



DESENVOLVIMENTO
E MEIO AMBIENTE

BIBLIOTECA
DIGITAL
DE PERIÓDICOS
BDP | UFPR

revistas.ufpr.br

The Conflict of Life: the lack-in-being and the will-to-power¹

El conflicto de la vida: la falta en ser y la voluntad de poder

Enrique LEFF^{1*}

¹ Emeritus Researcher at the Institute of Social Research, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Ciudad de México, DF, México. Emeritus Researcher of the National System of Researchers of Mexico.

* Contact email: enrique.leff@yahoo.com

Article received on March 2, 2022, final version accepted on September 21, 2022, published on September 14, 2023.

ABSTRACT: Lack-in-Being and Will-to-Power express the difference between the thought about Life and the thought about Being; these are two syntagma that signal the confrontation between Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis and Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy with the fundamental ontology of Martin Heidegger: about sexual difference --the bodily impulses and the drives of the unconscious desire that have remained unthought in the history of metaphysics-- and ontological difference. The environmental question opens a new philosophical inquiry beyond the transcendental idealism and ontological thinking. From the original difference between the Real and the Symbolic (Derrida's *differance*), from Heraclitus' intuition of *Physis* as the emergential potency intervened by the human Logos, a critical environmental thinking intends to disentangle the conflict of life from the modes of understanding configured in the human psyche and incarnated in bodily symptoms and unconscious desires, in order to think the possibility to harmonize an *emancipative drive* with the ecological, thermodynamic, symbolic and cultural conditions of life embodied in the social imaginaries and practices of the Peoples of the Earth, thus orienting a historical transition towards the sustentability of life in the planet.

Keywords: being/life; lack-in-being/will-to-power; ontological difference/sexual difference; techno-economic rationality/environmental rationality.

RESUMEN: “Falta en Ser” y “Voluntad de Poder” son dos sintagmas que expresan la contraposición del pensamiento de la Vida frente al pensamiento del Ser; son los sintagmas que marcan la confrontación del psicoanálisis de Jacques Lacan y de la filosofía de Friedrich Nietzsche sobre los impulsos del cuerpo y las pulsiones del

¹ This text is a summary of the opening lecture at the “Political Ecology and Psychoanalysis” Seminar held in the course of 2020 at the UNAM Institute of Social Research, and a revised version of the text that was published as an introductory chapter in the book *El conflicto de la vida*, Siglo XXI Editores, Mexico, 2020.

deseo inconsciente con lo impensado en la historia de la metafísica y en la ontología fundamental de Martin Heidegger: de la diferencia sexual frente a la diferencia ontológica. La cuestión ambiental abre una nueva indagatoria filosófica que trasciende al idealismo trascendental y al pensamiento ontológico del Ser. A partir de la diferencia originaria entre lo Real y lo Simbólico (la *differance*: Derrida), de la intuición originaria de la *Physis* de Heráclito sobre la potencia emergencial de la vida intervenida por el Logos humano, la filosofía ambiental desentraña el conflicto de la vida desde los modos de comprensión de la vida se han configurado en la psiqué humana y encarnado en los síntomas y las pulsiones del cuerpo, para pensar la posibilidad de armonizar un goce de emancipación con las condiciones ecológicas, termodinámicas, simbólicas y culturales de la vida en los imaginarios y prácticas de los Pueblos de la Tierra, orientando una transición civilizatoria hacia la sustentabilidad de la vida en el planeta.

Palabras clave: ser/vida; falta en ser/voluntad de poder; diferencia ontológica/diferencia sexual; racionalidad tecno-económica/racionalidad ambiental.

1. The ontology of being, the planet's environmental crisis and the becoming of life

An extraordinary event occurred in the Universe 3,800 million years ago: in the Galaxy where the fire of the star that governs our solar system burns, life emerged on planet Earth. From that remote time, life has evolved mobilized by the reduction of thermodynamic gradients, thanks to photosynthesis, by the emergent power of *Physis* (Heraclitus), through the “symbiogenesis of life” (Margulis & Sagan, 1995), of a “sentient ecology” (Ingold, 2000), in the “creative evolution of life” (Bergson, 2014), and the complex biothermodynamics of life (Kauffman, 2003).

In the long evolutionary process of the forms of life, *Homo erectus* was erected in the animal kingdom, which inhabited the planet throughout the Pleistocene, about 1.8 million years ago. In the conjugation of *gesture and word* (Leroi-Gourhan, 1965) another event, even more enigmatic, sowed the conflict of life: from the Humus of the Earth and in the Evolution of Life, the Symbolic Order

was gradually configured from Human Life: *Homo sapiens sapiens* emerges, the thinking Human Being constituted by the *Logos*: by the word and technique; by language and reason.

Many thousands of years later the first symbolic inscriptions would be engraved in stone, of which the representations of Paleolithic rock art at Lascaux in France and the Caves of Altamira in northern Spain, from approximately 18,000 years ago, are emblematic, perhaps only preceded by the grotte Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc in the Southeast of France, discovered in 1994, that date back to the Aurignacian era, some 30 000 - 32 000 years ago. Hieroglyphic writing is estimated to have come into use around 3300 BC, around the same time that cuneiform writing emerged in Mesopotamia. Writing marks the original *differance*, the disjunction of the Real from which the Symbolic order emerges (Derrida, [1967], 1971; [1982], 1989a).

The oldest written biblical text of the Old Testament Torah, found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, date back to the year 250 BC, in the early Hellenistic era. But it was about 2500 years ago, at the height of Ancient Greece's Classical Period, that thought,

language and word were articulated in the *Human Logos*, in an intuition-understanding of the things of the world attracted by the *Thought of Being*. It was the “first beginning” of Western philosophical thinking, of ontology that, as a thought of Being, would mark the history of metaphysics and the destinies of human history. Parmenides (born c. 515 BC) coined human thinking in the unity of Being and Thinking.

In an insight as dazzling as the Fire of Life, Heraclitus (c. 535 - c. 475 BC) thought as *Physis* the emergent power of the multiplicity of what exists and of its becoming in the creative evolution of life; but at the same time he understood the way in which the *Human Logos*, in its way of collecting and grasping the diversity of the multiple, reduced it to the generic and universal concept of the One. Right there was sown the germ of the destiny of Being in the diversifying becoming of Life towards the unity of the Concept, to the representation of Idea, to the measure of the Ratio, and to the dominance of Reason.

The destinies of life would be intervened and constrained by human thought as dams contain and divert the free natural course of river waters. The Ontology of Being, which would reach its culminating moment with the Enlightenment of Reason in the Modern World, in the long odyssey of over two thousand years in the history of metaphysics, dazzled humanity with its will to exert control through objective knowledge over the forces of nature, hiding the understanding of life; casting its own shadows on the degradation of life on the planet.

The *environmental crisis* that affects the conditions of life on the planet is the most powerful historical effect of the intervention of the *Human Logos* in the evolution of *Physis*, of the imposition of the *principle of reason* and the dominance of the rationality of modernity on the conditions of Life. However, Life on Earth continued to transform, in a co-evolution of nature and cultures, along with the organization of the various human communities that have inhabited the planet.

Human language multiplied at the Tower of Babel, giving rise to a diversity of world knowledge and modes of meaningful life (Steiner, 2001). But the forging languages of the many worlds of life of the Peoples of the Earth were intervened by Western thought and subjected by the Conquest and through the Colony to the designs of Reason, subject to the dominion of the Rationality of Modernity. They would only be reborn again at the *End of History*, in the emancipation of life from the iron cage of reason and from the “will to power” arising from the impulses towards dominion over life, nature and the world embodied in the human soul, in the drives of unconscious desire.

In this sense, Murray Bookchin thought of anarchism as “a libidinal emergence of individuals, as a revolt of the social unconscious that comes from [...] the earliest struggles of humanity against domination and authority”. In this way, his eco-anarchism “links the reconstruction of society with the reconstruction of the psyche” (Bookchin, [1971], 1990, p. 21).² But perhaps the most significant antecedent of the relations of the drives of the

² “The belief in spontaneous action is part of an even larger belief - the belief in spontaneous development. Each development must be free to find its own balance [...] [this] implies unleashing the internal forces of development so that it can find its authentic order and stability” (Ibid., p. 23).

unconscious and political life, is Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* ([1955], 1963).

Seeking to transcend Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), Marcuse wanted to reverse the Freudian theory that establishes that civilization is based on the oppression and permanent prohibition of human instincts, in which the libido undergoes a repressive sublimation imposed by culture channeling the energies towards useful activities, to propose the "libidinal desublimation of human eroticism". *Eros and civilization* attempted to establish theoretical alternatives that would guide the libertarian struggles to revolutionize social life. From an intended historical approach, Marcuse adopted Freudian theory to understand the historical tendencies of civilization that subjugate the instincts to the repressive controls of civilization as a social imposition of reason on the mode of constitution of the symbolic order in the human unconscious.

