment ideal of the human being who is rational, generates and is in control of its desires, inclinations, and thoughts, has a more or less transparent relationship to itself, and functions in terms of representations. This conception of the juridical subject has a special status within the transformation of penal procedures. The subject is considered to be a rational citizen of the social contract into which he or she freely enters. Society consists of a contractual relationship of individuals. If one commits a crime, one is breaking one's own promise to society and to oneself, thereby becoming a contradiction, a monster. In other words, the criminal is a "juridically paradoxical being," (DP, 90) because he has broken the pact, and thus becomes the enemy of society. The purported aim of juridical power is to reintegrate the individual into society. According to Foucault, juridical power relies on similarity and correspondence between the crime and the punishment. That is, the punishment fits the crime as a representation. While this model necessitates several different means of punishment (corresponding to different crimes), Foucault observes that starting in the eighteenth century, imprisonment becomes the predominant way of punishing criminals. The predominance of imprisonment indicates the presence of a different technology of power, which does not simply punish and attempt to rehabilitate the individual soul, but which disciplines the body. Disciplinary power produces individuals. Unlike authoritative power, where the subject as the source and the force of power is visible, in disciplinary power those who are subjected to power are visible,

but the power itself is not. Those subjected to power are individualized, normalized, and rendered visible.

The transition from monarchical to juridical power involves a shift in the focus of visibility. Under monarchical power the king demonstrates his power through punishment. This ritual is important, as the crime is committed against the king and the punishment is his revenge. The vivid description of torture in the first chapter of *Discipline and Punish* demonstrates this visible nature of punishment. However, with juridical reform power becomes invisible. The punishment is carried out without being made into a spectacle. Foucault's point is that thereby power becomes both more efficient and more insidious.

The juridical model requires a kind of punishment where the punishment fits the crime, not in terms of justice and scale, but in terms of its representation. Similar crimes require similar punishments. Foucault calls this art of punishing "a whole technology of representation" (DP 104). The idea of representation is consistent with the interpretation of the human being as a juridical subject. In other words, juridical power takes the human being to be the rational subject of the Enlightenment. Foucault quotes from Vermeil to demonstrate the representative correspondence between crimes and punishments: "Those who abuse public liberty will be deprived of their own; those who abuse the benefits of law and the privileges of public office will be deprived of their civil rights; speculation and usury will be punished by fines; theft will be punished by confiscation; 'vainglory' by humiliation; murder by death; fire-raising by the stake" (DP, 105).

However, and this is the crucial point of Foucault's argument, the punishment does not take these forms based on resemblance, analogy, and proximity. Despite these prescriptions of the juridical conception of power, paradoxically, prison, which was not even considered to be a proper punishment according to the juridical model, became the predominant mode of punishment in modernity. With this, Foucault intervenes into the transition from monarchical power to juridical power. His argument is that the juridical subject presupposed by juridical power is produced by a different kind of power, namely, by disciplinary power. The predominance of imprisonment indicates the presence of a different technology of power, which does not simply punish and attempt to rehabilitate the individual soul, but disciplines the body. Disciplinary power produces "individuals."

Foucault discusses disciplinary power in the figure of the soldier. The movements, gestures, and attitudes of the soldier are regulated in such a way that the body of the soldier produces the maximum efficiency. Disciplinary power manifests itself in terms of its management of the body. Foucault claims that the body becomes the object and the target of disciplinary power, which produces a docile, subjected body. This disciplinary power is at the basis of the juridical understanding of the subject. As Foucault puts it, "disci-

pline makes individuals" (DP, 170). The nature of this power is such that it is not owned like a property, but always exercised. It produces subject positions that can be occupied by anybody. Hence, one can be both the subject and the object of discipline. This self-disciplining nature of power complicates any simplistic notion of oppression. "At the heart of the procedures of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected" (DP, 185). The individual, accordingly, is a reality fabricated by the specific technology of power that is called disciplinary.

Disciplinary power is exercised through its invisibility. This aspect of power leads to Foucault's use of the idea of Panopticon, which is a system of prisons where prisoners are constantly observed without the observer being visible. The one-sided gaze of the disciplinary power within the Panopticon allows the observer to produce knowledge, but it also makes power omnipresent without its source being present at all. That is, the prisoners are disciplined without necessarily anybody observing them. In a sense, they discipline themselves. In this self-disciplining paradigm the prisoner "becomes the principle of his own subjection" (DP, 203). For Foucault, the Panopticon is not simply a literal means of punishment, but also a metaphor for a new figure of political technology. Panopticon becomes a metaphor for society, not interpreted existentially as a trap, but as a structure where participants become their own guards. "The panoptic schema, without disappearing as such or losing any of its properties, was destined to spread throughout the social body" (DP, 207). The founder of the Panopticon, Jeremy Bentham, being the democrat that he was, did not see that "the increase of power created by the panoptic machine may degenerate into tyranny; the disciplinary mechanism will be democratically controlled, since it will be constantly accessible 'to the great tribunal committee of the world'" (DP, 207). However, the problem is not that tyranny emerges through disciplinary mechanisms because of the lack of democracy, but precisely that tyranny, as the increase of disciplinary power, is a democratic process.

## BIO-POWER

Disciplinary power applies to one aspect of modern power. The power at work in disciplinary structures creates individuals, docile bodies, and disciplined subjects. The other aspect of modern power, bio-power, works on the population as a whole. In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault describes bio-power:

> The second focused on the species body, the body imbued with mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the condi-

tions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population*. The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed.[6]

Like disciplinary power, bio-power has a different relationship to life and death than sovereign power. Whereas the power of the king is to decide whether someone will live or die, bio-power fosters life or disallows it. The significance of this transformation is that bio-power administers life and creates human population.

In his 1976 lecture course published as "Society Must Be Defended," Foucault explains the relationship between the disciplinary and bio-power.

> Now I think we see something new emerging in the second half of the eighteenth century: a new technology of power, but this time it is not disciplinary. This technology of power does not exclude the former, does not exclude disciplinary technology, but it does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort if infiltrating it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques.[7]

It is important to underline the implications of this two-tiered notion of power for contemporary dilemmas of political action. For Foucault, modern power has a number of differences from the conception of power associated with classical sovereignty. In order to understand the functioning of democracy we need to disentangle democratic power from these classical conceptions of sovereignty and associate them with the bio-disciplinary power. It is power, according to Foucault, that produces individuals. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes:

> The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an "ideological" representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called "discipline." We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it "excludes," it "represses," it "censors," it "abstracts," it "masks," it "conceals." In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (DP, 194)

I would extend Foucault's designation of individual to include the political agent of democracy, or the democratic subject. Hence, the democratic subject is not the one who translates her desires, thoughts, and needs into political action and demands, but rather the one who is manufactured in the public domain, or the political sphere through bio-disciplinary structures.

Modern power, both in its individualizing effects (disciplinary) as well as its effects on population (bio-power) is "not something that is acquired, seized or shared" (HoS, 94). It cannot be understood as a substance that can belong to a subject. Power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective (HoS, 94). This is an important dimension of Foucault's conception of power and how it explains the functioning of democracy. Power is always exercised with a series of aims and objectives. However, Foucault does not attribute this to the choice or decision of an individual subject. Such an explanation would have implied that power emanates from a unified origin, a sovereign. Once the origin of sovereign power is disseminated, ("power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" [HoS, 93]) it is important not to reinstate this sovereignty in terms of individual subjects. Such a move characterizes the classical formulations of democracy where the same unified sovereignty moves from the king to the individual subject. In this sense the historical justification of democracy, regarding it as a movement of power from the king to the people, reinstates the homogeneous space of subjectivity into history. Instead, Foucault implies that "the disciplined subject" "construes" "her" intentions from a nonsubjective discursive relationship rather than generating them from within. Another aspect of Foucault's conception of power that differentiates it from sovereign power is that it comes "from below" (HoS, 94). Foucault claims that in the functioning of modern power, "there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as general matrix—no such duality extending from the top down and reacting in more and more limited groups to the very depths of social body" (HoS, 94). This general matrix sheds light to the possibility of how the ruler and the ruled become one in democracy. The overlap of the governed and governing as the fundamental trait of democracy, according to Schmitt, implies a kind of circularity, the self-identity of the political unit. Such a unity is only possible on the basis of bio-disciplinary power and cogitological subjects. Moreover, such an identity does not need to be already established or prior to the production cogitological subjects. Indeed, the necessity of resistance to the already established unity contributes to the movement of circularity and identity of the democratic space. As Foucault suggests, power cannot be separated from resistance; resistance is not exterior to relations of power.

Therefore, Foucault's conception of power provides the conceptual framework for understanding modern democracy. Fundamentally, Foucault's analysis depends on a distinction between sovereign and bio-disciplinary power. However, Giorgio Agamben argues that such a distinction might not be adequate to understand the political in contemporary society. Starting off from Foucault's conception of bio-power, Agamben articulates not a rupture from the traditional conception of sovereignty, but a transformation of it to a state of exception. Agamben demonstrates that it is the function of modern

sovereignty to administer *zoe*, bare life, rather than acting as a political subject. Consequently, the modern state is a state of exception and Agamben claims that this state of exception is in danger of becoming "the normal state of affairs." He takes the idea of a state of exception from Carl Schmitt's claim that the sovereign is that which decides the state of exception. Agamben tries to dissociate this violence from the law and thereby leaves the possibility of nonexception open. Agamben's idea of sovereignty still relies on a space between bio-power and bare life (*homo sacer*) even though he demonstrates that modern sovereignty conceives something like bare life for the first time. What Agamben acknowledges is that a regime like democracy protects itself antidemocratically. However, he wants to contain such actions to exceptions, even though it is true that one understands the rule best through the exception. One can accept that antidemocracy is an exception of democracy, yet this does not mean that they are ever separable.

Yet, for Foucault, it is important to distinguish sovereign power from bio-disciplinary power, because otherwise we associate the working of bio-disciplinary power with a source or an origin (the state). Democratizing power is not one that emanates from one group to the other; it is not held by the state mechanisms, but exercised through the state mechanisms as well as through the institutions of civil society. In a democratic critique of state there is a presupposition that society consists of a plurality that has to be reflected in the structure of the state. The assumption here is that democracy as a demand comes from the society and that is the proper path toward democratization. The paradox of democratic power as it is understood from this classical perspective is that it undermines rather than constitutes itself. The "disciplinary" effects of democratic power function in multiple locations in society. It does not create oppression, as there is no unitary group that holds this power, yet in these multiple locations we normalize, discipline, educate, and hence, democratize each other.

In order to understand how bio-disciplinary power explains democratic subjects and democracy as a discourse we need to concentrate on what I call the "cogitological" effects of bio-disciplinary power. One could call these effects "cogitological" power, recognizing that Foucault's analysis of power has to be supplemented when it is utilized to explain modern democracy. By cogitological power, I mean neither the power of the cogito, nor the power of logic. This power emanates neither from the thinking subject (cogito), not from the rules of logic, or reason, but rather it is a discursive power that manufactures the rational, thinking subjects of democracy. Cogitological power functions as a third dimension of the bio-disciplinary axis. It creates not obedient subjects or populations, but political, thinking subjects imagining themselves at the center of the problem of unity. Every political problem is couched in terms of the difficulty of forging the unity that is necessary for its implementation. Political ideas themselves are limited in advanced, de-

fined not in terms of their content, but with respect to their relative position within the spectrum of radicality. Nonmainstream ideas can be entertained, communicated, however, one must be responsible enough not to believe in their truth. Cogitological power manufactures rational subjects who think and act in a politically responsible fashion.

What guarantees this kind of ideational discipline? What are the structures of cogitological power? We can designate these structures as the media (commercials, advertisements, movies, and all the theatricality associated with them), as surveys, workshops, opinion polls, psychological profiling, the structure of "training sessions," skill building, leadership formation, etc. One of the most insidious interventions of modern capitalism into democracy, in addition to direct intervention of capital into campaign, is the domination of corporate culture into the public sphere. The training and disciplining developed in terms of corporate loyalty is extended to the political space where through civic education, society creates responsible political cogitological subjects who are responsible citizens. In fact, corporations are not only persons who financially contribute to political campaigns because of free speech, but also citizens who engage in responsible civic actions. The problem is not only that corporations act like individuals but also individuals act like corporations. The result of this intervention is not the depoliticization of, but rather privatization of the political space. And democratic civic education (as a bio-disciplinary cogitological process) makes this privatization possible. Individuals pursue private interests in the public sphere as responsible, well-organized "citizens."[8]

However, it would be wrong to designate these structures as at the disposal of certain authorities. It is not that our thoughts are controlled, that we are deceived, that we are manipulated. Such an interpretation would presuppose that which is precisely to be explained by cogitological power, namely the rational, transparent political subject. If we postulate that these cogitological structures are tools in the service of some powerful group, the government, or multinational corporations, etc., we assume that there is a subject behind these actions that exert power over us (which also implies that there is an aspect of us, our subjectivity, that can possibly escape such manipulations). Such an interpretation might be empirically true in certain instances; however, conceptually it never explains how democracy functions in modern society. In fact, it would end up recommending more democracy to remedy these problems. Also, such critiques of democracy are easily dismissed as conspiratorial and by denying that there is a unified group behind these structures, which is mostly true. It is equally important to distinguish this application of Foucault's conception of power from a "social conditioning" model or any kind of construction of subject positions. The main implication of Foucault's conception of power is not simply that subjects are discursively constituted subjects positions. This would be a reductive reading of Foucault. The issue

here is to interpret how democratic discourse *moves*. If we assume that se creates subject positions, we reproduce the same problem of the subject at the level of the discourse that Foucault criticizes at the level of individual. In other words, we need to be careful that we do not attribute to the category of discourse all the problems characteristic of the subject, problems that contribute to the formation of the concept of discourse in the first place. By being concerned how political subjects are disciplined we do not attribute an agency to the discourse that enables it. The relationship between the discourse and the subject is much more complicated than a kind of "social control" or "social constructionism."

Cogitological power cannot be explained in terms of the actions of subjects, precisely because it is proposed to explain the emergence of political agents. These mechanisms finally fulfilled Descartes' desire to be a "thinking thing."[9] No doubt, this took place in a very different way than Descartes could have imagined. Nevertheless, we are now, more than any other time, thinking beings. The problem of the relationship between the individual and society has been solved. We are all "cogitos," society is a thinking being consisting of thinking beings. Yet this society is neither organic nor mechanistic as it was imagined by modern philosophy, but if anything it is dialectical. It is organized around a number of practices that do not constitute a unity, an overall sovereign body, but a dispersed set of practices and discourses that produce rational subjects. The subjects have the uncompromising belief in the absolute uniqueness of their ideas, even though these ideas are organized in terms of patterns of iterability. Ultimately, truth is not decided in terms of the content of the belief, but in terms of the power that connects the subject to his or her own ideas. This tie, which was once certainty in the classical period of Descartes, is now democratic transparency; the mere presence of the belief is its own truth. This does not mean in the classical sense that whatever the subject believes is true, as if one is advocating a subjectivity of truth. The question of truth is now not in the content of the belief, but in its democratic presence. It is not that it is true because the *demos* think it, but truth is the certainty about what the *demos* thinks. In other words, whether what the *demos* think is true or not is not the question of truth anymore.

The question of subjectivity in the production of the community of cogitological subjects can be addressed in two registers: first, there can be a Cartesian path, namely that the community is forged around the idea that we are all thinking beings. While this assumption is true, it also has the problem of assuming the simultaneity of the individual (or even the singular) and the universal (common). This is a simple model that liberalism injects into democratic discourse (i.e., an abstract equality). Both Hegel and Schmitt demonstrate the shortcomings of this model. As I have noted in the previous chapter, Zizek introduces a different model of subjectivity in *Contingency, Hegemony*

*and Solidarity* when he raises the question "does the Lacanian notion of the 'barred subject' (and the German Idealist notion of the subject as self-relating negativity) . . . pose an alternative to traditional identitarian-substantialist metaphysics?"[10] Traditional critiques of subjectivity concentrate on the identitarian-substantialist model, but they do not sufficiently demonstrate the problematic nature of subjectivity based on the model of self-relating negativity. The second model that Zizek describes seems to provide a more effective path towards creating a community around cogitological subjects. This solution belongs to Hegel's philosophy and he accomplishes this by shifting the locus of subjectivity from the individual within the community to the shape of movement of the universal in its unity.

Consequently, there *is* neither a human subject, nor a subject-like society that would provide the unity that is necessary to solve the problem of political community. The unity of the political community is to be found in the shape of the movement of the universal, that is, in the *dialectic*. As opposed to liberal democracy Hegelian dialectic provides a much more subtle model for political subjectivity. Within this model, democracy can be regarded as the shape of the movement comprising (creating, as well as sublating) various political perspectives. The very idea of negation that is necessary for the dialectic is provided by their presence within democracy. Even if they might negate the very structure that they depend on, or even if they undermine it through negation, the dialectical outcome of this negation would be an inevitable affirmation of democracy. However, this conception of subjectivity as an account of the unity of democratic-political movement is also problematic because of the inevitable tendency to designate the other of democracy as undemocratic and render difference as opposition. Therefore, the conceptual problem of the individual subjects manufactured by the cogitological power is the same as the unity that is constituted at the level of the movement of democratic political space.