In that purpose to unravel the roots of the impulses that govern the world, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari wrote *Anti Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, where capitalism appears as the ontological regime to which desires are subordinated through an axiomatic economy based on the reduction of entities to the unit value of money and the abstract organization of reason (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972], 1985). The subtitle of that book - which is the one that frames the great program of their collaboration - already expresses the intention of unraveling the "intensities" and the "impulses" instituted in the "reasons" of Capital that come to dislocate human subjectivity, to unleash the schizophrenia of our world, in which the unconscious drives are mobilized by the forced intervention of the techno-economic regime that invades human bodies.

Such expropriation of human subjectivity by *Capital* is confronted today by the imaginary of the peoples, by the spirit of emancipation that animates the emerging movements of resistance towards the *re-existence* of their lifeworlds, anchored in their rights to "be-in-the-world". In those labyrinths of life, in the framework of history and the human unconscious, the enigmatic question opens up about the relationship between the influxes, impulses, passions, and emotions that are embodied in the drives of unconscious desire, and the reasons configured in the mind that establish the *reality principle*, that lead the destinies of humanity towards the conflict of life - between eros and thanatos - towards the collapse or the conflict of the sustainability of life that is expressed in the field of political ecology.

Half a century ago, the declarations made on *Earth Day* in April 1970, and by the *World Conference on the Human Environment*, held in Stockholm in July 1972, called humanity to a reflection *on the edge of the precipice* about the conditions of life in the living planet that we inhabit. Environmental consciousness stems from an unprecedented and unforeseen event in the history of humanity: the planetary environmental crisis. This reflection has insuflated the sails of the ship on which humanity has embarked on the civilizational odyssey that has gone under in ecological collapse, to circumnavigate anew the seven seas: to deconstruct the paradigms of knowledge that have dominated life, generating a myriad of views that seek to understand the nature of the globalization process that has invaded and affected life on the planet; to reveal its metaphysical and epistemological causes; to dismantle the strategies and devices of power that have operated the domination and degradation of life on the planet; above all to motivate

and redirect human actions towards a civilizational transformation capable of giving sustainability and reopening the meanings to life; to learn to inhabit the planet in the conditions of life.

The environmental crisis is a civilizing crisis, an event in history in terms of the unprecedented, the unpredictability of its “arrival”, given the dark motivations that lie hidden from human understanding.³ The advance of greenhouse gas emissions, the erosion of biodiversity, deforestation and in general the ecological degradation of the biosphere express in the planetary ecological crisis the symptom of a radical failure of the civilizing process of humanity. This manifests one of its most eloquent signs in climate change: the rise in average temperatures of the planet, the alteration of the climatic and rainfall regimes, desertification and drought, the water crisis, give signs of reality and make visible the unconscious premonition of Nietzsche in his *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*: “*The Desert Grows!*”⁴ woe to him in whom deserts hide...”. Such evidence reveals the incapacity of humanity - of the rationality of modernity; of public policies inscribed in the geopolitics of sustainable development - to contain the trend towards the entropic death of the planet.

In 2020, a new biospheric event has come to shake human unconsciousness in the era of the capitalocene: the COVID-19 pandemic that has released, transmuted and spread a coronavirus

on a planetary level, making it a lethal agent for human life.

Beyond exposing the simulation strategies of the discourse and the geopolitics of “sustainable development”; beyond displaying the negative effects of the rationality that governs the destinies of life on the planet and trying to elucidate the conditions of ecological sustainability of the planet and of human life, an enigma remains: how was it possible for humanity to have built a World –which reached its global dimension in advanced modernity– alienated from the conditions of life on the planet?

Such an enigma places the environmental crisis in the perspective of a *civilizational crisis*: it calls to think, to unravel the origin, the causes, the processes that came to institute the ontological regime of *Capital* that governs the globalized world: to deconstruct the regime ruled by scientific, technological, economic, and juridical rationality in which the significance of the world has been configured and instituted, in which scientific laws and legal procedures have been codified, in which the development of productive forces and expanded reproduction of capital have been solidified, stripping the Peoples of the Earth of their biocultural heritage and degrading their life-territories.

Today, the Covid-19 pandemic announces the transmutation of the ontological regime of capital into a *viral promiscuous capitalism*, in the sense that in its desire to extract and expropriate all the

³ Deleuze defines the event as “something excessive with respect to its realization, something that upsets worlds, individuals and people, and takes them to the depths of the bottom that works and dissolves them” (Deleuze, 1969, p. 196). In this sense, Nietzsche would have called for “the *true world* to be eliminated. It is the great introducer of doubts and undervaluation of the *world that we are*: it has been our most dangerous assault on life so far” (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 548).

⁴ “The desert grows: woe to him in whom deserts hide!
Stone grinds against stone, the desert devours and strangles,
Glowing brown monstrous death stares
And chews; its life is to chew ...”

elements of nature, in its intention to engulf the entire planet, it has removed and transmuted the genes of the viruses that were hosted in the cells of the organisms that have made up the biosphere since the origins of life on the planet, releasing and producing a pathogen that threatens human life (Leff, 2020b).

The environmental crisis calls for thinking about the meanings of life.⁵ The environmental crisis is a crisis of knowledge, a failure of the modes of understanding of the Real of Life, of the modes of production of reality that today no longer reflect the truth of nature, but intervene and degrade it through the techno-economic power that has subordinated life, and human existence, to the ends of economic and technological progress.

The meditation of Ereignis as the “Truth of Being that led with Heidegger to the culminating point of ontological thought, shows its ultimate truth in the planetary environmental crisis, making manifest the impact of the history of metaphysics on ecological degradation and the resilience of nature, as well as in increasing socio-environmental conflicts, the processes of resistance and *re-existence* of the populations affected by the processes of intervention and exploitation of nature: exacerbating the drives between Eros and Thanatos *in the conflict of life*.

This conflict is manifested today in infrastructure megaprojects to mobilize trade agreements; in transgenic food production, in mega-mining and *fracking* –the hydraulic fragmentation of geological layers to extract and degrade hydrocarbons, fossil sediments of life in the geological layers of the planet– releasing them into the atmosphere as greenhouse gases and causing the climate crisis as an expression of the insatiable “will to power” of Capital. The *environmental question* not only leads us to elucidate the ways in which reason has appropriated life from the biosphere, but also to scrutinize “psychoanalytic knowledge”⁶ to unravel the ways in which it has been introjected into the depths of our living bodies, into the unconscious depths of the human soul: the way in which the “lack of being” drives the “will to power” as a death drive over the eroticism of life (Leff, 2020a).

2. The lack of being and the will to power in the abysses of life

The environmental question, as a sign and symptom of the civilizational crisis of humanity, calls to unravel the original events in which they were tied, establishing and instituting the failures of understanding and the *oblivion of life* in the ascent of the human spirit, in the becoming and the pro-

⁵ In the prologue to the Spanish edition of Gilles Deleuze’s *Logic du Sens*, Miguel Morey extracts the essence of the Nietzschean impulse that moves the thought of the great French philosopher: “What is thinking? How is it possible to think, to be able to think? What has been thought and how, in the bosom of what forgetfulness, from what bad humor against life? What can be thought, with what body, from what instincts, through what institutions? What are the limits of what has not been thought, of the unthinkable, with which thought cannot cease to measure itself? What is it that makes you think?” (Deleuze, [1969], 1989, p. 16). Following what was thought by Nietzsche and Deleuze, we declare: what makes the oblivion of life think is an impulse of life itself!

⁶ “Psychoanalytic, because it shows how, from the depths of the bodies and their terrors emerges that bubble that comes to die on the surface, making the skin of language reverberate in a succession of concentric circles that escape until they dilute in the undetermined: sense-phantom” (Deleuze, Id., p. 17-18). It is the magma of meanings that inflames the fire of life, that mobilizes the senses that open the courses and paths of life; that move along with the destinies of life.

gress of humanity in its colonization of the planet we inhabit. Heraclitus would have already noticed the failure in the incapacity of the human Logos, which in its drive towards the One hides the being of *Physis*, the emergent force of the multiple that springs from the Real towards the infinite diversification of Life (Leff, 2020a).