Through the progression of the political unity produced by institutions and practices, the cogitological subject is "empowered" to think from the center of unity. For every member of this political the question is to think the question of unity of a society. The subject thinks not only from within the existing structures of domination, but even if she desires to undermine these structures, she has to think from within a unity. There is always the desire and demand to take on the position of the sovereign actor. What would one do? How would one act? Yet, most importantly, how can one think and act in such a way that it has a unifying perspective? This does not mean that a democratic subject has to think of the well-being of all people, but rather that she needs to think from within the fantasized center of a unified power. Obviously, not everybody does or can engage in this thinking, yet if one is ready to do it, the structural elements of democratic discourse are there to ensure its possibility and trajectory.

Ironically, contemporary democratic society is the realization of the non-democratic dystopia of Plato's *Republic*, with the exception that in contemporary society, everybody is disciplined as a "philosopher-ruler." Yet Plato realized that philosophers are not to be conceptualized as Cartesian subjects that generate their own ideas, but they need to be educated into the positions of rulers. In modern society, there is no need to separate the individual philosophers from their families, but the structure of the family as well as other "private" institutions in the society contribute to the formation of the cogitological subjects, not in the name of a Platonic truth (as if it ever existed, even for Plato), but in the name of democracy. The content of this democratic promise may be empty; in fact, its claim of emptiness is the way in which democracy escapes from any accusations of empirical and historical wrongdoing. We might have done wrong, but despite that, or in fact precisely because of that fact, we are all the more advanced in our march towards the possibility of democracy, a truly foolproof superiority of democratic discourse.

While democracy is traditionally associated either with the presence or the production of rational individuals who are capable of representing their interests as well as convictions, namely, the juridical subjects, the functioning of democracy today relies on the presence of obedient subjects. To the extent that one remains within the bounds of political theory, which relies on the idea of juridical subject, one cannot explain the discursive functioning of the ideal of democracy. Foucault's conception of disciplinary power allows us to approach the question of democracy from the perspective of its concrete practices, and explains the functioning of democracy within a society that requires obedient subjects who are disciplined and normalized in order to participate in the "democratic process," and to learn to be responsible. Democracy transforms citizens into visible individuals who are monitored through opinion polls and various scientific techniques, and whose thoughts are instantaneously translated into "opinions." This is a significant point at the intersection of the privatization of politics and production of obedient democratic subjects. Social movements and forces have to be reduced to political opinion. Here, my criticism is not simply that opinions are unjustified as opposed to the truth in a Platonist sense. In fact, opinions can still be true or a path to attain truth. My criticism here is that truth itself is conceptualized as the property of an opinion rather than events or forces in society. A democratic political space has to reduce political events, movements, and forces into opinions in order to deal with them ontologically. To the extent, they become simply ideas and opinions in the heads of democratic individuals; they can be suppressed, managed, or politely disciplined. The effect of democratic discourse on individuals, therefore, is an existential one. Democracy, to the extent that it is a discourse on/of human rights, defines what it means to be a proper human being with rights, to become a powerful human

subject while also being subjected to power. Bio-disciplinary power also makes it possible to understand the role of democracy among cultures. Democracy empowers developing countries, yet it also leads to the production of obedient individuals who have the power and the right to participate in the "world community."

In light of this general idea one can say that the European Union's condemnation of the Turkish Court was made from the theoretical stance of juridical power, yet it functions as disciplinary. The European Union justifies democracy as the rule of juridical subjects with desires, wants, reason, and ultimately, rights. It demands that the institutions of the Turkish government confirm this subject. Yet the European Court also recognizes that democracy requires the disciplinary ordering of individuals. In order to participate in the democratic structure one needs to be obedient to the organizing principles of democracy. Evidently, democracy has its own rules; it is not the rule of majority, but the rule of individuals disciplined in certain ways. The functioning of democracy today reflects several other aspects of disciplinary power. What are perceived to be "insignificant," and merely pragmatic institutions and practices from public opinion polls to surveys, lobbies, reveal the functioning of democracy. The public is seen as an aggregate of individual opinions and the individual is regarded as the owner of his or her opinions as well as interests and rights. Since democracy is considered to be a regulative idea, these institutions and practices have no attainable object but rather exist for the sake of the processes themselves.

In relation to Foucault's distinction between the juridical and the obedient subject, one can argue that democracy delivers exactly what it promises. It promises free, independent, rational citizens capable of self-transparency. It delivers these citizens as disciplined bodies and minds. Our unfreedom consists precisely in our belief in freedom.[11] It is not a restriction placed from outside, but rather our being constituted as democratic subjects. Once democracy sets out to constitute a political system that would create such existence, it results in disciplined subjects who monitor themselves and others, who are normalized and normalize, who are docile. These subjects are admittedly free and independent, characteristics that turn out to be conditions of governability rather than independent human values. In fact, this transformation is not an insidious trick or an unintended consequence. The transformation of human beings into docile bodies is an explicitly stated goal of the process of democratization and the proud achievement of the democratic culture in terms of human freedom. As Foucault puts it, "Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free."[12]

The ostensibly juridical conception of the subject works precisely in order to constitute a disciplinary body, just as ideal democracy as a discourse functions in order to make democracy work in practice, albeit in a completely different way than it is formulated in theory. It is this gap between discourse

and practice that renders most people of the so-called nondemocratic countries suspicious of democracy both as an ideal and as practice. This gap emerges not because of hypocrisy on the part of so called democratic countries, not because of the ill will of people, not because democracy is a prize that is denied to poor people, but because there is an unbridgeable gap, an unsublatable contradiction at the heart of democracy, which manifests itself also in a discord between the self-congratulatory discourse on democracy and its practical possibility.

As it is clear in the example, for the European Union, democracy is a game and one has to play the game by the rules. Those who do not play the game by the rules need to be disciplined. In light of the proliferation of democracy in the international context, one can raise several questions with respect to its prospects. Would a universal democracy create chaos in the sense that certain nations might elect governments that might be in conflict with the "original" Western democracies? This is certainly a possibility. Yet such an outcome is likely to be avoided by a distinction between democracy and populism. For Western democracies, democracy is a game, but the more important aspect of it is not that it might produce different results, but that the rules of the game remain the same. So, it seems that the more likely result of the democratization of the world is that non-Western countries will be disciplined into rational democratic subjects; only then, once they accept that the only possibility of the political is democracy, will they be named "democratic." Indeed, the process of democratic disciplining is the most recent manifestation of colonizing power.

## NOTES

1. Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London: Verso, 2011), p. 3. Reprinted with the permission of Verso.

2. James M. Dorsey, "Turkish Court Ban on Islamist Welfare Party Boomerangs, Widening Gulf With EU," *Washington Report on Middle Eastern Affairs,* March 1998, Issue, pp. 43–44.

3. James M. Dorsey, "Turkish Court Ban on Islamist Welfare Party Boomerangs," p. 44.

4. Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

5. Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). Hereafter abbreviated as DP in the main body of the text followed by the page number.

6. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1978), p. 139.

7. Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France*, 1975–76, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), p. 242.

8. Anti-capitalist political struggles seek to enact a notion of unity among distinct individuals because they observe that the capitalist society through disciplinary power creates isolated individuals. However, this desire to enact a unity does not recognize the other dimension of capitalist society, namely to create a unity in the population. Hence, political actions that are based on the condition of unity end up affirming the self-incorporating, dialectical movement

of capitalism. Again the problem here is to understand the difference between traditional political power and Foucault's conception of bio-power.

9. Therefore, Zizek's attempt to plead not guilty for Cartesian subject is both redundant and wrong. See Slavoj Zizek, *The Ticklish Subject* (London: Verso, 1990).

10. Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), p. 9.

11. Zizek's joke about the red ink and the German worker in Siberia is pertinent here. It seems that we cannot even say that the only thing that is missing is the red ink. See Slavoj Zizek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five Essays on 11 September and Related Dates* (London: Verso, 2002).

12. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" in *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* by R. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), p. 221.

# Democracy and Post/Neo-colonialism

*Specters of Colonialism*

> One can find repeated examples in the history of democratic struggles in the West of tolerant, educated, liberal political classes who were opponents of democratization, fighting to prevent the extension of effective political rights to those who did not own property, to religious and racial minorities, to women, and to colonial subjects. In many cases, the civic virtues that dominant political classes possessed provided the grounds on which to oppose democratization. Their own civility and reasonableness, they often claimed, qualified them to act as spokespersons for the interests of those who were not yet ready to speak for themselves.
>
> —Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*[1]

Imagine a military compound in a country where all the male citizens are required to serve on a temporary basis. As more than five thousand men, wearing the same green uniforms, green caps, and black boots gather into a stadium, the commander and the chief officer of the military base is to "welcome" everybody for their service and explain what they should expect in the coming weeks. For readers of Foucault, this occasion might appear to be an interesting one; they would probably expect some disciplinary rhetoric, some exemplary lecture on obedience, etc. However, what if the first words of the commander after welcoming the soldiers was a question: "What is democracy?" During a slight pause one would expect that he would explain the merits of the army in protecting democracy against the enemies of the state. Yet after receiving various answers from the crowd, he states, "Democracy is a self-governance of a group in accordance with rules and regulations." This definition sounds reasonable, except it implies that the army itself is governed through democracy. Yet, in the army those who issue

orders are not elected. Hence, it seems misleading to compare the army with the rule of democracy. Yet there is an important premise in the functioning of the army: high-ranking officers do not consider themselves as governing, but rather they follow and enact the inner rules and regulations of the army. Moreover, if one considers how certain public officials in the democratic political arena have to climb the ranks in a well-regulated structure in order to be elected, the analogy seems to be more appropriate than one might first imagine. After all, Foucault recognized that the disciplinary power expanded from the *inner structure* of the army to the entire surface of society. Indeed, if one considers the role of the army in the decolonization of formerly colonized nations, one can easily observe a desire for the continuity between armies and well-organized, well-governed, postcolonial democratic societies. This chapter builds on the argument of the previous one. If democracy is to be understood as a bio-disciplinary power with a cogitological supplement, then it also functions as such in the context of neo-colonization. If colonization is understood in terms of bio-disciplinary power rather than a sovereign concept of oppressive power, then democratization of formerly colonized nations is a continuation of this colonization, or more precisely its reenactment as neo-colonization rather than a path to emancipation or self-determination.

In the chapter entitled "Docile Bodies" of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault states that he chooses his examples from military, medical, educational, and industrial institutions. Other examples might be taken from colonization, slavery, and child rearing (DP, 314 fn1). Yet what Foucault does not explicitly say is that colonization is not just one example among others. Colonization does not refer to a set of distinct institutions within a society, but rather to its entirety. Therefore, the connection between the disciplinary power and the process and colonization is not simply a matter of instantiation, but rather colonization encompasses various unexplained dimensions of bio-disciplinary power over an entire society. Certainly, as Foucault warns us, one should be cautious not to "totalize" bio-disciplinary power. Power for Foucault operates from multiple and even perhaps disconnected sites, rather than forming a totality. But perhaps colonization is a more coherent process than Foucault's concept of ("dispersed") power can explain. This does not mean that the bio-disciplinary power is the only mode of power in modern society, but rather that it integrates itself and acts as an intermediary in various forms of political power. Even though Foucault brings up the connection of colonization and disciplinary power in the context of his discussion of delinquency and raises the issue of penal colony and argues that undisciplined soldiers, prostitutes, and orphans took part in the colonization of Algiers (DP, 279), he does not engage in a systematic analysis of colonization as a form of disciplinary power in *Discipline and Punish*. In his 1976 lecture course published as *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault raises the issue of colonization:

> At the end of the sixteenth century, we have, then, if not the first, at least an early example of the sort of boomerang effect colonial practice can have on the juridico-political structures of the West. It should never be forgotten that while colonization, with its techniques and its political and juridical weapons, obviously transported European models to other continents, it also had a considerable boomerang effect in the mechanisms of power in the West, and on the apparatuses, institutions and techniques of power. A whole series of colonial models was brought back to the West, and the result was that the West could practice something, resembling colonization, or an internal colonialism, on itself. (p.103)

I contend that even though this observation seems to be a side remark, it has important implications for the relationship between Foucault's conception of power and insights of postcolonial studies. Postcolonial studies have demonstrated that the relationship between European modernization and colonialism is not simply a historical accident, but rather there is a mutual constitution between the colonization of South America, Asia, and Africa, and Europe's social, political, and economic development. Fanon observes this relationship in the *Wretched of the Earth* when he writes: "Europe is literally the creation of the Third World" (p.102). Fanon's point here is fundamentally economic as he continues, "The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped peoples" (p.102). However, there is also a political and intellectual dimension to this relationship. The relationship between European political thought and colonialism demonstrates the problematic intellectual heritage of Europe. While European political thought is not only haunted but also explicitly disciplined by the specter of the Holocaust, mainly because it happened within its borders, its colonial history is safely relegated into the past. While Europe tries to recognize the other (or "evil") within its own boundaries, it does not consider the "evil" it perpetuated on the other. However, my argument is not a moral one claiming that European colonization is also evil. The problem is a conceptual one. European political thinking regards the possibility of the Holocaust as its defining conceptual border. Yet the desire to avoid the possibility of repeating the Holocaust enables European thought to conceptualize its political limits by avoiding its colonial genocidal lineage. Consequently, by defining the Holocaust as *the* conceptual political limit, European political consensus avoids the burden of recognizing the idea that the same set of values and practices that produced democratic structures in Europe also produced racism and colonial holocausts. My argument here is that there is not only a *historical* coincidence between the political development of Europe and colonial holocausts, but also that there is a *conceptual* relationship between the two. The thrust of this argument is not simply to seek historical justice for the past, but to demonstrate how the way in which European thinking relates to its past and enables

and justifies the expansion of contemporary neocolonial structures in the name of democracy.

Foucault connects the development of racism in modern societies to the emergence of bio-power.

> And we can also understand why racism should have developed in modern societies that function in the bio-power mode; we can understand why racism broke out at a number of privileged moments, and why they were precisely the moments when the right to take life was imperative. Racism first develops with colonization, or in other words, with colonizing genocide. If you are functioning in the bio-power mode, how can you justify the need to kill people, to kill populations, and to kill civilizations? By using the themes of evolutionism, by appealing to racism. (p.257)

The emergence of racism and colonialism has been mostly regarded as a counter-process of the march of European thought toward democracy. Moreover, racism and colonialism in European history are considered as alibis for the development of European political maturity. Because Europe has overcome such historical anomalies, it reached a complex political thinking: *The possible bad "historical accidents" by being sublated into its intellectual history dialectically justify the subsequent superiority of European thinking*. Ironically, this attempt to dialectically overcome its racist and colonial history is precisely the shape of European racism and neo-colonial thinking.

If the same structures that enabled democracy also enable racism and colonialism, we cannot avoid the former by inventing the necessity of human agency. One can see that the philosophical justifications of subjectivity in general and European subjectivity in particular provide the foundation of human agency in the political realm. However, a human agent cannot choose democracy and eliminate the possibility of racism, colonialism, and self-colonialism. This is not to blame the European culture or deny that there are redeeming aspects of it. It is to claim that there are no pure democratic principles that can protect us from racism and colonialism. In fact, we need to recognize that modern democracy may not be an antidote to racism and colonialism, but rather *their enabling condition*. Hence, the crucial question concerns the relationship between the contemporary discourse of democracy and its colonial dimension.

The demand for democracy functions as a bio-disciplinary strategy within the neocolonial framework.[2] We can observe the neo-colonial strategy in the relationship between the so-called free, democratic, capitalist countries and the nondemocratic developing world. Democracy is recommended to the people of the colonies with the promise of rendering them juridical subjects. Democracy promises to the oppressed people the chance to express their interests, exercise their rights. However, democratic discourses and practices do not produce juridical subjects but disciplined cogitological citizens. To

put it more accurately, in order to participate in the democratic practices and institutions juridical subjects have to be created by disciplinary and cogito-logical mechanism. Democratic discourse accomplishes this by two strategies: the first one is the promise of emancipation and self-determination. Democracy is proposed for the good of people, and in order to emancipate them from their oppressive rulers. Yet emancipation does not mean self-determination. Self-determination requires responsibility, accountability, and recognition of the other. Therefore, emancipation does not oppose to, but rather requires, the disciplining project. Secondly, any inconsistency between the call for democracy and the desire to actually enact it is considered to be an insufficient commitment to democracy on the part of specific rulers of "democratic" societies. Hence, if there is an alternative to democracy it is more democracy, a renewed commitment to an ideal. For example, the European Union demands the installation of democratic structures in Turkey. It is a quid pro quo: if Turkey is successful in implementing democratic reforms and in creating the necessary framework for an economic (capitalist) structure, then Turkey can become a member of the European Union. In this negotiation, the European Union quite frequently condemns the Turkish State for human rights violations and undemocratic practices. Yet these complaints seem to dwindle when a European nation wins an economic advantage on Turkey (e.g., a contract from the Turkish State). We can regard this hypocrisy as an insufficient commitment to democratic principles on the part of European nations. However, this is not a simple case of hypocrisy, but explains precisely the functioning of discourse of democracy today. The European Union recognizes that democracy cannot institute itself democratically, because of a fundamental paradox in the idea of the rule of people. People of a formerly colonized or currently dependent nation can rule themselves only to the extent that their rule is consistent with the universal structures of democracy, which ironically contribute to further colonization and dependency of their nation. Hence, we need to explain how colonization is a process of disciplining and how democracy is a stage within the continuation of this process of disciplining.

In *Colonizing Egypt*,[3] Timothy Mitchell demonstrates how Foucault's conception of bio-disciplinary power explains the process of colonization. He makes it clear that the aim of his analysis is "not a history of the British colonization of Egypt but a study of the power to colonize" (CE, ix). Mitchell not only expands Foucault's conception of power to colonization but also refines it because "forms of power based on the re-ordering of space and the surveillance and control of its occupants were by nature colonizing in method." Therefore, Mitchell's analysis is not simply an application of disciplinary power but he develops the argument that disciplinary power should be understood *in terms of colonization*.

Mitchell's analysis of the power to colonize is novel also because he demonstrates how the modern distinction between subject and object establishes the conceptual basis for the process of colonization. The starting point of this explanation is the idea of World Exhibitions. Mitchell takes World Exhibitions at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century as the site of his theoretical reflection. The general purpose of these exhibitions was to bring an accurate and comprehensive representation of the exotic, bizarre, and erotic East to the Western eye.[4] For Mitchell, these exhibitions are the theoretical and theatrical starting point of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. First of all, the exhibitions set up a distinction between representation and external reality and the aim of the representation was to reflect the external reality accurately. Therefore, the first feature of these exhibitions was their apparent realism. Mitchell identifies two more features of these exhibitions, which constitute his original contribution to the explanation of the process of colonization: the organization of the exhibits around a common center and that the position of the visitor occupying the central position (CE, 7). With these two additional observations concerning the world exhibits, Mitchell establishes the link between colonization and European subjectivity. Modern philosophy understands human existence as a knowing subject over and against a field of objects. This field of objectivity presents itself as a structure and consisting of an order organized by rules. The knowledge of the inner structure and rules governing objects leads to the power of the subject over the objects. However, the relation between knowledge and power is not that the former leads to the latter, but for the production of knowledge to be possible the world has to be made into an object through organizing power. The world has to be transformed to become a picture for the knowledge of it to be possible. Ontologically, Mitchell relies on Heidegger's idea of the age of the world picture where he describes mutual constitution of modern subjectivity and objectivity of the world.

Once the European colonial subject leaves the exhibition and encounters what it considers to be the "real" Orient, the so-called "Orient refused to present itself like an exhibit, and so appeared simply orderless and without meaning. The colonizing process was to introduce the kind of order now found lacking—the effect of structure that was to provide not only a new disciplinary power but also the novel ontology of representation" (CE, xv). The colonization of Egypt required both a physical and a mental transformation of chaotic nature of Egypt into a representable picture, and into a manageable order. There is, therefore, a conceptual connection between the possibility and effects of colonialism and modern European thinking. The latter made the former possible. Mitchell argues that colonialism is an extension, or laboratory of modern philosophical thinking, which, among other things, is characterized by a distinction between subject and objects, or rather the

transformation of all beings in terms of the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity.

However, to explain this further we need to observe that the relationship between the representation and reality is much more complicated than it first appears. The representations of the Orient project an orderly field of objectivity for the observing subject. Once the subject encounters the Orient, and fails to see this order, the colonial project becomes the imposition of the order on the Oriental society. Actually, the colonial project is the production of the "real object" of society as an orderly structure, because there is no "society" prior to colonial intervention. Mitchell explains this relationship as follows:

> In claiming that the "East itself" is not a place, am I saying simply that Western representations created a distorted image of the real Orient; or am I saying that the "real Orient" does not exist, and that there are no realities but only images and representations? My answer is that the question is a bad one, and that the question itself is what needs examining. We need to understand how the West had come to live as though the world were divided in this way into two: into a realm of mere representations and a realm of "the real"; into exhibitions and an external reality; into an order of mere models, descriptions or copies, and an order of the original. We need to understand, in other words, how these notions of a realm of "the real," "the outside," "the original," were in this sense effects of the world's seeming division into two. We need to understand, moreover, how this distinction corresponded to another division of the world, into the West and the non-West; and thus how Orientalism was not just a particular instance of the general historical problem of how one culture portrays another, but something essential to the peculiar nature of the modern world. Finally we need to understand the political nature of these kinds of division, by understanding them as techniques both of order and of truth. (C.E. 32)

Therefore, colonization is a disciplinary process that requires an order of representation, namely a representation of the Orient to the Western eye, and the transformation (or even the production) of its object as an orderly object of knowledge. The function of representation is that it renders the Orient an "object" of study. The relationship between power and knowledge manifests itself most concretely and vividly in the interaction between the East and the West: The East becomes the object of knowledge, and this knowledge (a special kind of knowledge in terms of objectivity) yields power. However, more significantly (and this is parallel to Foucault's argument), for knowledge to be possible, there has to be a prior power relationship already established, a power that reduces its "object" to the object of scientific (re)discovery, and of scientific gaze.

After establishing the connection between modern philosophy and colonization as a process of setting up the subject-object distinction, Mitchell con-

tinues to explain how these disciplinary processes and institutions such as army, school, and factories set up by the British colonial power in Egypt aim to create an orderly society, and object of representation, and an enframed population of productive forces.

First of all, the body is controlled through surveillance from birth. Moreover, this supervision and control is required because "private ownership of large estates and the investment of European capital were creating a class of landless workers, whose bodies needed to be taught the disciplined habits of wage-labor" (CE, 96). Capitalist production also required a restructuring of the infrastructure to build and maintain roads, railways, canals, bridges, telegraphs, and ports. Parallel to these physical reconstructions for the functioning of capitalism, colonial power also established a morality where the system rests upon private property and the priority of the capitalist mode of production. All laws are formalized and introduced as rules to be followed. The constant rhetoric of devaluing the morality of Eastern cultures is an attempt to introduce laws that are based on the capitalist mode of production.

The crucial aspect of this colonization as an activity on the ground is the attempt to reshape every aspect of Egyptian society and its physical spaces so that they are organized and reoriented around a common observer. This observer perceives herself at the center of the city, which Mitchell identifies as the position of modern subjectivity. It is true that this position is mainly occupied by the colonizing subject. However, once this position is created and its object is organized around this position, the colonization becomes a process that is detached from the identity of the subject. In other words, paralleling Foucault's discussion of the Panopticon, the position of the observing subject can be occupied by anybody (colonizer or colonized). Hence, the process of colonization becomes a "self-colonization" both for the Egyptians as well as for the Europeans as described by Foucault's notion of the "boomerang effect" mentioned above. And it is in this exact sense the cogito-logical subject of democratic discourse is situated at the center of political unity.

By detaching the colonizing power from the identity of the actual subject and connecting it to a subject position we can also understand why colonialism is not simply an oppressive power that simply exploits its objects, but rather it is a bio-disciplinary power that "produces the organized power of armies, schools, and factories, and other distinctive institutions of modern nation states. They also produce, within such institutions, the modern individual, constructed as an isolated, disciplined, receptive, and industrious political subject" (CE, xi). At the same time, this understanding of colonialism makes it conceptually problematic to resist by simply negating its processes "in abandoning the image of colonial power as simply a coercive central authority, one should also question the traditional figure of resistance as a subject who stands outside this power and refuses its demands. Colonial

subjects and their modes of resistance are formed within the organizational terrain of the colonial state, rather than some wholly exterior social space" (CE, xi). A significant implication of the role of subjectivity in the process of colonization is that the colonized was not simply the object of colonization but the subject of his own self-colonization. Indeed the bio-disciplinary power functions most effectively when people are taught to exercise it upon themselves. In the same way in which criminals, the sick, and schoolboys are subjected to various disciplinary processes, the people of the Orient are transformed, disciplined, and subjected to power. Yet this kind of self-colonization is a process that Egyptians desire to take onto themselves. The reason for this self-colonization is both conceptual and economic, because "the second consequence of disciplinary power, the one that Michel Foucault does not discuss, yet more important for understanding the peculiarity of capitalist modernity, is that at the same time as power relations become internal in this way, and by the same methods, they now appear to take the form of external structures" (CE, xii). One of the ways in which the colonization functioned was to give an order and form to the colony so that it could be represented, be known, and ultimately be ruled, and successful rule of colonies meant that they could be incorporated into the capitalist mode of production.

Therefore, the process of colonization is a disciplinary mechanism of capitalism. The connection between colonization and capitalism is also observed in the conceptual relationship between representation and reality, or more precisely in the disappearance of a rigid distinction between the two. "In commercial exhibits it was not always easy to determine where the exhibition ended and the world itself began" (CE, 9). The world beyond the gates of the exhibition turned out to be an extension of the exhibition, the rise of commercialism led to the rise of the world as an exhibition . . . the real world, as at the exhibition, was something created in the representation of its commodities (CE, 11). In addition to transformation of economy and infrastructure, the demand for order, clarity, and transparency extended from the visible aspects of society to the structure of language, not only as a medium of thinking, but as a means of communication. Europeans believed that there was supposed to be no ambiguity within the nature of language. Just like the streets and cities of Egypt, its language was also ambiguous. The simpler the language, the more universal it can be, and the immensely complicated Arabic language had no power within the universal medium of communication required for the world economic system to function. Orderless Arabic texts, which give no map into the structure of the book, appeared to be "whimsical arrangements" and even willful disorder for the European Orientalists. The simple nature of language increased the possibility of communication for the colonial countries. Just as there is an order demanded from the cities architecturally, there is a demand for order linguistically. Simplicity, order, structure are the main powers of colonial authority.

The material success of capitalism reinforced the morality that accompanied the process of colonization. The success of Western life exhibited in the very effectiveness of the exploitation of the Orient became the alibi of the superiority of Western morality, which had to be instilled in the Orient as well. The institution of this morality was accompanied by the rhetoric of devaluing the Egyptian mind, or the character of the Egyptian people. For example, the Egyptian mind was represented as "timid and yet defiant . . . susceptible to enthusiasm yet lacking in all initiative; his character is one of indifference and immobility, engendered by a lack of security about the future and an instability of property, which has killed the spirit of industry and the need to acquire" (CE, 105). Another writes that "indolence pervades all classes of the Egyptians, except those who are obliged to earn their livelihood by severe manual labor and how even the mechanics [manual laborers] who are extremely greedy of gain, will generally spend two days in a work which they might easily accomplish in one" (CE, 106). These representations, however racist and problematic, became established through colonial power. Ultimately, Egyptians themselves believed these descriptions, mainly because they were not economically advanced and subject to power. They translated several works describing them as inferior into Arabic in order "to make people consider the causes of this inferiority, by comparing the Egyptian 'character' to the character of the English who had occupied their country" (CE, 111). They believed that "the foreigners could not be blamed for [the colonialism], because they benefited by their own efforts, and by their social-scientific knowledge" (CE, 111). Consequently, the colonial structure justified itself in terms of a prior inferiority of the Egyptian mind. In other words, colonial rule justified its existence in terms of its racial superiority. It was believed that:

> The backwardness of the Egyptians . . . was due to certain mental traits that no administrative reforms by the British could ever noticeably alter. These included a submissive character, an insensibility to pain, a habit of dishonesty, and above all an intellectual lethargy that had rendered all Oriental societies immobile, unable to undergo any real historical or political transformation. The ideas, customs, and laws of the Arabs today were just as they had been one thousand years before. This sterility, said Harcourt, was due partly to the stifling effects of climate, but more to the element most uniform throughout the region, Islam. Islamic teachings created a profoundly altered moral sense, which destroyed all intellectual curiosity. (CE, 112)

An Egyptian commentator, Qasim Amin, reading the above description, did not question the essential distinction between vitality as the characteristic of the West and the thousand-year immobility of his own country, or the ascription of its causes to certain mental traits. He differed with the criticism only by attributing this disorder not to Islam, but to the abandoning of Islam (CE,

112–113). Thus, both agreed that there was something wrong with the Egyptian people, and that they were inferior. The irony of this colonial attitude was precisely its effectiveness in the minds of those who were the object of this criticism. They accepted and adopted these criticisms, precisely because they believed in the universal nature of the claims of the colonial powers. Science, economic prosperity, and most other Western values become universal values.

The successful rule of the colony was possible if it could be easily accessed and understood in every aspect. While it was one thing to conquer Eastern nations, "to understand them is quite another. . . . Greater understanding of the Orient . . . would secure the commercial supremacy of England, and enable the young rulers and administrators who are sent every year to the East to establish intimate relations with the people they are meant to rule" (CE, 166). The Orient was backward, irrational, and disordered, and therefore was in need of European order and authority. The domination of the West over the non-Western world depended on this manner of creating a "West," a singular "Western" self-identity, alongside or rather in opposition to "Oriental" or "Arab" identity. Like the "Arab town," the Orient was created as an apparent exterior of the West; as with the colonial city, what is outside is paradoxically what makes the West what it is, the excluded yet integral part of its identity and power.

It is important to isolate three moments of capitalism in the process of colonization. First, the Orient was considered to be a source for raw material. Secondly, the colony had to be transformed into a market. Fanon explains:

> Capitalism, in its early days, saw in the colonies a source of raw materials which, once turned into manufactured goods, could be distributed on the European market. After a phase of accumulation of capital, capitalism has today come to modify its conception of the profit-earning capacity of a commercial enterprise. The colonies have become a market. The colonial population is a customer who is ready to buy goods.[5]

However, within this process the definition of customer needs is further modified because "to submit and become a citizen of such an exhibitional world was to become a consumer, of commodities *and* of meanings" (CE, 162). Finally we have to recognize another stage in the process of colonization and capitalism, namely that the colonized subject is situated in the position of the common center of her "own" imagined and "represented" political unity. Only such a subject can have political rights, because "[r]ights could only be enjoyed within a society of obedient and industrious individuals" (CE, 116).

In order to characterize the attitude of the Western powers towards the people of the colonies, Mitchell quotes from a French military officer in Algeria: "When we have them in our hands, we will then be able to do many

things which are quite impossible for us today and which will perhaps allow us to capture their minds after we have captured their bodies" (CE, 95). It is precisely this capturing of the minds that defines the latest stage of colonialism. The colonized body is now situated into the position of the subject. Now, the colonized relates to her own political unity as if she is at the center of it. Yet this is neither an ideological indoctrination nor a false consciousness, but rather it is the latest phase of neo-colonialism where cogitological subjects are produced both in the former colonies and in Europe.

Democratic discourse produces the same colonial order from individual minds and demand that they function as responsible citizens of democratic societies. Therefore, discourse on democracy is a continuation of the infamous "mission to civilize" of colonization. It is imposed upon the dependent nation as a necessity for its own well-being, yet at the same it time serves as a tool to bring that nation into an order controlled by the colonial power.

The logic of democracy is an extension of the colonial superiority that justified the ruling of colonies. The same assumptions of inferiority are associated with the absence of democracy. The absence of democracy is both the cause of backwardness as well as its result. It captures the so-called nondemocratic third world countries in a double bind. The latest phase of neo-colonialism in the form of globalization that incorporates the lessons learned from the previous phases of colonialism.

The US-led neocolonial globalization has always been accused by critics of being hypocritical with respect to the issue of democracy. These critics claim that the Western countries in general and the United States in particular do not desire "real democracy" in developing or underdeveloped nations, because such a democratic control would produce policies that are against the interest of Western powers. Even though this argument has proved to be empirically valid (i.e., the election of Hamas in Palestine, the rise of Islamic control on politics in Iraq and various governments that are not friendly to the current US administration in Latin America), it misses the real effect of democracy in global politics. To the extent that one can conceptualize colonialism only as an oppressive power exerted on people, and democracy as the free expression of people's voices against oppression, one cannot understand the role democracy plays in neocolonial globalization. Democracy does not simply represents people's voices, but manufactures orderly politics in former colonies or current dependent nations. Democracy disciplines the political culture of an otherwise "archaic" society; it brings clarity, rationality, and order. In this way, the nation can become part of the global, rational order. It would be a mistake to dismiss the purported aim of the US administration to "bring democracy" to other countries, as arrogant, hypocritical, and paternalistic. It is all that, but it is much more insidious than that; it is sincere. The aim is to "emancipate" these nations, because the US administration knows that democracy produces emancipation and freedom to be a part of the global

world order. Democracy distributes power throughout the nation, which makes it easier to shape through global order. Since most European theorists conceptualize democracy in terms of internal political order of a society, and expand from there to the globalization of democracy, they do not recognize how democracy functions as a disciplining force within neo-colonialism.