Hegel would have suggested that “the death of nature is the life of the spirit”⁷, and Freud would have asserted that the repression of drives is the condition of culture (Freud, 1930). If ontological thinking has extradited Life from the imperative of

Being, and the Phenomenology of Spirit has dominated over the understanding of the embodiment of the metabolism of nature, the oblivion of Life in the inquiries of unconscious desire within the field of psychoanalysis has not played a lesser role. This is what has led us to take a step back in history, from our previous inquiries in the field of ecological economics, environmental sociology and political ecology, towards the field of political ontology, to unravel the metaphysical and unconscious causes that have oriented history and destined life, leading

⁷ Valerio Rocco suggests that “this very controversial and shocking expression, which meets some variations in many places in the writings of this philosopher, must be properly understood in order to offer a definition of “nature” of Hegelian roots that can be operative for contemporary ecological thought, and very especially in these times of pandemic.” He also points out that such a “Hegelian dictum” would have left traces at various times in the Hegelian work: *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* in Compendium. Zusätze of the pars. 245 and 366; *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, p. 28; *Lessons in Philosophy of Religion*, Ms. 93b, p. 28. Rocco clarifies: “Hegel almost always uses the expression ‘*absterben dem natürlichen*’ rather than ‘*Todt der Natur*’. Its correct translation would therefore be: ‘dying naturally is the life of the spirit’, and not so much ‘the death of nature is the life of the spirit’, which is how this idea is commonly cited in various contexts” (Rocco, September 15, 2020). These interpretations don’t clear the riddle. Certainly an essential key to understanding the oblivion of nature is what Hegel calls “*Abfall der Idee*”, “the fall of the Idea of Nature into the shapeless multiplicity that results in the dismemberment of the unity of the Absolute Idea.” There, the oblivion of the *Physis* is expressed in the rise of the *Logos* as the totalitarian reason that dominates the world. Indeed, there will be no “dialectical overcoming” of this oblivion of life in a philosophy of nature (*Naturphilosophie*) or in the rational, scientific understanding of nature. The *Environment as the Other of Being* is the “remainder” of nature extradited by the concept, of its exteriority not assimilated by the *Logocentrism of science*, which is expressed today in the environmental crisis. In this sense, it can be said that “Nature is catastrophe, madness, telluric, which remains as a background or an inremovable remainder of the horizon of all existence” (Rocco, Id.). Before we naturalize the death of life, before “dying naturally” (*absterben dem natürlichen*) to continue revitalizing the spirit that dominates life - the “natural” outbreak of the deadly virus as a random event of the chaos of the cosmos and the biosphere - we must unravel the “lack of being” and the “will to power” that have intervened the “generativity of *Physis*” and its significance in the shift towards the sustainability of life, rooted in the ethical-political principles and values of “environmental rationality” and mobilized by the “dialogue of knowledge” (Leff, 2004/2022; 2014; 2018).

⁸ The Mexican psychoanalyst Fernando Cesarman anticipated this psychoanalytic inquiry and sowed the first seed of the unconscious causes of the environmental crisis in the field of political ecology, of the thanatic drive and the “ecocidic impulses” that lead to the destruction of the environment. In his book *Ecocidio: estudio psicoanalítico de la destrucción del medio ambiente* (*Ecocide: psychoanalytic study of the destruction of the environment*) (1972), a precursor text published at the dawn of the global spread of the environmental crisis, Cesarman defined Ecocide as “the destruction of our earth. All behavior that changes the ideal situations of our environment is a manifestation of ecocidic impulses. The only way to avoid the ecological disaster that threatens us is by recognizing our ecocidic impulses, realizing their direct expressions and their multiple disguises [...] The use of analytical theory clarifies the psychological process of ecocide and forces us to think about the destructive impulses in each one of us, helping us to find basic solutions, by understanding the problem in the depths of individual psychology [...] The psychoanalytic approach gives us a new dimension and a very significant depth. It allows us to observe it not only from a social perspective, but as part of individual behavior, to understand the psychological impulses that have led us to this situation” (Ibid., p. 13, 9). Cesarman diagnosed the problem of science in the face of the environmental question: “Like a butterfly that appears to fly gracefully, when in reality it is desperate looking for its last ray of sunlight, the researcher fiddles with words and concepts, in his desperation to find an explanation for observable phenomena [...] What scientists and governments have achieved with their efforts are like the apparent flapping of a butterfly in a desperate effort to find some oxygen” (Ibid.:11). Therefore, it would not be science that could provide the solution to the environmental crisis. Beyond adjusting the unconscious drives to a reality principle informed by science, the psychoanalytic solution would consist in making the unconscious ...

to the planetary environmental crisis (Leff, 2018; 2020a)⁸.

In this perspective, the gaze is opened to follow the traces of the impulses of human desire in the configurations of the Logos and their inscriptions in the unconscious drives through the interstices of the cracks that open in the walls of reason that have encircled the life; from the reduction that the *human Logos* operates on the intuition of Heraclitus on the multiplicity and diversity of the *Physis*, to the appropriation of objective reality through the *logocentrism of science* (Derrida)⁹; to unravel the ways by which the “lack of being” has driven the “will to power” that has erased the traces of life and has perverted its senses in the unconscious jouissance (Lacan)¹⁰.

The environmental crisis is the urgent, desperate call to think about our time and to reorient the courses of life towards the sustainability of other possible worlds. Nietzsche questioned the role played by the philosopher in unraveling the forgetfulness of life, wondering if he could come to think his time.¹¹ He warned that “The greatest events and thoughts - and the great thoughts are the greatest events - are the last to be understood. The generations that are contemporaneous with him do not experience such events; they live ahead of them. It happens as it does with the stars. The light of the remotest stars reaches man at the very end; and it is until then that he *denies* that they exist.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche asked: “How many centuries does it take for a spirit to be understood?” (Nietzsche, 1966, p. 227)¹². And in

⁸ ... drives conscious: “The only real solution is that each inhabitant of the earth realizes his destructive potentialities, that he can appreciate the individual damage and that by recognizing the meaning of his behavior, he can make positive modifications consistent with reality. The acceptance of our ecocidic impulses, each one of us realizing our destructive capacity of the environment, and also accepting that the world is in danger of destruction, will eventually change the structure of the reality principle” (Ibid.:15) . The complexities involved in the enigmas that the unconscious keeps go beyond making conscious the unconscious fantasies of maternal gratification (pleasure principle), transferred to the fantasy of abundance of nature, and the repressions that are opposed by the real scarcity of the nature in its links with the environment and the limits of economic growth (reality principle). Its enigmas are interwoven with the *pseudos of the Logos*, the ungrounding of Reason and the twist of unconscious *jouissance* that perverts the primary impulses of human beings.

⁹ “*Logocentrism*” —that which is “centered” in “Logos” (speech, discourse, reason, science) — is the term coined by Derrida to characterize any significant system “structured by an assessment of speech over writing, of immediacy over distance, of identity over difference, and of self-presence over all forms of absence, ambiguity, simulation, substitution or negativity” (Derrida, [1972], 1989, p. 4).

¹⁰ On this debt of philosophy, Deleuze foresaw that “The philosopher of the future is at the same time the explorer of the old worlds, peaks and caverns, and only creates by dint of remembering something that was essentially forgotten. That something, according to Nietzsche, is the unity of thought and life [...] Ways of life inspire ways of thinking, ways of thinking create ways of living. Life activates thought and thought in turn affirms life” (Deleuze, [1965], 2000, p. 24). Nietzsche observed: “We do not have categories that allow us to divide a ‘world in itself’ from a world as a phenomenon. All our *categories of reason* are of sensualist provenance: collected from the empirical world, ‘The soul’, ‘the self’ —the history of this concept also shows here the oldest division (‘breath’, ‘life’)” (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 264). Calling to test the rights of the truth of life, Nietzsche stated: “The antagonism between the ‘true world’, as discovered by pessimism, and a world where it is possible to live: --for this, it is necessary to examine the rights of the *truth*, it is necessary to measure the meaning of all those ‘ideal impulses’ with respect to *life* to understand what this antagonism is [...] the first problem is that of the *hierarchy of types of life*” (Id., 2008, p. 219).

¹¹ Thus, Nietzsche asserted: “More and more it seems to me that the philosopher, being necessarily a man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, has always found himself, and had to have found himself, in contradiction to his today [...] His value and rank would have to be determined based on how much and how many things could he take care of, how far could he extend his responsibility” (Nietzsche, 1966, p. 137).

¹² This elusive question, asked since Genesis, was popularized by Bob Dylan in 1963 in his protest against the injustices of this world by blurting out to the world until when!: “How many times can a man turn his head and pretend that he does not see”?

the affirmation of “Dionysus against the Crucified” with which *Ecce homo* concludes, he demanded the liberation of the body from the sin of the spirit and the salvation of the soul (Nietzsche, 1999).