There are several examples of how democratization leads to "training of individuals" "educating" the prominent members of nondemocratic nations. In the cases of democratic training, the power at work is not a classical or oppressive one, but it is bio-disciplinary power with cogitological effects. Hence, sometimes the "colonized" itself desires to be democratized and thereby demands the neo-colonial intervention, which is impossible to understand under an oppressive notion of colonialism but makes perfect sense in terms of bio-disciplinary cogitological power. The relationship between Switzerland and Kyrgyzstan is such an example. It is worthwhile to discuss this relationship briefly because it provides an excellent illustration of the idea of disciplining democratic training. In the late 1990s, at the request of the Kyrgyz government, the UNESCO international social science program MOST (Management of Social Transformation) established a democracy-training project for selected individuals from Kyrgyzstan (policymakers, legislators, judiciary officials, and representatives from public and nongovernmental organizations).[6] The report for the project first briefly describes the history of Kyrgyzstan's democracy after it declared its independence from the Soviet Union. Since then, Kyrgyzstan held two elections, adopted a democratic constitution, and adhered to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The report observes,

> But obviously, a successful transition to democracy requires much more than free elections and formal declarations, which are necessary but not sufficient initials steps. Developing democratic institutions and a political culture based on democratic modes of interaction and participation constitutes a complex and lengthy process, especially in Central Asia, where the current political changes are intricately tied up with increasing ethnic tensions as well as radical economic transformations.

The project identifies the Kyrgyz society as multi-ethnic and multi-cultural and recognizes the need to manage this diversity. The Kyrgyz government can "benefit from studying the procedural and institutional mechanisms that a consolidated multi-ethnic democracy like Switzerland has developed over a long period of time."[7] The nature of the proposed relationship between Switzerland and Kyrgyzstan is pretty obvious. Switzerland can "train" Kyrgyz intellectuals in their "need of democratic management of ethnic diversity." To this end the project proposes several activities including "training sessions . . . to teach participants basic procedures of democratic interaction." The language employed in this document and in the project in general is

exactly the language of bio-disciplinary and cogitological power. This is not simply a linguistic resemblance; the project itself, its very practice and activities are "colonizing" in the sense that I have been describing. "The project is designed to not only help the Kyrgyz people to cope with the ongoing historical changes that affect the entire Central Asian region, but to actively turn them into full transition to democracy"[8] Of course, the language of the document tries to coach the relationship in terms of cooperation, but the aim of the project is clear, namely to create an orderly, disciplined, democratic society that can become a part of the global political system. Most of the relationships between the democratic and third world nations are not as formalized and explicit as the one between Switzerland and Kyrgyzstan. The focus of the project is the education of the elite or perhaps the production of a certain political elite. However, there is no reason why the entire population cannot be disciplined through the mechanisms of media, surveys/surveillance, public education, etc. The principle here is to apply the same mechanisms that produced democracy in Western countries to "colonized" nations. This observation is warranted when we consider the sponsors of the democracy-training project between Switzerland and Kyrgyzstan. First of all, this project is established by MOST. MOST is a social science program whose "primary purpose is to transfer relevant Social Sciences research findings and data to decision-makers and other stakeholders."[9] MOST clearly continues the colonial tradition of employing social science in the creation of a disciplined political society as it is explained by Mitchell. In addition to MOST, the democracy project relied on a report prepared by AFEMOTI (Association française pour l'étude de la Méditerranée orientale et du monde turco-iranien).[10] These organizations indicate a larger institutional and structural relationship between the Western democratic organizations and the so-called developing or third world ones in creating a democratic and disciplined political structure.

It would be a mistake to believe that the colonial use of democracy is simply an abuse, and that it is not in accordance with the spirit of democracy, which gives freedom and self-determination to the people. Such a belief would implicitly appeal to a "pure spirit" of democracy as if such a thing were to exist. There is no such pure spirit of democracy in the way such a claim would assume. In fact, the very reiteration of the idea of "pure spirit of democracy" is precisely how the disciplining aspect of democratic discourse functions.

Democracy may not appear to be a tool for colonization or neo-colonization. However, when we consider colonization not as simply the consequences of the rational and calculated decisions of colonizers with power against those who are passive objects and target of this power, but rather as a disciplinary process of creating certain kinds of subjects, the claim that democratization is a process of colonization becomes clear. Democracy is a

complex discourse, which has to be dissociated from any positive or negative Platonic essence. The question is not as to whether there is an ideality or a promise of democracy. There is no doubt that there is such a construction; the question remains as to how this ideality determines the functioning of democracy today. This is to say that the ideal of democracy is not a permanent reality in itself, but a discursive formation, which demands discipline from the participants in democratic structures. Democracy as a discourse contains within itself a fundamental contradiction, which makes its functioning in its ideally articulated form impossible. Hence, democracy is not to be understood in the first instance in terms of structures of power and subjectivity justified by modern metaphysical thinking, but rather in terms of disciplinary power and the obedient subject. Such an understanding explains how democracy today operates as a neo-colonial discourse which spreads throughout the world with a certain dogmatism and unreflective attitude. The discourse on democracy appears to be unassailable. Yet the task of thinking is precisely to question what appears to be an unassailable dogma of its time rather than legitimizing commonly accepted beliefs.

Timothy Mitchell's contribution to Foucault's conception of the disciplinary power in analyzing colonization process is his discussion of representation. The question of representation in the colonial discourse has been analyzed by Said in *Orientalism*. The European countries of France and England re-present the "Orient" in regulated and particular ways, which contributes to the material, political, and cultural domination of Europe over its colonies. Timothy Mitchell expands this discussion to explain how the question of representation presupposes a number of philosophical axioms on the part of Europe, and why it supplements the bio-disciplinary power emerging in and through the interaction of the West with the Orient. However, neither West nor the Orient are substantial identities; they are not even identities over time as if there is a particular unity to the movement of these categories through time. Within the most recent manifestation of neo-colonial structures, the so-called third world country can be "democratic" yet still be dependent. In fact, precisely by being democratic a nation can become dependent and integrated into the world political system. The question of representation plays a crucial role in explaining how the global political system works while at the same time accounting for its colonial genealogy.

In "Can the Subaltern Speak?"[11] Gayatri Spivak makes a distinction between representation as standing in and representation as standing for; the former is to present an image of an external reality as in art or philosophy, whereas the latter means to speak for someone in his/her absence as in the political representation. Spivak notes the difference between German words for these two types of representations: *Darstellen* pertains to representation in philosophy or art, where a mental image or a painting represents an object, whereas *Vertreten* concerns the political realm where the members of a dem-

ocratic parliament represent their constituencies. In both cases that which is represented is absent. The nature of this absence, however, is extremely important. The European colonial representation of the Orient has almost always been in terms of *Darstellen*. Yet the difference between these two senses of representation becomes difficult to delineate especially when representation becomes a self-representation. In other words, when one sets out to represent oneself (in terms of *Darstellen*), such representation is almost always a de facto political representation (*Vertreten*). Yet in both senses of the term what is represented is not metaphysically prior to the act of representation. That is to say, while representation attempts to stand for something other than itself, there is nothing that precedes the act of representation; that which is to be represented is absent in a radical way.

In "Signature Event Context,"[12] Derrida concentrates on the traditional distinction between speech and writing. Writing has the ability to communicate ideas to persons that are not present, whereas speech is privileged because of its immediacy. Derrida inquires into the nature of this notion of absence. Is absence a modification of presence (i.e., a distant presence) or an absolute absence? Derrida claims that for writing to have substantial difference from speech the absence should be understood as an absolute absence. Derrida establishes the nature of writing, as well as the functioning of a sign, on the basis of absolute absence. Writing continues to be writing (i.e., legible even in the absolute disappearance of any empirically determinable addressee). What is valid for addressee is also valid for addressor and what is valid for writing is also valid for speech. Therefore, any linguistic sign remains structurally legible in the absolute disappearance of the subject.

With respect to the question of representation we need to concentrate on this kind of absence. As I quoted above, Mitchell's analysis implies that the representations of the Orient are not simply inaccurate, false, or that there is a better, more accurate, realistic representation of the Orient, but the Orient as the object of Western representations is absolutely absent. That is not to say that there is no Orient, but through representations the Orient is both produced as an object, yet at the same time rendered absent. For Derrida and Mitchell, this is a philosophical problem of how we understand the world in terms of subject-object distinction.

We can now understand the paradox of democracy in terms of representation. Here it is important to note that this is not simply a question of the problem of representative democracy, but rather the question of representation in democracy. The distinction *Darstellen* and *Vertreten* introduced by Spivak is useful here. The problem of representative democracy is in the first instance a problem standing in (*Vertreten*). How can a political body, a parliament represent the will of the people which is the locus of sovereignty? As Rancière notes:

> The self-evidence which assimilates democracy to a representative form of government resulting from an election is quite recent in history. Originally representation was the exact contrary of democracy. None ignored this at the time of the French and American revolutions. The Founding Fathers and a number of their French emulators saw in it precisely the means for the elite to exercise power *de facto*, and to do so in the name or the people that representation is obliged to recognize but that could not exercise power without ruining the very principle of government. Rousseau's disciples, for their part, only admitted representation by repudiating the meaning of the word, that is, the representation of particular interests. The general will cannot be divided and the deputies only represent the nation in general. Representative democracy might appear today as a pleonasm. But it was initially an oxymoron. [13]

However, the problem of democracy is not only how to represent the general will or the locus of sovereignty, but as to whether such a thing exists to be represented in the first place. Lefort's response to this problem is to claim that in democracy:

> The locus of power is an empty place, it cannot be occupied—it is such that no individual and no group can be consubstantial with it—and it cannot be represented. Only the mechanisms of the exercise of power are visible, or only the men, the mere mortals, who hold political authority. We would be wrong to conclude that power now resides in society on the grounds that it emanates from popular suffrage; it remains the agency by virtue of which society apprehends itself in its unity and relates to itself in time and space. [14]

What Lefort seems to imply is that sovereignty does not belong to society. The sovereignty of people in the form of providing legitimacy to those who rule is not a substantial identity and cannot be represented. Sovereignty in democracy is not like the sovereignty of the absolute monarch. It is not even an indivisible unity that exists prior to being "executed." However, this does not mean that there is no representation of the society to itself. Lefort continues that power "remains the agency by virtue of which society apprehends itself in its unity and relates to itself," which implies that society represents itself in a circular way and relates itself to itself. Therefore, whereas the sovereignty of society cannot be represented as a locus of power, the society constantly represents itself to itself. This is the aspect of representation in democracy that we can understand in a neo-colonial context. *Demos* always represents itself to itself, not because there *is* a *demos* to be represented prior to being represented, but the agency of the *demos* is produced in and through this self-representation. *The very notion of "society" is unthinkable without representation.* Mitchell explains the emergence of concept of society: in Europe "one finds the same attempt underway to envision 'society' as both a political and conceptual structure existing apart from people themselves, the same connection with the process of schooling and the same fears of the

crowd. Durkheim's importance to social science was that he established society as something with an 'objective' existence, as a mental order independent of the individual mentality, and showed how this imaginary object might be studied" (CD, 121).

Society, therefore, has to be invented as a category that is crucial in the deployment of democracy as a disciplining mechanism. In the name of our responsibility to the fellow citizens, the collective has to be imagined as existing apart from the individual, as an objective presence. But it also has to incorporate the individual into this objective presence called society. Mitchell explains:

> If society was an object existing apart from the individual, as a conscience collective, it required a mechanism for recreating its collective morality in the individual. This morality was a system of discipline, based on "regularity and authority," and it was such discipline that schooling in the modern state was to inculcate. "The child must learn to coordinate his acts and regulate them. He must acquire self-mastery, self-restraint, self-domination, self-determination, the taste for discipline and order in behavior." (CD, 121)

According to Mitchell, with Durkheim society emerges as an objectively existing thing to be represented. Yet such a metaphysical assumption needs to be produced (manufactured) in a bio-disciplinary cogitological fashion, because such a thing does not exist in and of itself. The emergence of "society." "The independent reality or objectness of the social, in other words, was a reality constituted by the ability of this ideal object always to present itself in a non-ideal, material body. Another example of such embodiment was the representation of shared ideas in statistics: 'currents of opinion,' Durkheim wrote, 'are, in fact, represented with considerable exactness' in such figures, whose average provides a material representation of 'a certain state of the group mind'" (CD, 126).

Therefore, the significance of representation is directly related to the idea of an objective existence of society, "Society, thus, was a thing—that is, something that occurs representationally . . . the processes of representation were taken to be the process of order itself. In the modern state, they were the method by which the apparent existence of a conceptual realm, the separate realm of meaning or order, was to be achieved" (CD, 126).

It is in this metaphysical framework that democracy becomes the representation of society in the way Mitchell describes. Moreover, democracy transforms the society into a political order with a unity. In other words, democratic discourse is a form of bio-disciplinary process that renders a society politically representable by disciplining their subjects into rational political figures who imagine themselves at the center of unity.

Such a description of modern society might appear to be overly determined and totalizing. It is certainly true that not all subjects are disciplined

by a totalitarian agency into the political unity. Yet resisting these dispersed, at times contradictory and scattered processes that have multiple origins proves to be notoriously difficult. This difficulty is the problem of decolonization, which is an interminable struggle, precisely because processes that are decolonizing tend also turn into their opposites. At times resistance to the colonizing tendencies of modern political globalization requires questioning the limits of what is considered to be rational political act.

## NOTES

1. Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*: *Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London: Verso, 2011), p. 4. Hereafter abbreviated as CD followed by the page number. Reprinted with the permission of Verso.

2. One can once again observe this relationship in the context of the European Court's decision regarding the pro-Islamic welfare party in Turkey as I demonstrated in the previous chapter.

3. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1988). Hereafter abbreviated as CE in the main body of the text.

4. The aim (or the ambition) of these exhibitions was expressed most strikingly by an Orientalist, Sylvestre de Sacy, who planned to establish a museum, "a vast depot of objects of all kinds, of drawings, of original books, maps, accounts of voyages, all offered to those who wish to give themselves to the study of [the Orient]; in such a way that each of these students would be able to feel himself transported as if by enchantment into the midst of, say, a Mongolian tribe or of the Chinese race, whichever might have made the object of his studies" (CE, 6).

5. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove, 1965), p. 64.

6. *Swiss-Kyrgyz Democracy Training Project*, "Swiss-Kyrgyz Democracy Training Project," N.p., n.d, Web, May 14, 2013, http://www.unesco.org/most/kyrgyz.htm.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. "Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme/United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization," Np., n.d.,http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/most-programme/.

10. *Swiss-Kyrgyz Democracy Training Project*, http://www.unesco.org/most/kyrgyz2.htm

11. Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg, eds. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271–313.

12. Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," *Limited Inc.*, trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

13. Jacques Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steve Corcoran (London: Verso, 2007), p. 53.

14. Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, p. 17.

*Chapter Four*

# Hunger Strikers, Suicide Bombers, and All the other Evil Terrorists

*Wer mit Ungeheuern kämpft, mag zusehn, dass er nicht dabei zum Ungeheuer wird. Und wenn du lange in einen Abgrund blickst, blickt der Abgrund auch in dich hinein.*

(Whoever fights with monsters should see to it that he does not become one himself. And when you stare for a long time into an abyss, the abyss stares back into you.)

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits Von Gut und Böse*, Band 5 [1]

Even though the metaphysical and philosophical problems of subjectivity have been exposed in the twentieth century, these criticisms have not been extended to the concept of democracy. This is not to say that there is not a tradition of the critique of democracy. However, this critique has been short-circuited by a post-metaphysical commitment to ethics and politics. That is to say that even though philosophical discourse today mainly understands the critique of subjectivity by Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, and others, it still attempts to recuperate a minimal conception of "subject" in order to ground the possibility of ethics and politics. This attempt to recuperate the subject is based on the conviction that a radical critique of subjectivity (i.e., the modern configuration of Western metaphysics) undermines the possibility of ethics and politics by making agency impossible.[2] While the attempt to recuperate a kind of subject has a mainly ethical focus, it also justifies the commitment to democracy. In this chapter, I will try to show why the response to the critique of subjectivity, which tries to recuperate an "agent" for action, is impossible. It is philosophically naïve and politically conservative to renew one's commitment to a subject, however minimalist this conception of the subject may be.

Some post-metaphysical attempts to reformulate a conception of the subject, which is considered to be necessary for politics, find this possibility in the notion of the body. These post-metaphysical attempts claim that the concept of the body has been neglected by philosophy in general and by modern philosophy in particular. Consequently, the argument goes, the critique of (modern) philosophy does not necessarily affect the notion of the body, and therefore, one can base a new conception of the subject on what modern subjectivity neglected.

For these recent post-metaphysical attempts to retrieve the significance of the body for philosophical reflection, the possibility of the body as a weapon presents special difficulties. I will investigate two cases in which the use of the body as a weapon undermines the theoretical framework of subjectivity even in its most minimalist formulations. In general, I will question two assumptions made by critics who try to recuperate a conception of agency: first, the assumption that a new conception of the subject is necessary for any political action and that such a conception of the subject is possible. Secondly, that this new conception of the subject can be based on the body (or "embodied subject," as it is sometimes called). I will start with the second assumption: my argument is that it is not possible to consider the embodied subject as an agent, and in addition purport to go beyond the Enlightenment rationality unless one admits that the only meaningful action this body can engage in is self-destruction. I will argue this point by investigating two instances of political action: hunger strikers and suicide bombers.[3] The hunger strike is a political act to the extent that it *undermines* what Foucault calls disciplinary power that constitutes the subject. By interpreting the logic of hunger strikes, I will also show that they not only undermine the possibility of politics based on agency, but also complicate the assumption that politics can and should be grounded at the level of the individual. Hence, I will also question the first assumption above, namely, that a conception of the subject, however minimal, is necessary for the possibility of political action. The desire to recuperate a minimal conception of subjectivity is based on the assumption that politics can only be thought at the level of the individual. Whatever the reasons for making it, I think this assumption is incorrect. One fundamental flaw of this desire to seek a kind of subjectivity or agency after the death of the subject is that most of these formulations do not acknowledge or do not do justice to the potential metamorphoses of the modern subject (hence, they do not depict a sufficient or completely accurate account of the modern subject).

Turkish prisoners have used hunger strikes as somewhat effective political tools.[4] Indeed, there is a long tradition of using the hunger strike as a political tool in prisons in Turkey. However, recently this act has taken on a different tone. The political prisoners started hunger strikes in order to protest the administration's attempt to institute so-called F-type prisons. In F-

type prisons, inmates are forced to live in small, private cells, replacing the traditional dormitory style cells. Yet the act of a hunger strike seems to be a peculiar political action. The hunger striker uses his or her own body not against another, but against him- or herself. The body becomes one's weapon against oneself. At first sight, the action seems to have an identifiable aim. Yet one cannot simply rationalize hunger strikes as attempts to attract public attention. This rationalization does not explain the distinct character of the act, not only because there are various ways of drawing the public's awareness, but also the success of the act does not depend on public attention. What is this distinct dimension of hunger strikes? It is an act where the "oppressed" assumes the role of the "oppressor" against his or her own body in order to undermine the oppressor. The transformation of the oppressor from the other to oneself marks the symbolic nature of this act. Yet the power of the oppressed is not exercised on the oppressor, or at least not directly, but rather on the oppressed herself. The body as the possible ground of the agent undermines itself by using itself against itself. This act renders the formation of an agent, however minimal, impossible. Indeed, the possibility of the act does not depend on the formation or the presence of the agent, but rather on its very disappearance, its absence, and death.

It is true that a hunger strike is possible on the basis of a number of modern institutions. The hunger striker counts on the dissemination of information and others knowing about the act. For the act to be successful the formation of public opinion is important. Yet the particular way in which hunger strikers engage in this action demonstrates that their aim is for the prison administrators to be shamed, to be rendered powerless, and incapable of imposing their power onto the prisoners. In most cases, the authorities respond to hunger strikers by forcing them to eat, for the authorities impose their power to the extent that the integrity (both physical and mental) of the prisoners is intact. The prisoners undermine the very object of the disciplinary power of the prison authorities, which is the subject of their actions, namely their bodies.

In order to understand how the prisoners undermine the logic of disciplinary power, we need to recall Foucault's analysis of power in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault's analysis of the prison's function in the constitution of the subject through the exercise of disciplinary power is especially illuminating in the case of hunger strikes or "fasts to the death," as the Turkish supporters call them. In the first instance it is pretty obvious that the context in both cases is the prison. However, the deeper reason for a Foucauldian analysis is the fact that the act of hunger striking seems to undermine what Foucault designates as the main target of disciplinary power, namely the body of the subject.

The starting point of my argument is again Foucault's claim that "Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free."[5]

Foucault explains the nature of this kind of power in *Discipline and Punish*. As we discussed in the second chapter, Foucault's main argument is that even though the transition to a new system of punishment is conceptually justified in terms of the juridical subject, the birth of prison as a generalized punishment undermines this justification. The power at work is not the juridical power of the subject, but the disciplinary power over the body. Unlike the monarchical power, the juridical conception of power is justified on the basis of a conception of a human being considered to be a rational subject. Yet what produces this discursive juridical subject is the disciplinary practices on the body.

Foucault's interpretation of the disciplinary power at the root of the juridical subject of the ideal contract complicates any attempt to define the body as the site of agency of a possible politics. In fact, one could say that this very desire for a renewed conception of agency in post-metaphysical philosophy is a reinstitution of disciplinary power. In order to justify this claim, we need to emphasize another aspect of modern power. In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault discusses the notion of bio-power, which in many ways is a continuation of his notion of disciplinary power. Bio-power has a different relationship to life-death than the sovereign power. Whereas the power of the king is to decide whether someone will live or die, bio-power fosters life or disallows it. The significance of this transformation is that bio-power administers life, creates human subjects, and is only possible to the extent that it can be exercised on the body. Hence, modern power not only creates subjects, but also operates on the body. Consequently, any attempt to institute the body as the site of agency and ethics has to come to terms with these aspects of Foucault's critique.

Having reiterated these Foucauldian concepts, we can return to our analysis of hunger strikes. First of all, the setting of the prison reveals the disciplinary nature of the power. The prisoners' unwillingness to accept prison cells can be interpreted as a resistance to the gaze of the Panopticon. Yet the specific manner of resistance, namely, the slow, persistent diminishing of the body also implies that the target and the aim of this power are undermined. It would be a mistake to interpret these acts as the acts of sovereign subjects as they interrupt the very notion of sovereignty. They also undermine life as the primary element that bio-power administers. Therefore, it makes perfect sense that the prison authorities periodically try to force-feed the hunger strikers, not because of their fear of public outcry, but because the prisoners undermine the target of their power.

As I indicated above, the main issue of the confrontation between the hunger strikers and the government officials concerns the shape of prisons: the government wants to abandon the traditional dormitory style prisons, because the prisoners not only become less visible and controllable in such a setting, but because they also recruit new members to their political organiza-

tion. By isolating the prisoners from each other the prison officials desire to transform them into individuated subjects. The resistance of the prisoners, on the other hand, is not in the name of better prisons. The new prisons proposed by the government are far superior to traditional ones in terms of their comfort and general "humaneness": "the individual cells were pleasant enough; each three-man unit had a kitchen and a small enclosed patio" (The Hunger Warriors," 46). The prisoners refuse to be subjects of disciplinary power, yet they do not resist within the framework of subjectivity or agency, but through the very abandonment and even slow destruction of that agency.

To assess these acts on the basis of their success is still to remain within the framework of subjectivity and agency. Therefore, the *New York Times* correspondent is at a loss in "explaining" the logic of the fasts to the death. The prisoners as well as the family members who support them do not even hope that their demand will be met. When the correspondent brings back the news that the government officials are not willing to negotiate, they are not surprised at all. The question of "why" can never be answered satisfactorily especially since this issue (the shape of prisons) appears to most as sadly insignificant, compared, for example, to Gandhi's use of the same strategy during decolonization. As the *New York Times* correspondent puts it, "what is remarkable about the Turkish hunger strike, by contrast, is the smallness of the issue that sparked it and that it continues despite all evidence that it is and will remain a failure" ("The Hunger Warriors," 44). It seems that the failure of the act is its very success. Any rational, political, self-interested, and calculative framework is undermined by the act. Yet it is not an irrational, fanatic, altruistic, and meaningless act either. It is slow, methodic, painful, destructive, and ultimately a political act.

Hunger strikes undermine the position that insists on predicating the possibility of politics on agency. These "acts" not only demonstrate the priority of the act over agency, but also undermine the attempt of grounding the possibility of politics and ethics on the body. To the extent that one can call resistance to disciplinary power a political act, the act of a hunger strike, fast to the death, is a purely political act. It is outside the logic of calculation, outside the bounds of instrumental, pragmatic, politics, as well as of deontological ethics. It is political precisely in undermining the agency presumed behind it. It resists disciplinary power and in that sense it is the only possible political act. It might seem to start out as the act of an agent. However, this act undermines such an interpretation, by being perverted in and through the act itself. It undermines the structure not by being effective against it, but by erasing the condition for the possibility of the success of the system, namely the body of the subject to be acted upon. It is therefore also ethical yet undermines the possibility of grounding the ethical.

It is obviously difficult to engage in a reflective analysis of suicide bombers. Any discussion is not only overdetermined by various political and

psychological arguments, but also invokes a certain amount of passion. My argument concerning suicide bombing is that it is a pure act that not only undermines the primacy of subjectivity and agency, but also the possibility of evaluating these actions from the perspective of political understood as a kind of economy. Therefore, I do not develop an argument to condemn the act of suicide bombing nor to glorify or justify it. Mostly even the designation of "suicide bomber" already delineates one's position with respect to the act. Suicide bombers do not call themselves as such, but as martyrs. From a philosophical point of view, both the desire to condemn or justify the act has already presupposes that which remains to be understood in this act. For example, certain studies that try to understand suicide bombing in terms of psychology, psychiatry, and/or socialization all presuppose, whether they condemn or defend the act, the presence of an integrated subject behind the act. Suicide bombers are stated to be either psychologically troubled or morally deficient, acting out dealings of helplessness, weakness, oppression, and shame depending on one's political position.

Yet all of these explanations operate with the assumption that they are acts of rational political subjects, hence either good or evil. The act is either absolutely evil or is a reaction to this sentiment, absolutely good again depending on one's political and ideological position. There is almost a fear of understanding these acts, as if the mere thoughtfulness about the act would contaminate us as individuals. The moral indignation takes the form of a conscious unwillingness to understand. A refusal to understand (or even attempt to understand) undermines the integrity of a rational subject: human beings are for the most part rational beings; how can one wake up one day and decide to kill oneself along with other innocent people? Evidently, unless one clarifies one's fundamental assumptions about human beings, this is an impossible question to answer. This impossibility presents us precisely a domain to radically question our political, moral, and metaphysical assumptions, however unwilling we may be to do it.

Suicide bombing cannot and should not be understood as the act of an agent. If we do so, we cannot go beyond our moralist and ethnocentric perspective. We need to ask: What kind of act is a suicide bombing? First of all, even if it is initially considered to be the act of an agent, it destroys the agent. It is subsuming one's self, one's life, to a goal. Yet it is different from the traditional conceptions of martyrdom. It is a purely "modern" act where one's body, with the help of technology, becomes one's weapon. The body does not stand for an oppressed aspect of an oppressed person, but undermines the very logic that seeks a victim, as well as an oppositional structure where one can tell right from wrong. The traditional martyr is absolutely, divinely right. There is no doubt that in the mind of suicide bombers that they are such absolute martyrs. Yet the act itself does not easily lend itself to such an interpretation. In other words, it would be wrong to derive the meaning of

suicide bombing from the thoughts, intentions, and aims of its executors. The target of the suicide bomber is not necessarily the oppressor. In this act the victim is not easily distinguishable. Actually, in this act there is no clear separation of the oppressor from the victim. There is simply an act without a subject and without an object. It is an action, but not the action of a subject. Suicide bombing, not its actuality, but its very possibility, therefore, undermines the pragmatic search for a subject that would legitimize its political action.

The act undermines the distinction between the murderer and the murdered. It can still be said that the actor in this case is the suicide bomber. However, even if one grants this initially, the suicide bombing still remains an enigmatic act. One could after all kill others without necessarily being killed in the act. If one gives purely pragmatic objections to this claim, such as the suicide bomber would have otherwise been captured, cannot carry out the act, etc., the fact still remains that one could at least attempt to kill without being killed. Suicide bombing defies our notion of agency in such a fundamental way that we cannot even think about this action without unequivocally and unambiguously condemning the act. It is as if merely speaking about the act will implicate us. If we utter anything about it, we would be making it acceptable, or worse, endorsing it. Yet these discursive traps should not deter us from thinking about the act, in fact they should indicate that there is something absolutely necessary to be thought in these moments.

Suicide bombings and hunger strikes, despite their very significant differences, are political acts that undermine the sense of politics based on the economic model. They are neither rational nor simply irrational (they are generally quite well organized), they are neither simply the result of religious fanaticism (increasingly nonreligious people are involved in it) nor simply free of religious convictions. They are acts that undermine their supposed agent. They represent a kind of absolute alterity with our ethical, political, and metaphysical assumptions. Yet I argue that they also present the most significant challenge to our ethical and political and metaphysical convictions. They demand response in the most radical sense of the word, precisely because none of our traditional responses would be sufficient. They require an ethical response; in fact they require the only ethical response precisely because our traditional conception of ethics is no help other than condemning them thoughtlessly, indignantly, and moralistically as evil or absolute martyrdoms.

The difficulty of the suicide bombing partially originates from the fact that it undermines the fundamental conception of a political act. The "actor" that engages in the political act is required to preserve its unity through the act and confront its consequences. The suicide bombing undermines the integrity required for the actor of a political action. The culprit is not there to suffer the punishment or the reward for his or her actions. The rationality of

an act is constituted by the presence of the subject that externalizes and separates the act from itself. In the case of the suicide bombing the act is not rational, not because the subject behind it is psychologically irrational, but the unity required for rationality and secured by the subject is undermined. The absence of the subject leads to fundamentally opposed judgments of the act: it is either absolutely evil or it is pure martyrdom. The fact is, however, both of these judgments demand the presence of the unity that is undermined by the act. Hence, the responsibility that is to be attributed to suicide bombers is either shifted to the survivors and they are condemned, or the survivors absolutely embrace and approve the act.

The difficulty surrounding the act of suicide bombing is constituted by the absence of the subject (i.e., the death of its executor). What is to be condemned or glorified by the act is not only the actor but the death itself. In order to understand the simultaneous constitutive and destructive nature of suicide bombing (again depending on political position, because regardless of what one thinks of suicide bombing, martyrdom—death for the sake of one's perceived community—is not an act any community can absolutely condemn) we need to reflect on the relationship between the political and death. Death is the constitutive element of the political; yet at the same time it is the destruction of the unity.

In the first chapter I tried to articulate the relationship between death and the political and derive the consequences of this relationship for the democratic constitution of the political space. Democracy is a system that is based on our most fundamental metaphysical conceptions of a human being. Yet, suicide bombers and hunger strikers do not demand democracy, because they undermine the very logic of democracy namely the *demos*, the human being. To argue that the lack of democracy is the source of all political evil is based on an oppositional thinking that undermines its own premise. This is one of the fundamental problems of democratic theory that has always been a major contradiction. Is it possible to democratically choose nondemocracy or does democracy always inevitably choose itself? This may appear to be a conceptual problem. However, in certain countries, like Turkey, democratically-elected religious parties present a dilemma both for themselves and for democracy. Their worldview is fundamentally at odds with democracy. Yet nobody wants to leave them simply outside of democracy (underground so to speak), because thereby they become more dangerous. Yet they can participate in democracy by partially becoming other than themselves. Hence, the myth of diversity in democracy becomes unveiled. Democracy appears to allow a certain kind of diversity, while in its logic it also undermines the very idea of difference and diversity. Democratic structures can only deal with alternatives to the extent that they consider the latter only as "nondemocratic." The logic of democracy therefore is one of the affirmation and production of the sameness over difference. This brief reflection on suicide bombers

and hunger strikes demonstrates how the question of terrorism is conceptually related to bio-disciplinary structures. We might dismiss some of these "terrorists" as religious fanatics (in the case of suicide bombers, even though not all suicide bombers act out of religious faith but rather out of political conviction). However, we have to recognize that the peculiar nature of such political acts (especially hunger strikers) need to be understood in terms of bio-disciplinary processes that sustain our political systems rather than dismissing them as the acts of "sworn enemies of democracy," as Derrida seems to do.

## NOTES

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits Von Gut und Böse*, Band 5, Nietzsche, F., *Kritische Studienausgabe, in zwölf Bänden*, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980); *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Aphorism 146, p. 69, reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

2. The troubling aspect of this complaint is that it presents the question of agency once again from the perspective of an already assumed agent. In other words, it seems to me that the question of whether agency is possible is not a question for an agent to determine. If we assume that it is, we are not answering the question, but assuming our answer. One cannot criticize philosophical arguments by claiming that they do not allow us to do what we want. Otherwise, philosophy seems to be nothing more than a collection of arbitrary determinations of a subject.