As a premonition of the climate crisis of our time he anticipated:

This is the time to which we have been thrown, the time of a great decline that gets worse and worse, and of a collapse that with all its weaknesses and even with its greatest strength acts against the spirit of youth. The collapse, the uncertainty is typical of this time: nothing stands in itself on firm feet and solid faith: you live for tomorrow, because the day after tomorrow is uncertain. Everything is slippery and dangerous in our path, and even the ice that still supports us has become so inconsistent: we all feel the hot, haunting breath of the snow-melting wind - *where we go, soon no one else will be able to go there* (Nietzsche, 2010, p. 457).

In that tonality of the soul, which moves Nietzsche towards the plan of *The Will to Power*, he interprets in a fragment of the Prologue the occurrence of his own philosophy, anticipating the times to come:

What I am telling is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come any other way: *the rise of nihilism* [...] That future already speaks in a hundred signs, this destiny is announced everywhere; for this music of the future all ears are already open. All our European culture has

been moving for a long time under the torture of a tension that grows from decade to decade as doomed to a catastrophe: restless, violent, precipitous: like a river that wants to *end*, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect on itself (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 489).¹³

Time fulfilled its promise and the environmental catastrophe did not have to wait two centuries, but barely one to break into the world. The environmental crisis began to be perceived only in the decade of the nineteen sixties. To this day, humanity has not listened sufficiently to understand this historical event, for which it is responsible. The ontological understanding of the world that Nietzsche defines as the “will to power” leads to suggesting the difference that emerges from the original power of the Real, which is expressed in the emergent power of *Physis*, as a “will to power” of life itself - in the execution of a design that no intelligence has conceived, that tends towards a purpose that no will has chosen (Derrida, 2019) - against another will to power: the one that is prefigured from the first beginning in the modality of the *Logos* and unfolds to the ontological regime of techno-economic rationality as a “metaphysical effect” that has been introjected into the becoming of Life; as the will for technology to dominate over life –over man and nature– that is established and exercised through the institutionalization and instrumentalization of the theoretical and technical devices of

¹³ Nietzschean nihilism, as a desubstantivation of the world, was metaphorized by Marx and Engels when they declared in the Communist Manifesto: “all that is solid melts into air”; when that air was barely breathed in the atmosphere of metaphysics, before becoming the greenhouse gases that cause the climate crisis. Hans Magnus Enzensberger renewed the metaphor in the “foam world” (Enzensberger, 2004). The “foam” is the metaphor of the loss of identity, of the existential support from which life could still be renewed. It is the abyssal of nihilism from which absolute pessimism is affirmed in which “faith in the renewing power of life is exhausted [... in which] surrendering to the destiny of an ambiguous ‘cosmic game’ seems to be the only consolation that ‘remains’.” (Heinrich, 2012, p. 53, 59).

¹⁴ Deleuze affirmed in his last sayings that “pure immanence is *a life*, nothing more. It is not immanence towards life, but what is immanent in nothing, is in itself a life. A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence: it is complete potency, complete ecstasy. It is to the ...

the technological-economic-juridical rationality of modernity; that is constituted and manifested from the mode of being of the technique as an ontological regime contrary to the immanence of life; that acts above the power of *Physis*, diverting it towards the entropic degradation of the planet.¹⁴

Embracing ourselves in the *Fire of life* - in the actualizing of the dazzling event of Heraclitus' thought that humanity did not experience in his time, or throughout history - we try to elucidate the limitations of Heidegger's fundamental ontology to understand the conditions of life from the facticity of life, of the significance of *Dasein*, of being-there as being-towards-death; and in the mystification of Being in his turn towards *Ereignis* as the "Truth of Being" (Heidegger, 1999), and passivity in the face of the environmental crisis and the existential conditions of humanity to which messianic serenity (*Gelassenheit*) disposes, awaiting the occurrence of Being (Heidegger, 1996)¹⁵.

Hope for life will not be "the waiting without horizon of a language that only knows how to make itself be waited for", nor the resigned acceptance of "a desire without horizon", of "a promise that no longer expects what it expects" (Derrida, 1989b, p. 114, 17). At this point in history that calls us to "discern between promise and terror", a drive, a hope that is still palpating, perhaps too illusory,

calls us to think about life from the anxiety of the world on fire; from the flame of the eroticism of life that calls to think, to say, to emancipate and restore life on this Earth.

Heraclitus, the "Obscure Philosopher of Ephesus" certainly bequeathed to humanity the first great insight into life. He named it *Physis*; he thought of it as the emergent power of all entities, in an understanding of time as becoming, of the complexifying generativity of Being. At the same time, he unraveled the character of the *Human Logos*, of the way of gathering that diversity of everything that exists through the *Legein*, of language, of the discourse that, from the origins of Western thought, manifested a way of "collecting" that which was witnessed before the gaze of thought as a multiple reality: the mode of nomination, of ideation, of the concept as a representation of the Real; of the Unity and the Universality of the Being that reduced the Diversity of Life to the Idea of the One.

The institution of the *Logos-Legein* in the Greek world operated the unitary synthesis of the multiple and the diverse, which in the metaphysical construction of the world configured the *logocentrism of science* that Derrida describes as the supreme way of knowing the world; of the world objectified by the *Technique* that Heidegger designated as the world of *Gestell*, in which the

¹⁴ ... degree of going beyond the aporias of the subject and the object that Johann Fichte, in his latest philosophy, presents the transcendental field as *a life*, no longer dependent on a Being or subjected to an Act - it is an immediate and absolute consciousness, whose activity no longer refers to a being, but is incessantly put into a life" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 27).

¹⁵ This "actualization" and emancipation of life could not be a "return to nature". As Nietzsche warned, "There has never yet been a natural humanity. The scholasticism of unnatural and *antinatural* values is the rule, it is the beginning; man comes to nature after a long struggle - he never 'returns' ... Nature: that is, daring to be immoral like nature" (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 313). Responding in advance to Heidegger's questioning about having thought the *will to power* in terms of "values", Nietzsche spits out a more radical critique: that of his "will to truth" embedded in the roots of philosophical thought and in the "Truth of Being": "The will of truth that will still tempt us to many ventures, that famous truth of which all philosophers have spoken with respect - what questions has this will of truth not put before us! What strange, wicked and questionable questions!" (Nietzsche, 1966, p. 9).

totality of entities has been disposed for calculation and planning; of the Logos that enframed Reason as a device of power to objectify, dominate, and appropriate life (Heidegger, 1977).

The history of metaphysics operated a true transmutation from the original category of *Physis* to the modern concept of *Nature* as the Unity of all things in the world. This effect of metaphysical thought was instituted in the world by the ontological regime of *Capital*: the denaturing of nature and the dehumanization of humanity; their ontological conversion as natural resources and labor force ready for the capitalist appropriation of life. Its first deconstruction was the work of Marx (1965).

The ontological difference between Nature and Culture could not be fully understood from the ontological difference between Being and entities that Heidegger thought as an essential point to unravel the principle of identity in the history of metaphysics (Heidegger, [1957], 1988). The ontology of being (there is no other by definition and by philosophical tradition), reaches a critical point in the history of metaphysics in the borderline thought of the *Ereignis*¹⁶. There the reflection on the forgetting of life opens towards what remained unthought, what is still to be thought by the *Physis*: the way in which life has been reconfigured in the human psyche from *Logos to Ratio*, from *Cogito Sum* to the *Rationality of Modernity*; from the mode in which the power of life has been embodied in the drives of the unconscious. What still remained to be

thought were the ways that the impulses of life and the hues of the soul are conjugated by language and are linked in the symbolic order that configures the human psyche; the ways in which the drives of the unconscious are linked with the signifiers articulated by a language, with the signification that the Logos encodes, that establishes and mobilizes the ontological regimes and the rational devices of domination that have forgotten, subjugated and degraded life. There, in the depths of the unconscious, the Being does not speak, but rather a “lack in being” is manifested; the lack that drives a “will to power”.

What brings into play the conjunction, the conjugation and articulation of the *Lack in Being* that inhabits the human unconscious and that mobilizes in the subject a *Will to Power* is what Derrida called *différance*, the point of disjunction between the Real and the Symbolic, whose original mark would be inscribed in writing, and which he sought to unravel in *grammatology* (Derrida, 1971, 1989a). *Différance* is the point at which the signs-phonemes that articulate speech become signs-syntax of writing. It is the text where the philosophy of deconstruction seeks to dearticulate the effects of the metaphysics of presence in order to let emerge that which is not articulated in metaphysical thought and in ontological discourse: where thought becomes abyssed in its ignorance towards the “lack in being” of the unconscious: to understand the ways through which the human being somatizes the preontological Real of Life; the flows and inflows that communicate the

¹⁶ Heidegger himself declares in one of his last works, *On Time and Being (Zur Sache des Denkens, 1969)* the end of the thought of *Ereignis* as the History of Being and opens it to the thought of the expropriation of life: “With the entry of thought into Enownment (*Ereignis*), also comes its own mode of concealment. Enownment is in itself expropriation. This word contains in a way commensurate with Enownment the primary Greek *Lethe* in the sense of concealment. Consequently, the lack of destination of Enownment does not mean that it has no ‘movement’. On the contrary, it means that the way of the movement more typical of Enownment, turning towards us in retreat, is shown first as that which must be thought. This means that the History of Being as that which must be thought comes to an end for the thought that enters Enownment” (Heidegger, 1972, p. 41).

significance that is articulated in the *Logos* with the sources of other alternating currents that effervesce and of “logics of meaning” that are configured and emanate from the unconscious depths of the human soul.