3. I neither romanticize nor condemn these actions from a moral perspective. It is clear that the possibility of ethics is not the same as the possibility of ethical judgment. I argue that these actions undermine any possibility of ethics conceptualized from the perspective of an agent or embodied subject.

4. "The Hunger Warriors," *New York Times*, October 21, 2001, p. 43.

5. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," p. 221 in *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* by R. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983).

## Chapter Five

# Derrida and Democracy-to-Come

In his paper entitled "The Crisis in the Teaching of Philosophy," originally given at Cotonou (Benin) at the opening of an international conference gathering francophone and anglophone African philosophers in December 1978, Derrida writes:

> Every monolingualism and monologism restores mastery or magistrality. It is by *treating* each language *differently*, by *grafting* languages onto one another, by *playing* on the multiplicity of languages and on the multiplicity of codes within every linguistic corpus that we can struggle at once against *colonization* in general, against the colonizing principle in general (and you know that it exerts itself well beyond the zones said to be subjected to colonization), against the domination of language or domination by language. The underlying hypothesis of this statement is that the *unity* of language is always a vested and manipulated simulacrum. [1]

The context of this conference helps us to understand the meaning of the preceding words. In a continent 95 percent of which was colonized, philosophy taught and practiced in French and English language is situated in an undeniable complicity with history. Derrida recognizes all the problems of an unmistakably European philosopher delivering a lecture in Africa on the crisis of teaching philosophy. Moreover, Derrida also recognizes the role of philosophy within the colonial project. This complicity of Occidental philosophy is not external to the content of philosophy. In fact, it is connected to the perpetual crisis of philosophy, of its self-critique. Derrida attributes the "imperialist self-confidence of philosophy" to its ability to reproduce and reiterate itself by questioning its own foundations and limits. Yet if the very virtue of philosophy as the *paideia* of self-critique in general is responsible for its imperialist nature, how can one be critical to this gesture without

repeating it? Here Derrida articulates an important conceptual overlap be-
tween deconstruction and decolonization.

> This new relation to the philosophical, in order to be neither colonized nor
> neo-colonized, should not import either the self-repetition of Occidental phi-
> losophy or even its crisis or its "models" of crisis, not even its values of
> property and reappropriation, which have sometimes imposed strategic neces-
> sity on liberation and decolonization movements. The very idea of importation
> or the opposed motif of nonimportation belongs to the same logic. Hence the
> extraordinary- theoretical and practico-political difficulty: how to do some-
> thing more and other than overturn and (thus) reappropriate? This—more than
> critical—difficulty is common to the movements of both deconstruction and
> decolonization. If, like philosophy and the deconstruction of the philosophical,
> decolonization is interminable, it is because it cannot be effective either as
> simple mode of reappropriation or as a simple mode of opposition or overturn-
> ing.[2]

This is one aspect of deconstruction that is promising for decolonization and
postcolonial theory. It seems that deconstruction promises the possibility of
thinking that displaces the hegemony of the Western world (philosophy,
politics, and culture). Derrida's thinking contains the possibility of advancing
a radical critique of colonialism that displaces the developmentalist paradigm
of culture and politics within a Hegelian framework. This possibility comes
from Derrida's idea(s) of heterogeneous future and hospitality. However, as I
will try to argue in this chapter there is a scission within Derrida's thinking
between the idea of democracy-to-come, on the one hand, and a certain
thought of alterity that Derrida describes in terms of hospitality, or foreign-
ness, on the other. Even though Derrida himself thinks of these two notions
as complementary, if not the same, I will argue that the notion of democracy-
to-come is fundamentally incompatible with the most radical and promising
thrust of Derrida's thinking. Derrida's thinking allows a conception of pos-
sibility, and of political future, that promises to go beyond the traditional
liberal conceptions of democracy, as well as his own conception of democra-
cy-to-come. Therefore, this chapter tries to read Derrida against himself and
question his ethnocentric adherence to democracy as it is expressed in his
recent work. My conviction is that Derrida's notion of hospitality is a prom-
ising notion that addresses important problems of postcolonial theory, where-
as democracy-to-come in a sense undermines these promises, and ties Derri-
da to a problematic political tradition.

In *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, Derrida proposes an original con-
cept of hospitality as well as a *right* to hospitality. He discusses this notion in
relation to Kant's essay "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay." Even
though Derrida recognizes the limits of such liberal conceptions of cosmo-
politanism and right to immigration, he claims that there is an absolute sense

of hospitality that goes beyond Kant. Kant's conception of cosmopolitanism seems to be based on the idea of the rational subject, which, according to Derrida, undermines the "absolute" dimension of hospitality by reducing it to a present and presentable right. When Derrida speaks of democracy-to-come in his recent work *Rogues* and tries to interpret this conception in terms of absolute hospitality towards the future, he distinguishes it from a conception of democracy that is based on the subject:

> I should perhaps confess that what tortures me, the question that has been putting me to the question, might just be related to what structures a particular axiomatic of a certain democracy, namely, the turn, the return to self of the circle and the sphere, and thus the ipseity of the One, the autos of the autonomy, symmetry, homogeneity, the same, the like, the semblable of the similar, and even, finally, God, in other words everything that remains incompatible with, even clashes with, heterogeneity, the heteronomic and the dissymmetric, disseminal multiplicity, the anonymous anyone," the "no matter who," the indeterminate "each one."[3]

The difference between the two conceptions of democracy, namely, the liberal, subjectivist democracy and democracy-to-come, according to Derrida, explains the paradox that "at a time when we claim to be lifting internal borders, we proceed to bolt the external borders of the European Union tightly."[4] Here, one should argue against Derrida that far from being a paradox, tightening the external borders of any union (conceptual as well as political, like the European Union) is a necessary condition of lifting the internal borders of that union. In this sentence, Derrida seems to imply, even though he does not explicitly state it, that the lifting of borders should be at least in principle possible beyond the (European) union. It is his belief in this possibility that ultimately leads Derrida to regard the future of politics almost exclusively in Europe and this is the Euroethnocentric aspect of his thinking that must be displaced. The distinction that Derrida invokes between democracy-to-come and existing (empirical) democracies as well as the "ideal" of democracy can only be instituted, maintained, and defended from the perspective of the subject and the liberal democratic space. In other words, Derrida looks at the problem of border "from within." Indeed, by invoking "old democracy" in its Greek origin *demos* and *kratos*, Derrida reinstitutes and delimits the borders of Europe. His perspective from within Europe leads him to assimilate the promise of the future to the concept of democracy. Thereby, Derrida colonizes the future in a way that is both insidious and contrary to his own way of thinking. The problem is that democracy is either a European, Western subjectivist, and exclusionary concept, which Derrida admits (but also distinguishes from democracy-to-come), or it is a concept that colonizes the space of hospitality, foreignness, and possibility. Derrida opens up the space of the foreign with one hand by appealing to irreducible

alterity in the political, but closes off this possibility with the other hand by insisting that space is the space of democracy.

"Democracy-to-come" as an expression preoccupied Derrida for more than a decade at the end of his life. Yet the thought behind this expression can be said to extend over Derrida's entire career. Therefore, rather than arguing when deconstruction became political or whether it was always political, we should understand how democracy-to-come relates to other Derridian themes. The very notion of iterability, which in a sense organizes Derrida's early writings, already contains a promise of an impossible future, a thought of absence, which is completely heterogeneous to the presence. Derrida builds his later notion of "to-come" on the basis of this critique of presence. *L'avenir* (to-come, the to-come) is not a future that is determined by the configuration of the past and the present. To-come is a kind of future but unlike the present future, it is not calculable, not foreseeable, not programmable, totally unexpected, it is what Derrida calls the "real" future, the coming of the Other which is not homogeneous with the order of the present. This thought of the "to-come" organizes Derrida's thoughts more than any other idea, and I believe it is this thought of the Other, the to-come that organizes his resistance to the Hegelian notion of negativity in the sense that the latter organizes the future, and renders it calculable, foreseeable, and predictable. Consequently, Derrida's political thinking, or rather deconstruction's approach to the political has to be understood in terms of this idea of "to-come." All the ethico-political concepts Derrida utilizes are accompanied by this notion of the to-come: hospitality, forgiveness, cosmopolitanism, and democracy.

Within a dialectical movement from the past to the future, the future is homogeneous with the presence. The dialectical moves through the negation of negation of "what has been" (*Gewesen*). In that sense, while the future seems to be completely different than the past, and the present, it is in fact *within the same order*, the order of the possible, the order of presence. Derrida proposes the idea of *l'avenir* precisely as an attempt to resist this way of construing difference (between the presence and the future), which while appearing to be radically different (opposition) still regulates the radicality of the "to-come." Derrida does not simply import this notion of the to-come to the political, but rather the concept of *l'avenir* is inextricably political. It promises radical politics to come that is not regulated by the present configuration of power. It also enables a critique of present political ideas, as well as institutions, without appealing to a universal common ground. Yet in Derrida's political thinking "to-come" *does not remain nameless, but it is designated as "democracy-to-come."* "The expression "democracy-to-come" does indeed translate or call for a militant and interminable political critique." Derrida designates it as a weapon aimed at the "enemies of democracy" yet claiming that every de facto democracy remains inadequate to the democratic

demand. The "to-come" not only points to the promise but suggests that democracy will never exist, in the sense of a present existence: not because it will be deferred but because it will always remain aporetic in its structure. This aporetic structure can be formulated in various ways including the paradox between equality and freedom, the suicidal autoimmunity of democracy, that it protects itself by killing itself, or what Derrida calls autoimmunity, a process that is an nondialectizable antinomy, an internal contradiction and indecidability. Therefore, democracy-to-come inevitable remains as "an empty name, a despairing messianicity or a messianicity in despair" (*Rogues*, 86).

What leads Derrida to assign the notion of democracy to the idea of "to-come"? How is the heterogeneity of the "to-come" compatible with the political regime of democracy? To elucidate Derrida's answer to this question requires multiple qualifications: first for Derrida, democracy does not simply designate a political regime.[5] Although it is not clear what exactly Derrida means here, it is safe to assume that democracy-to-come exceeds every (present) political configuration. Secondly, for Derrida "the inherited concept of democracy" is different from any other political regime in that it is:

> The only system that welcomes in itself, in its very concept, that expression of autoimmunity called the right to self-critique and perfectibility. Democracy is the only system, the only constitutional paradigm, in principle, one has or assumes the right to criticize everything publicly, including the idea of democracy, its concept, its history, its name. Including the idea of the constitutional paradigm and the absolute authority of law. It is thus the only paradigm that is universalizable, whence its chance and its fragility. (*Rogues*, pp. 86–87)

I want to emphasize the term perfectibility here. I believe it undermines the idea of heterogeneity that Derrida is defending in terms of the "to-come." It is for this reason of perfectibility that democracy occupies the entire space of the political, of "politics-to-come." Derrida says that it opens up the public space (*Rogues*, 92). Yet how is this perfectibility to be thought? Before going any further, we need elucidate how Derrida distinguishes democracy-to-come from a regulative idea. This distinction is crucial because the historicity of democracy (i.e., the fact that it is unique among all political systems) must be completed, and it can only be completed if it is freed not only from the idea in the Kantian sense but from all teleology, all onto-theo-teleology (*Rogues*, 87).

Even though Derrida's immediate polemic is against Kant's regulative idea, there is another layer to his discussion. A Kantian regulative idea also dictates the shape of the movement from the present to the future. The shape of this movement also takes a Hegelian form, in that the present determines the future in the sense that the regulative idea that is attributed to the future is conceptualized in the present. Therefore, while Derrida's critique of the Kan-

tian regulative idea is conspicuous, there is also an inconspicuous confrontation with Hegel that needs to be articulated.

There are three reasons why Derrida distinguishes democracy-to-come from a Kantian regulative idea. The way in which the regulative idea commonly used (not necessarily in its Kantian determination) "remains in the order of the possible, an ideal possible that is infinitely deferred" (*Rogues*, 84). To this idea of the possible Derrida opposes the impossible, the foreign. Derrida claims that the impossible needs to be understood in a nonnegative fashion. Here we observe Derrida's resistance to the Hegelian dialectic, because if the impossible is understood in a negative way, it would still remain within the (dialectical) order of the possible; it would remain as a distant presence determined dialectically by the negation of the present. Derrida designates the impossible as the real, not as an empirically verifiable presence, but rather in a Lacanian sense, as the irreducible and non-appropriable difference of the other. The impossible is heterogeneous to the presence whereas the regulative idea is not.

Derrida's second objection to the regulative idea concerns the fact that in terms of a regulative idea, one always knows where one is going. There is no decision; the path to the ideal remains determined and unified. Once again, one can observe Derrida's desire to resist Hegel even though the regulative idea is associated with Kant. The regulative idea determines the shape of the movement towards itself in advance. Therefore, there is no room for decision in the sense that Derrida understands decision.

Finally, according to Derrida, the use of the regulative idea would necessitate subscribing to the entire Kantian architectonic and critique (*Rogues*, 84–85). The regulative idea justifies not only the present configurations in terms of their proximity to the postulated ideal, but it also undermines the urgency of democracy-to-come, the fact that it cannot be postponed in the name of some perfect state in the future.

Derrida's argument against the regulative idea is similar in structure to the one he developed in *Specters of Marx*.[6] In this text, Derrida demonstrates that the distinction between the ideal of democracy and its empirical manifestation functions as the legitimating ground of the tyranny of liberal democracy. The political implication of Derrida's argument against the distinction between the ideal and empirical in *Specters of Marx* are much more damning than he recognizes, in the sense that they also complicate his distinction between present democracies and democracy-to-come.

Politically, as well as conceptually, the distinction between democracy-to-come and regulative idea is not enough to rescue "democracy-to-come" from eurocentrism. Why does one *name* the event that is "unique, unforeseeable, without horizon, and unmasterable"? Is this naming not a desire of mastery? Derrida could have said that democracy is just another name for the to-come, not the only, not the exceptional one. Yet the privileging of democ-

racy over other political terms does not come from a heterogeneous *l'avenir*. This privileging is justified on the basis of a history, or rather a historicity that renders democracy the only system that welcomes perfectibility. How do we know this perfectibility? Is this knowledge of perfectibility different from the knowledge of regulative idea where it dictates the law, where one knows the path? And if so, (i.e., if they are different), how can one distinguish democracy-to-come from communism-to-come or better (or worse) fascism-to-come? How does one even conceptualize the idea of perfectibility without establishing the relationship between what is now and what has been? What is it that always remains to be perfected, other than a form of democracy that already exists?

It is clear that Derrida attributes a kind of unique characteristic of openness to the future that he denies to "sworn enemies of democracy." The so-called terrorist strategies do not have the same openness to the future. Derrida writes: "Such actions and such discourse *open onto no future and, in my view, have no future*. If we are to put any faith in the perfectibility of public space and of the world juridico-political scene, of the world itself, then there is, it seems to me, *nothing good* to be hoped for from that quarter" (*Autoimmunity*, 113). It is not clear how the so-called terrorist strategies can have no future. It is true that these words of Derrida's are uttered/written around the time of 9/11, thus the obligatory renouncement of anything that appears to be terrorism. Yet Derrida's notion of democracy-to-come is closed off to the sworn enemies of democracy. It is not clear how one can be a sworn enemy of democracy if democracy-to-come is heterogeneous to the present. How is it possible to distinguish sworn enemies of democracy without treating democracy-to-come as a regulative idea? It seems Derrida is operating with a Schmittian distinction between friend and enemy that he problematized in *Politics of Friendship*. Do not the enemies of democracy turn out to be its most faithful defenders? Derrida claims that terrorists are not absolute others. They are recruited, trained, and armed in Western ways (*Autoimmunity*, 115). By denying alterity to so-called terrorists, Derrida equates the terrorist with sworn enemies of democracy. Who then is going to contribute to the future of international law? Here, Derrida's answer is predictable: it is Europe, as opposed to the United States. Yet this Europe is of course not the presently configured Europe, but Europe of the future. The future that is denied to the enemies of democracy is open to Europe. Derrida states that he is saying that "without any Eurocentrism" (*Autoimmunity*, 116). Yet is Eurocentrism a belief that one can so simply denounce, or is it an attitude that colonizes the future?

The strategies that Derrida recommends are indeed profoundly Eurocentric: "We (as always, it is not clear who this "we" is) must help what is called Islam and what is called 'Arab' to free themselves (even though they do not belong to the "we," they nevertheless are not the absolute other, they are like

us) from . . . violent dogmatism. We must help those who are fighting heroically in this direction *on the inside,* whether we are talking about politics in the narrow sense of the term or else about an interpretation of the Koran" (*Autoimmunity*, 113). Here, Derrida opens up a interesting space for the interaction between the cultural capital of democracy and non-Western cultures. Yet, here a potentially interesting political confrontation is somehow displaced by a familiar attempt to explain critical attitudes toward democracy in terms of a religious text. It is not clear how an interpretation of the Koran can help us to understand contemporary political questions. Derrida further ponders the implications of the fact that Aristotle's *Politics* is not translated into Arabic. He does not take direct responsibility for this line of questioning. He attributes it to historians and interpreters of Islam:

> From what I have been able to understand, certain historians and interpreters of Islam today regard the absence of Aristotle's *Politics* in the Arab philosophical corpus having a symptomatic, if not determining, significance, just like the privilege granted by Muslim theologico-political philosophy to the Platonic theme of the philosopher-king or absolute monarch, a privilege that goes hand in hand with the severe judgment brought against democracy. (*Rogues*, 32)

Such an analysis perhaps expected from a media pundit is highly problematic for the philosopher of deconstruction. How can one assume that the lack of Aristotle's *Politics* can explain anything about the judgment against democracy in the Muslim world today? How can one assume that any factor have *a* (i.e., one) symptomatic or determining factor to explain for Muslim theologico-political philosophy? If there were such a factor, certainly preferring Plato over Aristotle would be much less of an explanation than, for example, colonialism. Yet, while Derrida does recognize colonialism as state terrorism, he is unwilling to pursue the continuing factors of colonialism in understanding critical approaches to democracy. In other words, Derrida does allude to history colonization and Western civilizing mission, yet he is unwilling or incapable of explaining how these processes contribute to the idea of democracy-to-come and the role of being European in this. He writes:

> We have here not one but a whole series of examples of autoimmune pervertibility of democracy: colonization and decolonization were both autoimmune experiences wherein the violent imposition of a culture and political language that were supposed to be in line with a Greco-European political ideal (a postrevolutionary, constitutional monarchy at the time of colonization, then a French—later an Algerian—republic and democracy) ended up producing exactly the opposite of democracy (French Algeria), which then helped fuel a so-called one that was really a war for independence waged in the name of the political ideals extolled by the colonial power. The new power itself then had to interrupt the democratization under way; it had to interrupt a normal electo-

ral process in order to save a democracy threatened by the sworn enemies of democracy. (*Rogues*, 35)

This passage invites a number of questions that complicate not only Derrida's outlook on contemporary politics, but also his idea of democracy-to-come. What is, if any, the difference between the pervertibility and perfectibility of democracy? On what basis do we distinguish the sworn enemies of democracy from its friends? If we cannot make these distinctions adequately, purely, on what basis do we colonize the future in the name of democracy? On what basis do we deny the future to the sworn enemies of democracy? Ultimately, the answers to these questions lie in the fact that Derrida falls short on the promise of his own thinking. Ironically, the father of deconstruction, the master who displaces all binary oppositions, falls prey to a simpleminded binary opposition between the camp of democracy and terrorists. Moreover, Derrida not only buys into a fairly simplistic opposition, but also decides to take sides.

> Despite my very strong reservations about the American, indeed European, political posture, about the "international antiterrorists" coalition, despite all the de facto betrayals, all the failures to live up to democracy, international law, and the very international institutions that the states of this "coalition" themselves founded and supported up to a certain point, I would take the side of the camp that, in principle, by right of law, leaves a perspective open to perfectibility in the name of the "political," democracy, international law, international institutions, and so on. (Autoimmunity, 114)

One could regard this declaration as a gesture necessitated by the times, an obligatory pronouncement of solidarity. However, Derrida's claim is not merely the result of an empirical reality, but rather a necessary consequence of his conceptual commitment. Even though the "ontotheological" foundations of democratic sovereignty must be deconstructed, democracy itself cannot be. In this sense, democracy-to-come performs the same political function as the ideal of democracy: it asserts, and reasserts, the cultural and political capital of the "American and European" posture.

In the context of postcolonial theory, democracy seems to promise a kind of equality, an equality between the citizens of the Western countries and colonized, and neo-colonized nations. Yet the paradox of democracy is that it is the cultural capital of the West. Therefore, the equality promised in democracy has to take place through a kind of deconstructive grafting, taking democracy from its cultural context, not by making it absolute and universal, but by recognizing that the insertion of democracy in a different cultural context is not an application of an already established, present rule, but the constitution of the very meaning of it. However, even such a deconstructive gesture cannot provide the equality it promises. It still remains within the

economy of European cultural capital, to the extent that we do not speak of independent contexts within a pure linguistico-deconstructive space, but of the context of globalization. Therefore, the Derridian gesture of democracy-to-come has to be deconstructed, displaced. Democracy, as cultural capital, undermines the possibility of political equality, ironically the very equality that democracy keeps promising. Hence, the paradox of democracy should not be formulated in terms of equality and freedom. Such a formulation is internal to the logic of democracy because both equality and freedom are incorporated into the discourse of democracy. The paradox of democracy is between democracy itself and the concept of equality, namely democracy undermines the equality it promises. Such a formulation forces democracy to confront itself as the other, namely that there is not simply an internal division within the overarching concept of democracy, but rather a scission of the concept of democracy with itself as the other. The aim of such a confrontation is not to purify the idea of democracy or the idea of democracy-to-come, but rather to emphasize the significance of equality-to-come and justice-to-come, which do not have the same cultural bias as democracy.

## SPECTERS

Derrida's conception of "democracy-to-come" operates against the background of the Hegelian model. On the one hand, Derrida tries to resist Hegelian logic that determines the future in terms of "has been" (i.e., the future is the dialectical negation of the present), hence ultimately shaped and determined by the present. This is a promising aspect of Derrida's thinking; in fact, this is the very definition of promise (i.e., something that is totally unexpected). On the other hand, politically Derrida insists on designating the "to-come" as "democracy-to-come." Derrida's thinking like every political thought that emerges in Europe today is predicated on the necessity that the political evil (imagined in terms of the Holocaust) is to be avoided. Therefore, Derrida cannot help but colonize the "to-come" by democracy, because even though the "to-come" is supposed to be radically different and totally unexpected, it still cannot be something that opens up the possibility of an event like the Holocaust.

One of the main themes of twentieth-century philosophy can be characterized in terms of a critique (or rather deconstruction) of presence. The deconstruction of metaphysics is launched not from a positivistic perspective, as it was in analytic philosophy, but rather from an intense engagement with that tradition mainly culminating in Hegel. With Hegel, the question of metaphysics is transformed from a simple presence (presence of forms, presence of categories, transcendental apperception, and finally the subject) to shape the movement of thinking. With Hegel, thinking is not the activity of a

subject anymore, but a movement through which the subject (the individual as well as the collective) finds its meaning. Yet with Hegel, the question of presence is not entirely answered but transformed into the shape of the movement of thinking. For Hegel, thinking is not always present, in fact it is a relationship between presence and absence. Hence, one cannot claim that Hegel is a metaphysician in a straightforward fashion. With Hegel, the question of presence becomes much more complicated. The question of presence and subjectivity arise in Hegel's thinking in terms of the shape of the movement of thinking, namely dialectic thinking. Dialectic is characterized by the movement of negativity. The present configuration of thinking and being is a determinate configuration, and as such, as this is Hegel's contribution, it will inevitably be negated. Hence, Hegel does not adhere to a simple idea of constant presence. Hegel's entanglement with subjectivity and presence is based on the idea that negation is always a determinate negation. This means that negation is determined by what it negates. Therefore, what is to come, the future, is always and always will be the negation of the presence. What has been will always determine what is to come. The shape of the dialectic is a negation of negation. This shape is Hegel's original contribution to the notion of subjectivity. Subjectivity does not mean that there *is* a subject behind thinking, not a subject constantly present throughout the movement of thinking. The subject is the shape of the movement; *it is the movement*. Yet to the extent that it is constituted through a determinate shape, *it both requires and produces a unity*. That which is negated will always come back to itself (not a self in the sense of simple presence), but presence means the ability to constitute oneself through this movement to and from its other, or negation. Hegel's dialectic is presencing, but this presencing is already determined in advance not by a teleological principle in the classical sense, but through its shape, where the past always determines the future.

The question of presence is not only a conceptual question; it is also inextricably political: Is it possible to think the question of the political without being trapped in the configuration of presence and allow a radical future, without even determining the shape of the movement that will take us to the future? It seems that it is impossible to even raise this question from the perspective of the political determined by the Western European philosophy. The question of the political, ever since its inception in Greek philosophy, always asks the question of unity. How is it possible to conceptualize the unity of a group of people? It was Plato's question in the *Republic*: What is the best way to rule a community as a whole? Therefore, Western philosophy is fundamentally political as it raises the question of the possibility of unity. If the question is posed in this way, (and it has always been, and perhaps will be to the extent that it remains the question of the political, that is, the question of *polis*, a unified city, an interiority) there is no possibility of resisting the form of Hegelian dialectic. Perhaps the question is not to be

raised from within the unity, that is to say, one will not raise the question of how we can constitute a unity among political subjects. This is precisely the question that democracy requires the political subjects to raise. The subject is placed at the center that desires a unity. One is empowered by being situated in this space. Indeed, this is what it means to be a political subject. However, if a unity conceptualized in terms of presence is to be problematized, this space of subject needs to be rendered void. Perhaps the problem of politics is not that we don't know what to do, but that we can only raise questions that have always already been answered.

The reason why Western European thinking is incapable of thinking about the future of the political is that it is entrapped in a conception of a past that is "completed." To the extent that we think of the past as already accounted for, completed, we cannot think of the future in a substantially different way. The narcissistic self-image of European society is that it is in a constant progress. The very idea of progress requires a comparison between the past and the present. This in turn requires that the past must be complete. Consequently, without abandoning the idea of progress we cannot think of the past otherwise than complete. The Kantian regulative idea is based on this interplay of the past and the future. It regulates the future in terms of an idea that emerges from accomplishments of the present. It privileges the present with respect to the past; we are closer to the ideal than before, but also shapes the movement to the future by claiming that the ideal is never achievable, will never be achieved, certainly not achieved yet. However, our progress from the past to the future determines the truth of our path. We know where we are going; we might never go there. In fact, we should never say that we are there, because that contaminates the ideal. However, we can never admit that the ideal is always already contaminated by being formulated, imagined, and fantasized in the presence. This is the conceptual difficulty of European thinking.

In contemporary European political thinking the ghost of the Holocaust is the more pronounced obstacle to political thinking. European commitment to democracy is singularly shaped by the specter of the Holocaust. Yet democracy thinks, can only think of the Holocaust in the past, as the perversion of itself. This allows the rendering of the Holocaust safely in the past and determines the future of the political in terms of "never again." The singularity of the past, its inevitable completeness manifests itself. To claim that the Holocaust should never happen again is not to think the past differently; it is allowing the past to determine the future. Yet the way in which we think of the past, as complete, finished, makes it possible to never raise the question of the relationship between democracy and the Holocaust. By fetishizing the Holocaust that happened within Europe, European political thinking can continue with the same democratic principle that rendered the Holocaust possible. By not allowing the Holocaust to be written without the capital letter,

the European philosophy takes *the* Hegelian step: the past is in the past, it is complete, finished, it is the other, yet democracy having gone through the determinate negation of its previous shape is now stronger. In fact, precisely having gone through this absolute evil renders the European experience and thinking powerful. Yet since the movement of thinking is unified and moves toward the future, the whole outside of Europe will be part of this movement. The political legacy of Europe is democracy and that in itself enables the colonization of the future as well as the rest of the world. In fact, this is a generalizable structure of democracy: democracy can render its opposition powerless not by simple oppression, repression, and violence (which it certainly does), but through a dialectical play of inclusion. That which at one time threatens the integrity of a democracy does not need to be permanently repressed. In fact, once such an opposition emerges, the strategy is to violently repress the elements that are currently impossible to incorporate and assimilate the elements that are possible to do so. However, an effective democracy should not leave any residue, any remainder so to speak. If the elements that were not possible to assimilate in the past become possible to incorporate (which they almost always do), then they should be integrated, because it is precisely this integration that renders democracy distinctive. Hence, it is possible, in fact necessary, for democracy to both allow the Holocaust to emerge and at the same time present itself as the only possible resistance to it.

## DEMOCRACY IS (NOT) YET TO COME: SPECTERS OF THE CAMPS

Jacques Derrida's thinking is a response to these political and philosophical problems. His entire thinking is in one sense the desire to think the political. In his essay entitled "The Ends of Man," Derrida writes: "every philosophical colloquium has a political significance."[7] It is dubious whether this pronouncement was particularly enlightening in the context of 1968. It signifies that Derrida's entire thinking is political. In *Specters of Marx* Derrida puts Marx on a stage, perhaps a world stage that has already been prepared in advance. Derrida's book is not exclusively about Marx or Marxism, but also touches upon other authors including Francis Fukuyama, who I will discuss in a moment. Yet the book is mainly staged in terms of a play, *Hamlet*. It is paraphrased, and structured in terms of Shakespeare's line in *Hamlet*: "The time is out of joint." Therefore, the question of spectrality is always a question about spectators as well, that is, the questions of communism or Marxism or democracy and justice depend on who is on the stage, who is watching the actors, and who cannot even enter the theater.

Derrida stages Marx as someone, parallel to Hamlet, who is trying to conjure away ghosts. Yet it also seems that Derrida himself is trying to conjure away a ghost, perhaps that of Marx whose analysis of capitalism would complicate, if not undermine, Derrida's notion of democracy-to-come. Hence, my aim is to present a critical reading of selected passages of Derrida's *Specters of Marx*. Even though I believe Derrida's reading of Marx is intriguing and useful, it undermines a potential critique of democracy in Marx's philosophy. Derrida mentions his notion of democracy in the same breath as he does justice and communism. I believe this conflation undermines a critical aspect of Marx's thinking, which in turn complicates Derrida's problematic adherence to democracy (-to-come).

In the second chapter of *Specters of Marx* entitled "Conjuring Marxism," Derrida criticizes Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*. The main thrust of Derrida's criticism of Fukuyama concentrates on Fukuyama's distinction between the ideal of democracy and its empirical manifestations. For Derrida, Fukuyama invokes the ideal of democracy against the possible criticisms of its empirical manifestations. The ills of democracy might continue to accumulate, however, their accumulation would in no way refute the ideal orientation of the greater part of humanity toward liberal democracy. As such, as telos of progress, this orientation would have the form of an ideal finality. Everything that appears to contradict it would belong to historical empiricity, however massive and catastrophic and global and multiple and recurrent it might be (SM, 57).

Derrida rightly attacks this distinction between empirical reality and ideal finality of democracy, which ultimately proposes democracy as the only alternative for all political systems. Hence, as soon as we open our mouths, we defend democracy without even thinking about it anymore. I will come back to this issue.

Yet, according to Derrida, Fukuyama somehow undermines this distinction when he claims Kojeve has "identified an important truth when he asserted that postwar America or the members of the European Community constituted the embodiment of Hegel's state of universal recognition" (SM, 62). Hence, somewhat naively Fukuyama relies on a messianic event, namely the French Revolution, which would have been "the event that took Christian vision of a free and equal society, and implanted it here on earth" (SM, 60). This messianic vision undermines the distinction between the ideal and the historical, but Fukuyama does not consider this implication. More importantly, Fukuyama criticizes Marxism on the basis of its failures in empirical reality and hence denies communism the same ideal finality that he preserves for liberal democracy. In Derrida's words, Fukuyama's discourse "performs a sleight-of-hand trick: with one hand, it accredits a logic of the empirical event which it needs whenever it is a question of certifying the finally final defeat of the so-called Marxist States . . . but with the other hand . . . it

discredits the same logic of the so-called empirical event" (SM, 72). Fukuyama has to discredit "all the evil" and everything that is "not going well" in the capitalist states and in liberalism as empirical and thereby preserves the purity of the ideal of liberal democracy.

In the next chapter Derrida lists the problems of liberal democracy: unemployment; homelessness; ruthless economic wars among the countries of the European Community; the inability to master the contradictions in the concepts, norms, and reality of the free market; the aggravation of foreign debt; the arms industry and trade; the spread (dissemination) of nuclear weapons; the proliferation of interethnic wars; the growing and undelimitable power of the mafia and drug cartels; the present state of international law and of its institutions, specifically the European origin of philosophical concepts governing international law, and the fact that the application of the international law remains dominated by nation states. One can address these problems in two ways according to Derrida: either by relegating them to the domain of historical empiricity and invoke the inevitable ideal of liberal democracy, in which case, that which is said to be the cause of these problems would be their solution, or one can question the very ideality of liberal democracy, including equality, liberty, human rights, dignity of citizens, etc., Derrida believes that the notion of spectrality manages this critique of the ideal, because the ghost exceeds the binary or dialectical logic that opposes actuality to ideality.