The *différance* subverts the sovereignty of the *One* that has occupied the center of philosophical and scientific discourse. Deconstruction implies a demarcation and disjunction of the senses; beyond provoking a paradigm shift, the thought of the *One* collapses and opens it to the Other: the Unconscious of Life. The de-centering of the *Logos* opens the infinite hole of the senses where the security of life is abyssed. The environmental crisis is its symptom.¹⁷

In the adventure towards understanding the unconscious conditions - real, symbolic and imaginary - of life, it would be a contradiction to seek any ontological security in the writing of a *Logos* that would seek to trap the senses that it seeks to liberate: those impulses that Nietzsche left as traces to unravel in his own writings. If the linguistics of the sign became prisoner of the illusion of the phonological systems that led us to think that writing comes after the word, writing does not manage to jump over what is played in and from the bottom of the drives of life that “utters words” in the manifestations of the drives of the unconscious; of the causality of the hidden truth that seeks to spring out of the depths

¹⁷ Klaus Heinrich affirms, “causality has lost its function as a conjurer of demons [...] it never finds the true causes, but always only with the symptoms of the foam world” (Heinrich, 2012, p. 56). On the subversive revolution of unconscious knowledge Lacan pointed out: “The Copernican revolution is not a revolution at all. If, in a discourse that is nothing more than analogical, it is assumed that the center of a sphere constitutes the dominant point, the fact of changing that dominant point, of making the earth or the sun occupy it, has nothing to do in itself with anything that subverts what the significant center conserves of its own. Man - what is designated by this term, which is nothing more than what it does mean, far from being moved by the discovery that the earth is not in the center - substituted it very well for the sun [...] it is evident that neither is the sun a center, and it walks through a space whose status is increasingly precarious to establish. What remains in the center is that old routine according to which meaning always retains, after all, the same meaning. This meaning is given by the feeling that each person has of being part of their world, that is, of their little family and of everything that revolves around [...] Wherever they take it, meaning finds its center. And until a new order, it is not the analytical discourse, so difficult to sustain in its decentration and that has not yet entered the common consciousness, which can somehow subvert something [...] Subversion, if it existed somewhere and at some point, it is not in having changed the point of rotation of what turns but in having substituted a tour for a fall” (Lacan, 2010, p. 56). Nietzsche anticipated that fall.

¹⁸ Sign, meaning, significance; feeling, sensitivity, sense; emotion, motivation, mobilization; representation, objectivity, truth ... words to express the understanding of the Real, of the Being, of the World; terms that should be clarified, because they are not synonymous and *do not express the same thing*: concepts and notions that name and express in different ways what they name; that enact and mobilize the processes they designate in different ways and degrees. Beyond the assignment of a meaning to things by a signifier, different sense drives that structure linguistic signifiers in the configuration of discourse in the logical order of grammar, syntax and semantics, or in the significance of the “*lalangue*” in the order of the unconscious (Lacan, 2010); different is the objective truth to which science aspires and the truth of the ways of being-in-the-world of the cultures that affirm their existential rights. In this extra-significant sense of meaning Deleuze affirmed: “When we define the meaning as the condition of truth, we give it a character that is common with the sense, which is already that of the sense [...] For the condition of truth to escape that failure, it would have to have a different element of its own of the form of the conditioned; it would be necessary for there to be something *unconditional* capable of ensuring a real genesis of the designation and of the other dimensions of the proposition: then the condition of truth would no longer be defined as a form of conceptual possibility, but as an ideal matter or ‘stratum’, that is, no longer as signification, but as meaning” (Deleuze, 1969, p. 29-30). And he adds: “The highest term is not Being, but something *aliquid*, insofar as it subsumes being and non-being, existences and insistence [...] There is something, *aliquid*, that is not confused either with the proposition [...] Nor with the object or the state of things that it designates, nor with the lived experience, the representation or the mental activity of the one who expresses himself in the proposition, nor with the concepts or even with the signified essences? The meaning, what is expressed in the proposition, would then be irreducible to individual states of affairs, to particular images, to personal beliefs, and to universal and general concepts [...] Husserl names this dimension the last *expression*: it is distinguished from the designation, of the manifestation, of the demonstration. Meaning is what is expressed. Husserl, no less than Meinong, rediscovers the living sources of a stoic inspiration. When Husserl questions himself about the ‘perceptual noema’ or ‘sense of perception’, he distinguishes it both from the physical object, from the psychological experience, from ...

of the earth through the human word to metabolize itself in the biosphere; of the labyrinths of *Jouissance* where *Geschlecht* –the sexual difference– and *Gestell* –the framing of the objectified world and mode of representation of the Real converge; where the reasons of the Logos and the metabolism of life are conjugated with the drives of the unconscious, the will of the reason and the structures of thought; in that “magma of significations” (Castoriadis) in which the *Physis* burns like the *fire of life*, where the senses, the truths and the destinies of life vibrate and beat (Leff, 2018)¹⁸.

From that dark depth of human existence, impulses arise and the “will to power” springs up that mobilizes the construction of possible worlds, in the conditions of life; but also of the *Jouissance* that perverts the senses of life and leans them towards the death drive.

Nietzsche accuses all previous philosophers because “they trust concepts just as unconditionally, they distrust the senses: they do not consider that concepts and words are our inheritance from times when something very dark and primitive happened in our heads (Nietzsche, 2010, p. 757). Based on this premise, Nietzsche ventured to let the unconscious unravel the knots and textual frames in which the significance of the world has been configured: in which human thought has been encoded, the dominating reason of the world and the practices of

appropriation of nature have been instituted.¹⁹ In this willingness to put the thought in contact with what we ignore, with the unknowing impulses of the unconscious, which exceed the truth of presence or absence, bringing Derrida’s thought closer to the Lacanian field to listen to the unconscious. Frida Saal pointed out that,

The *différance*, with its lack of essence and existence, without being a word or a concept, is a strategic proposal to avoid an ontological or teleological re-appropriation [...] *Différance* indicates an original, productive and constitutive causality, the process of breaking and dividing, whose differences or differences would be products or constituted effects [...] *Différance* questions the secondary origin of the substitute, and in this way questions the whole idea of origin [...] *différance* puts us in contact with what we ignore and that exceeds the alternative of presence or absence. Freud named this alternative Otherness The Unconscious (Saal, 1994, p. 30).

If Lacan defines the Real as “that which never ceases not to be written” and the Symbolic as “that which never ceases to be written”, Derrida points out with the concept of *différance* the impossibility of a pre-established destination that would make the encounter of the signifier and of the signified possible (Derrida, 1975). In this way, he establishes the origin of the conflict of life through history.

¹⁸... mental representations and from logical concepts. He presents him as an impassive, an incorporeal, without physical or mental existence, that neither acts nor suffers, pure result, pure ‘appearance’ [...] Metamorphosis (sublimation and symbolization) consists for each thing in the clearing of an *aliquid* that is at the same time the noematic attribute and the noetic expression, eternal truth, sense that flies over and hovers over bodies [...] There are many noemas or meanings for the same designated [...] For this reason it cannot be said that the meaning exists, but only that it persists or subsists” (Ibid., p. 16, 31-32, 257). In this way the Stoics perceived a sense that is formed beyond the meaning of the word and the body, of rational representation and sensitive perception.

¹⁹ “The supposed *impulse of knowledge* has to go back to an *impulse of appropriation and subjugation*; Following this impulse, the senses, memory, instincts, etc. have been developed. The fastest possible reduction of phenomena, the economy, the accumulation of the treasure of acquired knowledge (that is, of the appropriate world and suitable for us)” (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 574).

In this perspective, the environmental crisis is not an ecological catastrophe, but rather the collapse of humanity's civilizing adventure into its oblivion of life. The environmental crisis is the symptom of a failure to understand life that, by being configured in the human psyche and institutionalized in the rational devices of power that dominate the impulses and the power of life, lead the metabolism of the biosphere towards the entropic death of the planet. This failure was not established by the laws of nature –in the ineluctable law of entropy–, but in the human condition, in its *symbolic being*; or rather, in his “lack of being”, from where his “will to power” is constituted and triggered.