Indeed for Derrida, both communism and democracy share the same structure of spectrality. He writes "communism has always been and will remain spectral: it is always still to come and is distinguished, like democracy itself, from every living present understood as plenitude of a presence-to-itself, as totality of a presence effectively identical to itself" (SM, 99). The logic of spectrality escapes the binary, oppositional logic that is at work in Fukuyama's understanding of democracy. The ghost is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive, it escapes metaphysics that is inevitably traced back to presence as an origin. Derrida assigns deconstruction the task of thinking democracy "without renouncing and ideal of democracy and emancipation, but rather by trying to think it and put it to work otherwise" (SM, 90). In this sense, Derrida detects both in Marxism as well as in democracy such a promise of an always yet to come. Yet it is precisely at this point things become complicated for Derrida's own analysis. Several times in *Specters of Marx*, Derrida invokes a structural affinity between communism, justice, and democracy. He claims that spectrality obliges us "to think another space for democracy. For democracy-to-come and thus for justice" (SM, 169). How does Derrida move from communism to democracy-to-come and to justice? Are these straightforward transitions? Are these terms signifiers with the same promise? Or are they not the same in terms of the content of their promises, but in terms of the structure of promise, which is

inevitable, yet impossible to fulfill? Here, Derrida invokes a structure that he has called iterability, supplementarity, etc., throughout his career. Now the same structure is called spectrality or ghost. However, the invocation of spectrality is problematic in the context of democracy. It is problematic to assume that there always remains an undeconstructible element in democracy. Why is this privilege attributed to democracy ("let us not say," Derrida writes, "all democracy, or precisely [*justement*], of democracy-to-come")? *In this regard Derrida's democracy-to-come fulfills the same political function as Fukuyama's ideal of liberal democracy.* It is true that Derrida's conception of democracy-to-come questions the most fundamental presuppositions of liberal democracy or of Fukuyama's ideal of democracy and perhaps even undermines the metaphysical presuppositions of this ideal. Yet, what is it in the signifier of democracy that allows it to be equated with justice? Perhaps, Derrida's deconstruction is incapable of overcoming the problems of Fukuyama's ideal of liberal democracy. This is because Derrida does not have a critique of democracy; or rather his critique only applies to the ideal of democracy but not to the signifier of democracy itself. The reason why Derrida concentrates on Fukuyama is not to discuss the operation of conjuring away Marxism that Fukuyama exemplifies and defend Marx against it, but rather because of Derrida's own desire to conjure away the ghost of Fukuyama. By trying to distinguish democracy-to-come from the ideal of liberal democracy, Derrida repeats the same gesture that protects the inevitability of democracy. There is no alternative to democracy, but democracy-to-come. It is true that this yet-to-come never actually comes, but it is also always to come. Derrida himself calls this structure messianism, a kind of messianism that cannot be deconstructed.

Democracy, therefore, in advance structures is that which is to come. Whatever is to come will come as democracy. Therefore, whenever we open our mouths we promise democracy. Derrida never quite escapes this totalizing inevitability of democracy. This dimension of democracy, which I call the tyranny of democracy, is to be deconstructed. Yet for Derrida, this is precisely that which cannot be deconstructed.

> Well, what remains irreducible to any deconstruction, what remains as undeconstructible as the possibility itself of deconstruction is, perhaps, a certain experience of the emancipatory promise; it is perhaps even the formality of a structural messianism, a messianism without religion, even a messianic without messianism, an idea of justices—which we distinguish from law or right and even from human rights—and an idea of democracy which we distinguish from its current concept and from its determined predicates today. (SM, 74)

It might well be the case that deconstruction itself is possible on the basis of something that cannot be deconstructed, but it is not certain that this undeconstructible can be understood in terms of the signifier "democracy."

Conceptually, democracy shares the same structure of promise as other signifiers: justice, communism, and even fascism. Yet the political deployment of democracy functions exactly in the opposite way that Derrida phantasizes, namely it colonizes the future in advance and obfuscates the to-come. By adhering to the democracy-to-come Derrida essentially repeats the very inevitability that the ideal of democracy commands. Perhaps what obliges us to think today is not the yet-to-come of democracy but the necessity of deconstructing the tyranny of democracy, which issues from its ostensible inevitability.

Marx attempts to undermine this inevitable structure of democracy. Derrida does not discern (or focus on) the critique of democracy in Marx's analysis, as he makes clear in his reading of the last chapter of *Specters of Marx*. The final chapter of *Specters of Marx* addresses the first part of the first volume of Marx's *Capital*. Derrida analyzes the way in which the use-value and exchange-value function in Marx's text. Marx, according to Derrida, claims that the mystical character of the commodity does not come from its value. The exchange value, on the other hand, is through which the commodity is staged on a market, where it seems to gain supersensible qualities. It is true that for Marx the commodity already haunts the thing, its specter is at work in use-value. However, for Derrida, Marx tries to conjure this ghost by thinking that "he can speak of a pure and simple use-value (SM, 150). The commodities do not go to the market and exchange themselves; hence, there must be a human intervention which would trace back the commodity to its origin. Commodities cannot speak unless human beings provide spirits for them. Hence, for Derrida, Marx tries to indicate the precise moment where the ghost emerges. The ghost of the exchange emerges when the thing comes on stage as a commodity. According to Derrida, "to say that the same thing, the wooden table for example, comes on the stage as commodity after having been but an ordinary thing in its use-value is to grant an origin to the ghostly moment" (SM, 159). However, for Derrida, this ghostly moment cannot be isolated without the risk of reducing it to pure presence. The things are in advance already haunted by the exchange value, not as an empirical occurrence, but as a structural necessity. "The form that informs its *hulē* must indeed have at least promised it to iterability, to substitution, to exchange, to value, it must have made a start, however minimal it may have been, on an idealization that permits one to identify it as the same throughout the possible repetitions and so forth (SM, 160). It is clear that Derrida interprets the exchange value in terms of the structure of iterability that informs deconstruction since its inception. "In its originary iterability, a use-value is in advance promised, promised to exchange and beyond exchange" (SM, 162). Derrida indicates that exchange value has the same structure as that of the iterability. They are even mentioned in the same breath "exchangeability, iterability, the loss of singularity" (SM, 161). This is, to emphasize again, not

an empirical necessity that everything in advance must be a commodity, but everything in advance has the structural necessity of possibly being staged in the market of exchange.

Derrida points out that Marx attempts to circumvent this structure of iterability, and to conjure away ghosts by appealing to the use-value of the thing. "Without disappearing, use-value becomes then a sort of limit, the correlative of a limit concept, of a pure beginning to which no object can or should correspond, and which therefore must be complicated in a general theory of capital" (SM, 160). Therefore, ultimately Marx is an ontologist, rather than a hauntologist. He tries to conjure away ghosts. He continues to ground his critique or his exorcism of the spectral simulacrum in ontology. It is a critical but predeconstructive ontology of presence as actual reality and as objectivity (SM, 170).

Yet Derrida's deconstruction of Marx points to a problematic character of deconstruction itself. First, Derrida's desire to equate the structure exchange of commodities in a capitalist market with the structure of iterability undermines their difference. Secondly, in this whole theater Derrida seems to cast himself as the friend of all the ghosts, or at least the structure of spectrality. Yet, can one be friends with ghosts? Can one let them speak? Does Derrida himself not reserve an original position to deconstruction?

Derrida's interpretation of exchange value is in line with his notion of democracy-to-come and that these notions are problematic for Marx. For Marx the use-value does not refer to an originary presence, but to an interruption within the structure of seamless exchange, an interruption, which resists the totalizing repetition of the exchange value. It is no surprise that capitalism belongs to the same system as liberal democracy. This togetherness has to be construed not in terms of freedom, entrepreneurial liberty, etc., but in terms of a Derridian structure of exchangeability. Democracy, just like the stage of exchange of commodities on a market, refers to a stage where actors repeat their lines. Within democracy human beings are reduced to exchangeable commodities with particular properties. My point is not that humanity is objectified or its dignity has been taken away. In fact, democracy does not objectify people like commodities, but rather confers rights upon them as subjects. However, this distinction between subjects and objects does not capture the underlying unity between democracy and exchange value. They both seem to function like a Derridian structure of iterability. However, invoking democracy is never like invoking justice or communism. Democracy functions by its very logic not opening itself to a structure of iterability, but circumvents this in advance by invoking the same human subjectivity. Democracy by its very definition does not have a structure of iterability, because democracy only *appears* to lend a voice to the forces that attempt to undermine it. Yet democracy cannot and does not lend a voice to alterity, unless this alterity is transformed into a voice within democracy. Therefore,

democracy stages human beings not through freedom but through discipline. Democracy speaks through subject; reduces them to actors who repeat their lines without iterability. Indeed, within democracy the seemingly seamless movement of the system precludes the structure of iterability through repetition of the same. Hence, when Marx proposes the use-value, not as an origin, but an interruption of the seamless movement of capitalism, he is invoking the same necessity of interrupting the tyranny of democracy. Within such a system of democracy, it appears that Marx's ghost can be exchanged with that of justice as well as democracy as commodities on a stage. Yet the role of the friend of ghosts is not without its own ghosts. It so happens that this actor repeats the same line as the others: democracy-to-come.

Derrida recognizes that democracy by definition implies an openness to the other, even if this other is the "sworn enemy" of democracy. Derrida wants to preserve this openness by insisting that "democracy protects itself and maintains itself precisely by limiting and threatening itself" (*Rogues*, 36). Yet Derrida does not take this claim to what I would call a "neo-colonial" reading of democracy, which would claim that democracy institutes and protects itself undemocratically. This is not simply an empirical claim, but concerns the very idea of democracy as well as democracy-to-come. What Derrida considers to be a "positive" aspect of democracy-to-come manifests itself as *the* colonial force of democracy. Democracy manifests itself not only as an openness to the other, but also, and because of this openness to the other, as a force of colonization. Derrida's conception of democracy-to-come, consequently colonizes the future, the foreign, and hospitality. If this is correct, we must separate the Derrida of hospitality and alterity from the Derrida of democracy-to-come, because the latter closes off the possibility of imagining the political in a radically different way.

## NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, *Who's Afraid of Philosophy: Right to Philosophy I* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p.105.

2. Derrida, *Who's Afraid of Philosophy*, pp.102–103.

3. Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascal-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 14–15. Hereafter referred to as *Rogues* followed by the page number.

4. Jacques Derrida, *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2001), 13.

5. Jacques Derrida, "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides," in Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 121. Hereafter referred to as *Autoimmunity* followed by the page number.

6. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, The Work of Mourning & The New International* (New York: Rouledge, 1994), especially chapter 2. Hereafter abbreviated as SM in the text followed by the page number. I will return to this text later in this chapter.

7. Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 111.

# Conclusion

On Sunday, January 11, 2015, some forty leaders from all over the world gathered in Paris for a march as a demonstration against the terrorist attack on the editorial offices of the magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. It was a picture-perfect example of what Kundera called the "Grand March": "Europe was the Grand March. The march from revolution to revolution, from struggle to struggle, ever onward."[1] While the image of the solemn leaders gave the impression that they were marching in front of a large group of people, an aerial shot later revealed that there were less than a couple of hundred people behind them, probably most of them security agents. The emptiness of the photo was as iconic as the initial photo opportunity was meant to be. It was merely a show; it was the familiar European kitsch:

> The fantasy of the Grand March . . . is the political kitsch joining leftists of all times and tendencies. The Grand March is the splendid march on the road to brotherhood, equality, justice, happiness; it goes on and on, obstacles notwithstanding, for obstacles there must be if the march is to be the Grand March.[2]

While the Grand March is a European kitsch, according to Kundera, there were leaders from all over the world in Paris. This gathering speaks to the conviction that:

> The Modern Era has nurtured a dream in which mankind, divided into its separate civilizations, would someday come together in unity and everlasting peace. Today, the history of the planet has finally become one indivisible whole, but it is war, ambulant and everlasting war, that embodies and guarantees this long-desired unity of mankind. Unity of mankind means: No escape for anyone anywhere.[3]

It is this universalist kitsch of Europe that sustains the idea of democracy today.

Throughout this work I argue that democracy operates as a bio-disciplinary process of colonization. I try to explain the specific mechanisms and metaphysical presuppositions of this process. In the theoretical sense, democracy operates as a movement of self-relating negativity. This negativity as a pure movement takes a particular shape, its shape is dialectic as negation of negation. I argue that this movement in this shape colonizes both the political and intellectual space. I argue that it is necessary to clear an intellectual space for the critique of and resistance to the tyranny of democracy.

In today's global discourse of politics, democracy organizes and advocates itself against religious fundamentalism. It is certainly true that not all religious fundamentalisms are the same and it seems that today's main threat to democracy is Islamist politics. Today's confrontation between the Western democratic worldview and Islamism is to a large extent the continuation of the adversity between the colonizer and the colonized. Admittedly, such a binary opposition is very simplistic because neither "the West" nor "Islam" has any kind of consistent unity. Yet we seem to be experiencing a crisis of global capitalism and democracy, which is discursively crystalized in the confrontation of Western democracies and formerly colonized and currently dependent nations (or more precisely economies of subaltern peoples). Yet perhaps the confrontation is not between secular humanistic liberal democracies and theological worldviews but rather between different political theologies. As Carl Schmitt argues in *Political Theology*: "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts" (PT, 36). One could rephrase this statement today in terms of democracy and claim that all the concepts of contemporary European political thought are theological.

Perhaps this aspect of European political thinking might be the starting point of why the future of the political cannot be in Western European thinking anymore. Western democracies often boast a secular political heritage. They usually glorify their history in terms of a rejection or reformation of religious beliefs. However, as Schmitt observed, democracy, far from allowing a real confrontation with the theological, transforms the theological thinking into the political. Therefore, Western democracies still operate under the forces of religion and the European Union can still be a fundamentally Christian institution. This theological heritage of the European Union cannot be eradicated by accepting non-Christian nations as members either. Under democracy, theological thinking still continues to dominate the intellectual scene. Democracy cannot separate the political from the theological. Democracy, or more precisely the concept of "the people" in democratic discourse, functions as the (big) Other in a Lacanian sense. It structures the

political culture as a master signifier. It is time to recognize that the (big) Other of democracy does not exist, and has never existed.

The future of the political lies in the so-called Islamic nations where the political cannot exist alongside the theological. This does not mean, however, that the theological should be accepted into the political. Quite the opposite: the theological should be radically separated from the political in a way European politics failed to do. Such a possibility does not lie in Europe. It is also not clear that it lies in postcolonial nations either. It seems more and more that these nations become copies of European nations in terms of their disciplining of their citizens into democracy. Religious practices in Europe always contributed to democratic disciplining. Thus, it is likely that the same will happen in neo-colonial nations. Therefore, the political does not need a dialectical sublation of the religious into its practice, but rather a radical rejection and eradication of the religious from the domain of the political.

It might appear to be paradoxical to argue that genuine secularism and openness to the future will come from postcolonial thinking. First of all, I need to separate such a possibility from identity politics. This is not to say that genuine openness to the future can only be thought by the non-Western identities. It is to say, however, such an openness cannot be thought with the concepts of Western European political philosophy, because they are fundamentally colonizing. So what is the future of the political, and how can democracy be thought of in a way that is not colonizing? How is it possible to decolonize democracy? Of course, the first step is to decontextualize democracy (or more generally the political itself) from its cultural, geographical context of Europe, and do so not in an imperialist fashion by universalizing the concept to the other cultural and geographical context, but by treating democracy as a finite spatio-temporal event that has no substantial identity. In other words, democracy happens, it can happen, it always happens as a resistance to the present configuration of political power. It cannot and should not be institutionalized as a form of government, as a cultural heritage or capital, as a way of life, as a philosophical idea, not even as an undeconstructible "to-come." Democracy needs to be perpetually deconstructed, decolonized, and recognized when it happens, lingers for a while and that it subsequently disappears. It is significant that recent events in Egypt and Turkey over the last few years are not to be described as "in the name of democracy" but rather as events *of the political*. There are manifestations of something for which European political philosophy has no concepts to describe. They can only be understood with respect to their postcolonial disruptive elements rather than continuously perpetuated Western concepts such as democracy, freedom, good government, etc. They are acts of resistance to neo-colonial global order of democracy. They happen and they are done. We cannot formalize them, we cannot *learn* from them, we cannot repeat them. We need to engage in such events of resistance again in a way that does not

affirm precisely what we resist. Political actions need to be separated from disciplined subjects with intentions and aims because such actions are always already defined in terms of disciplinary discourses. We do not know what the future of the political will be, and that is precisely what we need to embrace, that is the genuine sense of openness that even Derrida's deconstruction cannot embrace. Ultimately, the theological impetus within the political is the desire to determine the future and produce a unity, which makes the future predictable. The idea of messianism without religion, even without messiah, participates within this desire. The name of radical difference and diversity is not democracy and has not been democracy for a long time. It is time to decolonize the political by recognizing democracy as the new phase of colonial domination, and to reckon with the tyranny of democracy.

## NOTES

1. Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (New York: Harper Collins, 1984), p. 50.
2. Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, p.135.
3. Milan Kundera*, The Art of the Novel*, trans. Linda Asher (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), p. 11.

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# Index

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