The environmental crisis is an enigma. Beyond deconstructing the genealogy of human thought in its different epochs - from the original *Logos* of Western thought and the medieval *Ratio* to the constitution of the world of *Gestell* as the general framework that disposes of all entities to be appropriated and expropriated by the ontological regime of *Capital* in modernity -, it is necessary to unravel what is the deepest, what is most buried in the depths of the unconscious, what is most indecipherable and ineffable at the bottom of the human condition: what Freud referred to as the *Unheimlich* of human existence.

Before being banished from paradise, the human being has already been born an orphan of home in this world. Having tried to deconstruct the failed wanderings of philosophical thought since the establishment of the will of unity of the human

Logos and the ideality of the platonic *Eidos* that led the history of metaphysics towards ontological dualism by the separation of the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa* in the Cartesian *cogito sum*, and to the illusion of the representativeness of the Real in the “age of the world image” (Heidegger, 1996), it is important to find the missing link between the “lack of being” and the “will to power”, of that original hole of the unconscious that is established in the body as anxiety and as existential emptiness.²⁰

We must understand the ways in which the “lack-in-being” of human existence nests in the “small object a” that Lacan designates to locate that in-signifier in the unconscious, insofar as it is not a sign, which does not allow itself to be represented by a signifier, but which launches desiring impulses and leaves sedimented traces in the human body since before the *Human Logos* attempted to name the things of the world (Lacan, 2007).

From the drives that are structured there, conducting threads emerge that are woven into the psyche, which are conjugated in grammatical articulations, syntactic arrangements and discursive strategies that configure the meanings that inscribe and institute human intervention that mobilize the flows and courses of life: of the possible conjugations of the times and their links in the courses of life; of the language games that open and close the floodgates of the meanings of life; that beyond their aporias of the logic of philosophical discourse, of the simulations and deviations in their translation into a rational norm, constitute the structures and

²⁰ “In a 1933 lecture, ‘New lectures on psychoanalysis’, Freud speaks of anxiety as the greatest affect, which is not conceived of the subject as a lack-in-being but of an inhabited body. Freud does not speak of it only as a state of affect defined by him as a coming together of certain sensations from the pleasure / displeasure series, but as a trace of affect, *Affektspur*, because he relates it to a previous event, *Ereignis*. We find in Freud, regarding what it affects, the couple of the event and the trace. An event, or more precisely, Freud - it is his understanding of the affect of anxiety - states that he sees there the precipitate of an important event incorporated by heredity” (Miller, 2002, p. 80). The origin of the “lack-in-being”, of the unconscious desire that nests in the human body, is thus enunciated and announced as a condition of human existence.

infuse the drives of human desire that are woven into the logics and meanings of human thought, within of codes that not only prevent the identity between the word and the thing, between the Concept and the Real, between noesis and noema, but that have been inscribed in an ontological regime, in a rationality *anti-natura* and in a mode of unconscious *juissance* that have derived in an ecocidal drive and in a will-to-power over life.

By “crossing out” the subject, the structures of the unconscious desire erect insurmountable barriers for the signifier to carry out the desired phenomenological reduction from the intentionality of the psyche that seeks to understand the Real, which

establishes a prohibition on thought to be inscribed in the immanence of life.²¹

But where do they come from, what is the source of the impulses of unconscious desire? How do the forces, the potency of the Real of Life become a body - symbolized, signified, left out, desiring?²² Certainly, the hole in which the unconscious desire nests is not the same emptiness in each subject and in each culture, but because of its fundamental structure, that of its “lack-in-being”. Already Moustapha Safouan (1977) pointed out that Oedipus is not universal. As soon as the fabric of the Real signified by the Symbolic order becomes a symptom, it incarnates in the body as anxiety and character, producing threads of different textures and colors

²¹ Nietzsche had already questioned the primacy of the *Logos* as the will to power and of grammar as *a priori* logical metaphysical postulate and above the unconscious impulses: “one thinks: therefore there is a thinking being’: this leads to the *argumentatio* of Descartes. But that means putting our belief in the concept of substance as ‘true *a priori*’: that if one thinks there must be something ‘that thinks’ it is nevertheless simply a formulation of our grammatical habit that an agent sets for an action. In sum, here a logical-metaphysical postulate is already being made - and *not simply by making sure* ... By means of Descartes we do *not* arrive at something absolutely certain but only to the fact of a very strong belief” (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 350).

²² Heinrich asks, “The substance of the individual, which receives its individual form from it, is not itself something individual. The inner turmoil of all living things does not disappear in the individual impulse. But where in the individual and where in the individual impulse that which is beyond limitation takes shape?” (Heinrich, 2012, p. 56).

²³ Merleau Ponty pointed out that disembodied thinking, that thinking language before speaking it, was a myth. We will have to consider the different significance that the “body” acquires in the Lacanian discourse in front of the body as an instance the phenomenology of perception. Lacan says: “It is not this order of events [Goldstein's organism structure or Merleau-Ponty's behavioral structure that make the body ‘an embodied soul’ in contemporary phenomenology] that is implicated in our mention of the body's function, but rather the commitment of the man who speaks in the chain of the signifier, with all its consequences, and its repercussion, henceforth fundamental, that chosen point of an ultra-subjective irradiation, that foundation of desire, to say it all. It is not about the body as something that would allow us to explain everything by means of a kind of sketch of the harmony of the *Umwelt* and the *Innenwelt*, but that in the body there is always, due to this commitment in the signifying dialectic, something separate, something sacrificed, something inert, which is the pound of flesh [...] the law of debt and gift –this total social fact, as Marcel Mauss expressed it later– [...] which] does not owe its importance to any element that we can consider as a third element, in the sense of an external third element - exchange of women or of goods, as Lévi-Strauss recalls in his *Elemental Structures* - but rather that what is at stake in the pact cannot be and is nothing more than the pound of flesh, which must be taken, as the text of *The Merchant* says, from very close to the heart” (Lacan, 2007, p. 237-238).

²⁴ “Human possibility depended on the moment in which, seized by insurmountable vertigo, a being made an effort to say no [...] Man rose up in order to no longer follow the movement that drove him; but in this way, he could do nothing but rush it to vertiginous speed. If in the essential prohibitions we see the rejection that being opposes to nature understood as a waste of living energy and as an orgy of annihilation, we can no longer distinguish between death and sexuality. Sexuality and death are only the acute moments of a party that nature celebrates with the inexhaustible multitude of beings; and there sexuality and death have the meaning of the unlimited waste to which nature proceeds, in a sense contrary to the desire to last proper to each being [...] The prohibitions in which a single reaction took shape with two different ends [...] (form) an indivisible complex. As if man had unconsciously grasped at once the impossibility in nature (what is given to us) when it demands beings that it promotes to participate in that destructive fury that animates it and that nothing will ever satisfy” (Bataille, [1957], 1997, p. 65-66).

that are encoded in different cultural imaginaries, translating into habitus and life practices²³. George Bataille showed that the symbolic order established in the collective unconscious of traditional cultures leads the practices of ritual spending from a drive to spend, towards a destiny governed by an excess.²⁴

In this intention to find and weave the threads that connect philosophical thought with the human unconscious, Parmenides and Heraclitus appear as initial forgers of the civilizing history of humanity, as architects of those moments in which the human depth is reflected in the original knots of metaphysical thought, in the search for the Truth of Being from its unity with Thinking, of the identity of Being and the One, of the *Physis* as an understanding of the becoming of the multiple and the *Logos* as a reduction of diversity in human thought.

Nietzsche is the first deconstructor of these principles by questioning in the concepts of “purpose”, “unity” and “truth”, the false foundation of reason that drove the adventure of metaphysical thought, of the principles that cause the nihilism of reason that have configured the schemes of science, and that have precipitated on the environmental crisis of our time:

There is a profound and perfectly unconscious effect of *decadence* itself on the ideals of science: our whole sociology is the proof of this proposition. It remains to reproach [sociology] for not knowing by experience but the *structure of decline* of society, and inevitably taking as the norm of sociological judgment the instincts of decline (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 520).

What interests the field of political ecology is to deconstruct the ways by which these categories have configured and established the unnatural

rationality that destines life on the planet; to understand the way it is incorporated into the cultural imaginaries of the peoples and is articulated with the unconscious desire of the human being; to disentangle the connections established between the impulses of the body and the drives of desire with the significance of the *Logos*, with the meanings and the senses instituted in the rationality of modernity; between the significance that is embedded in the keys of the instance of the letter in the unconscious and the significance that is articulated in the codes of metaphysical thought, in its ontological regimes - in its codes of rationality and its biopower devices - that govern the globalized world; and from that understanding to be able to think of strategies to move towards the sustainability of life. Political ecology seeks to unravel that “cursed part” of the human impulses described by Georges Bataille (1967), so that human rationality and existentially lived life can be modulated and moderated through an ethic of responsibility towards life; to redirect the meanings of life within the conditions of life in the planet.

Ethics for life implies unraveling from the depths of the impulses and reasons incorporated in the living body of humanity and beyond a “life instinct”, an ethical principle of responsibility for life (Jonas, 1995; 2000); a drive beyond the will to power instituted in the ontological regime that governs the world and dominates life, capable of exorcising the “cursed part” of the death drive, to explore how the unconscious *jouissance* could take a turn towards a “*jouissance* of emancipation of life”; to understand the way in which the turn of the will to power towards the impulse of “being able to want life” could take place (Leff, 2002). In that “being able to want” the possible of life is at stake;

in the way in which drives and reasons mobilize and destine the power of life. In the *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger had noted:

To embrace a “thing” or a “person” in its essence means to love it [*sie lieben*], to favor it [*sie mögen*]. Thought in a more ordinary way, such favoring [*mögen*] means to bestow essence as a gift. Such favoring is the proper essence of enabling [*Vermögen*], which not only can achieve this or that but also can let something essentially unfold [*wesen*] in its provenance, that is, let it be. It is on the “strength” [*kraft*] of such enabling by favoring that something is properly “possible” [*das eigentlich “Mögliche”*], that whose essence resides in favoring... Being is the enabling-favoring, the “may be”. As the element, Being is “quiet power” of the favoring-enabling, that is, of the possible. Of course, our words *möglich* and *Möglichkeit*, under the dominance of “logic” and “metaphysics”, are thought solely in contrast to “actuality”; that is, they are thought on the basis of a definite—the metaphysical—interpretation of Being as *actus* and *potentia*, a distinction identified with the one between *existentia* and *potentia*. When I speak of the “quiet power of the possible” I do not mean the *possibile* of merely represented *possibilitas* nor the *potentia* as *essentia* of an *actus* of *existentia*; rather, I mean Being itself who, willing, is empowered on thinking, and therefore about the essence of the human being, what it means about his relationship with Being (Heidegger, [1946], 1977, p. 196).

Heidegger remits to Being the possible of the wanting power. But what is possible in life emerges from the relationship of the power of the Real of Life and the desire to power life driven by the “lack-in-being” from the drives of the human unconscious.

Environmental rationality is inscribed in the philosophical discourse of modernity as the “disjunctive syllogism” that deconstructs the me-

taphysics of the ontological discourse of Being and the theoretical frameworks and power devices of the rationality of modernity to operate a turn towards the understanding of Life. However, the category of environmental rationality does not offer potions to exorcise the demons that have taken over the human soul or to offer a cure to his existential anguish; it barely tries to unravel its modes of operation, the way to redirect human desire within the conditions of life. As in the face of the environmental crisis, what is the point of curing the patient of his anxiety if he will die from global warming, from a coronavirus or at the hands of organized crime, as a result of the degradation of life? Given the current conditions of life, it is no longer only important to see how risk and the climatic condition are subjectivized in the existential anxiety of human beings, but also the way in which we understand and respond to the environmental crisis as an existential condition that puts at stake our symbolic condition within the biothermodynamic conditions of life.

What is important to understand goes beyond the innumerable cases and the various ways in which the subject’s reason is unhinged, to see the ways in which it asserts itself in the collective superego in the process of economic globalization as an expression of his malaise in our post-modern culture; as a manifestation of a “force majeure reason” (Nicol, 1972), of the “will to power” of capital that, in its process of rationalizing the world, configures the modes of “rational choice” that lead the unconscious desire towards the economization of the world, the capitalization of jouissance and the commodification of nature.

The field of political ecology has been established as the social space in which socioenvironmental conflicts between different social groups

are manifested, disputed and settled before the processes of degradation of life led by the imposition of the supreme reason of the Capital. There, the different ways of understanding the environmental question and the solution of its different conflicts in the territorialization of life are expressed. These conflicts are not resolved through the rules and power devices of economic and legal rationality that have led to the environmental crisis. Environmental justice goes beyond putting the rights of nature at stake and in dispute, demanding an understanding of the conflict in life that erupts from the drives of the human unconscious and its “will to power”, of the impulses towards the domination of nature in the construction of the world and of peoples' lifeworlds. Bringing unconscious impulses into line with the conditions of life implies elucidating their obscurities and unraveling the perversions of human desire (Leff, 2020a).

The pleasure principle that mobilizes the eroticism of life does not manifest itself as a replica of the creative power of the *Physis* that is internalized into the unconscious as the “will to power” of *life qua life*. Beyond the “lack of transparency” of the transcription of the biothermodynamic conditions of life in the human psyche, there is also no direct transposition and assimilation of the “will to power” of the Real of Life as a life drive within the psychic apparatus. From there arises the challenge

of unraveling the “maladjustment” of the Pleasure Principle and the Reality Principle in the drives of unconscious *jouissance*, in the face of the conditions of the sustainability of life; from disharmony between the power of the *Physis* that springs from the *Real of Life* and the drives of human desire –from the conflict between Eros and Thanatos– that are configured in the unconscious body.

As unraveled by Freud, the Reality Principle expresses the tension between a desire for life and an alien, not immanent reality: the conflict between the power of *Physis* and the ontological regime generated by the *Logos*; between the desire for life and the death drive that engage in combat in the psychic apparatus, in the Real of the unconscious that is the cause –the “truth as cause” (Lacan)–, of the “lack-in-being” of the human unconscious that does not allow itself to be thought, not to mention the *Logos*; that does not resolve the conflict of life through reason²⁵. Human desire is not the tropism that moves the instinct of the organism, which in its impulse is trapped in the cobweb of its real environment; it is not the symbiogenesis of life that mobilizes biological evolution by adaptation of the fittest. As the Stoics discovered, human bodies are attracted by tensions and relationships, by actions and passions “based on a primordial fire in which they are reabsorbed and from which they develop”.²⁶ Between Eros and Thanatos, the intentions of the

²⁵ On this resistance of the Real of the unconscious to be symbolized, articulated by the signifiers of the theoretical discourse and of the social norm, Jacques Derrida observes: “At least it is not on this side because it is first on the side of the ‘thing itself’, which is not a thing but a cause, the process of this unsolvable censorship of desire. Our hypothesis [...] all this irresolution is not simply on the theoretical side, but in the thing itself, if there were, in fact, in the writing scene that unites and disunites them” (Derrida, 2019, p. 358). In this way, the mark of the subtraction of the unconscious desire from ontological thought is enunciated: its “lack-in-being”.

²⁶ “What is in the depths of bodies are mixtures, one body penetrates another and coexists with it in all its parts, like a drop of wine in the sea or fire in iron. One body withdraws from another, like the liquid in a glass. The mixtures in general determine the quantitative and qualitative states of affairs: the dimensions of a set, or else the red of the iron, the green of a tree. But what we mean by ‘grow’, ‘decrease’, ‘redden’, ‘green’, ‘cut’, ‘be cut’, etc., is of another nature: not at all states of affairs or mixtures in the bottom of bodies, but incorporeal events on the surface, which result from these mixtures. The *tree greens*” (Deleuze, 1969, p. 15).

humanly generated world - by the Logos, Values, the Reason and the Norm - are tensed, and the impulses of life upset by the death drive that inhabits them, by the enigma of the *Unheimlich* of human existence.

The ecological fracture of human existence is the explosion of the historical trace of an original fault that expands in the desertification of the human soul and in the entropization of the Earth. It is a debt that cannot be resolved by economic calculation, whose international monetary fund has been instituted due to the “lack-in-being” that established the original conflict of life; by the original *differance* inscribed in the writing; by the impossibility of the Logos to collect the diversity of life; by the ontological reduction of all that exists to its objective form and its monetary value that generated the symbolic violence towards life and the ecological degradation of the planet. As a failure of the symbolic order in the Real of Life, the ecological debt is inscribed in the instinctual regime of the unconscious, vindicating the pleasure principle, spurring the will of life harassed by the principle of rationality, which as a principle of reality has left the traces of the Logos marked in the erosion of the Earth and the polluted air in which human existence is drowned and abyssed.

Elucidating the conditions of human life will lead us to delve deeper into the event of thought to bring it into line and in tune with the times of the environmental and epidemiological crisis, to stop the fall of the nihilism of reason towards the abyss of life. Unraveling the conditions of life implies penetrating the labyrinths of the meanings of life to reach the deepest layers of thought, to get to build “a more comprehensive, stranger and richer world, beyond the surface, a bottom deeper and more

abyssal behind each floor, beneath each attempt to offer ‘foundations’.” (Nietzsche, 1966, p. 229).

Fascinating world where the identity of the self is lost, not for the benefit of the identity of the One or of the unity of the Whole, but for the benefit of an intense multiplicity and a power of metamorphosis, where power relations play with each other [...] That everything is so ‘complicated’, that I am another, that something different thinks of us in an aggression that is that of thought, in a multiplication that is that of the body, in a violence that is that of language, there resides the joyful message (Deleuze, 1969, p. 345-346).

Unraveling the enigmas of unconscious desire follows this impulse of the hermit thinker, to get to the bottom of the “lack-in-being” that mobilizes the “will to power”; to deconstruct the figures of the self and heal the superego; to elucidate the unconscious causes, not assignable to *Physis* as a cosmic force, and beyond the violence exercised by *Logos* and *Reason*; to come to understand the “causality of desire” and the unconscious impulses that have configured the “will to power” that moves the world, motivating social actions, constituting the devices of power that govern the world, directing the metabolism of the biosphere towards the entropic death of the planet.

The entry of humanity into the era of the Anthropocene means that the impulses of life, the drives of the unconscious and the modes of understanding and human intervention on the world have become the greatest force that mobilizes the metabolism of the biosphere and degrades the conditions of sustainability of life. The rationality of capital has been established as the sovereign power that imposes death on bare life (Agamben, 1998); it is the global force that directs life beyond the

very forces of nature, towards the entropic death of the planet. *Environmental rationality* (Leff, 2004 [2022]) returns thought and social action towards the immanent creative power of life (Deleuze 2001; 2011; Deleuze & Guattari, 1996), territorializing the vital imaginaries of peoples and communities in the metabolism of the biosphere and opening the horizons of human existence from the ethics of otherness (Levinas) and a politics of difference (Derrida) towards the infinite of a world of peaceful coexistence of the diversity of life.

References

- Agamben, G. *Homo sacer: sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Bataille, G. *El erotismo*. México: Tusquets, 1997.
- Bataille, G. *La part maudite*. Paris: Minuit, 1967.
- Bergson, H. *Creative evolution*. New York: Dover, 2014.
- Bookchin, M. *Our synthetic environment*. New York: Knopf, 1962.
- Bookchin, M. *Post-scarcity anarchism*. Montreal/New York, Black Rose Books, Second edition, 1990.
- Carlson, R. *The silent spring*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962.
- Cesarman, F. *Ecocidio: estudio psicoanalítico de la destrucción del medio ambiente*. México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1972.
- Commoner, B. *The closing circle: nature, man, and technology*. New York: Knopf, 1971.
- Deleuze, G. *Nietzsche*. Madrid: Arena, 2000.
- Deleuze, G. *Nietzsche y la filosofía*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2012.
- Deleuze, G. *Lógica de sentido*. Trad. Miguel Morey. Barcelona: Paidós, 1969.
- Deleuze, G. *Pure immanence. Essays on a life*. New York: Urzone, 2001.
- Deleuze, G.; Guattari, F. *Anti-Edipo: capitalismo y esquizofrenia*. Barcelona: Paidós, 1985.
- Deleuze, G. *A thousand plateaus. Capitalism & schizophrenia*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Deleuze, G. *Qué es la filosofía?* Barcelona: Anagrama, 2011.
- Derrida, J. *De la gramatología*. México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1971.
- Derrida, J. *Márgenes de la filosofía*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1989a.
- Derrida, J. "The purveyor of truth". In: *Yale French Studies*. No. 52, Graphesis: Perspectives in Literature and Philosophy, Yale University Press, p. 31-113, 1975.
- Derrida, J. El oído de Heidegger. Filopolemología (Geschlecht IV). In: *Políticas de la amistad*. Trad. Francisco Vidarte, 1989b.
- Derrida, J. *La vie la mort*. Séminaire. Paris: Seuil, 2019.
- Enzensberger, H. M. *Lengua del país*. Barcelona: La Poesía, 2004.
- Erlich, P. *The population bomb*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1968.
- Freud, S. *El malestar en la cultura*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, [1930].
- Heidegger, M. *Ser y tiempo*. Trad. J. E. Rivera. [1927]. Disponible en: www.heideggeriana.com.ar.
- Heidegger, M. *Contributions to philosophy (from Enowning)*. Trad. Parvis Emad; Kenneth Maly. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- Heidegger, M. *Heráclito*. Cursos de 1943-1944. Trad. Carlos Másmela. Buenos Aires: Elhilo de Ariadna, 2012.
- Heidegger, M. Letter on humanism. In: Krell, David Farrell. *Basic writings*. New York: Harper Collins, p. 196, 1977.
- Heidegger, M. *The question concerning technology and other essays*. Trad. William Lovitt. New York: Harperperennial, 1977.
- Heidegger, M. *Identidad y diferencia*. Trad. Arturo Leyte.

- Barcelona: Editorial Anthropos, 1988.
- Heidegger, M. The way to language. *In: On the way to language*. Trad. Peter D. Hertz. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982.
- Heidegger, M. *On time and being*. Trad. Joan Stambaugh. New York: Hasper & Row, 1972.
- Heidegger, M. La época de la imagen del mundo. Trad. Helena Cortés; Arturo Leyte. *In: Heidegger, M. Caminos de bosque*, Madrid: Alianza, 1996.
- Heinrich, K. *Ensayo sobre la dificultad de decir no*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2012.
- Ingold, T. *The perception of the environment*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Jonas, H. *El principio de responsabilidad: ensayo de una ética para la civilización tecnológica*. Barcelona: Editorial Herder, 1995.
- Jonas, H. *El principio de vida*. Hacia una biología filosófica. Madrid: Trotta, 2000.
- Kauffman, S. *Investigaciones: complejidad, autoorganización y nuevas leyes para una biología general*. Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 2003.
- Lacan, J. *Écrits*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966.
- Lacan, J. *El Seminario 10. La angustia*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2007.
- Lacan, J. *El Seminario 20. Aún (Encore)*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2010.
- Leff, E. *El fuego de la vida. Heidegger ante la cuestión ambiental*. México: Siglo XXI Editores, 2018.
- Leff, E. *El conflicto de la vida*, México: Siglo XXI Editores, 2020a.
- Leff, E. Clima viral: o lugar da humanidade no planeta. 2020b. Disponible en: <https://www.amazonialatitude.com/2020/08/05/clima-viral-lugar-humanidade-planeta/>
- Leff, E. *Racionalidad ambiental: la reapropiación social de la naturaleza*, México: Siglo XXI Editores, segunda edición corregida, 2022 [2004].
- Leroi-Gourhan, A. *Le geste et la parole*. Technique et language. Paris: Albin Michel, 1965.
- Levinas, E. *El tiempo y el otro*. Barcelona: Paidós, 1993.
- Levinas, E. *Totalidad e infinito. Ensayo sobre la exterioridad*. Salamanca: Sígueme, 4. ed., 1997.
- Marcuse, H. *Eros y civilization*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1963.
- Margulis, L.; Sagan, D. *What is life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris: Gallimard, 1945.
- Miller, J.-A. *Biología lacaniana y acontecimiento del cuerpo*. Buenos Aires: Colección Diva, 2002.
- Nicol, E. *El porvenir de la filosofía*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1972.
- Nietzsche, F. *The genealogy of morals*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956.
- Nietzsche, F. *Beyond good and evil*. Prelude to a philosophy of the future. New York: Vintage Books, 1966.
- Nietzsche, F. *The gay science*. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- Nietzsche, F. *Así habló Zaratustra*. Madrid/México: Alianza Editorial, 1997.
- Nietzsche, F. *Ecce homo*. Como se llega a ser lo que se es. Madrid: Editorial Alba, 1999.
- Nietzsche, F. *Fragmentos póstumos (1885-1889) Vol. IV*. Trad. Juan Luis Vermal; Joan B. Llinares. Madrid: Tecnos,

2. ed., 2008.

Nietzsche, F. *Fragmentos póstumos (1882-1885) Vol. III*. Trad. Diego Sánchez Meca; Jesús Conill. Madrid: Tecnos, 2010.

Rocco, V. Pensar la naturaleza en tiempos de pandemia. *Blog Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid*, 2020.

Saal, F. Derrida psychoanalyst? A Lacanian Derrida?. Conferencia en el Décimo Simposio de la Fundación Mexicana de Psicoanálisis sobre *Escritura y psicoanálisis*, 1994.

Safouan, M. *¿El Edipo es universal?* México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1977.

Steiner, G. *Después de Babel*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001.