

The Non-modern Crisis of the Modern University

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ABSTRACT This article offers a synthesis of the book *La crisis no moderna de la universidad moderna* and reconsiders many of its main claims, without, however, rehearsing the conceptual history that the book develops. These claims bear on several non-modern crises, crises affecting (1) the modern conflict between knowledge and thought; (2) the modern dispute between the superior, technical faculties and the inferior, critical faculty; (3) the university understood as the original source of ends-driven research, on the one hand, and open-ended, unconditional research, on the other; (4) the modern categories used to understand the university; (5) the university community defined as an organic unity of knowledges; and (6) the autonomy, the untimeliness, the philosophy of history, the enthusiastic mission, and the epic narrative of the modern university. In the Chilean context, these crises coincided with the military dictatorship (1973–90), which carried out a juridical and constitutional transition that was also a transformation of the university. No longer defined as a state-administered institution guided by the developmentalist goal of ensuring the nation's progress, the university became a corporate institution that instead seeks to protect the revenues of multinational corporations. Indeed, the university belongs to these corporations. Effected by the dictatorship, this transition was legally reinforced, naturalized, and supported by post-dictatorship forms of democratic governmentality.

KEYWORDS modern university, transition, impossibility, neo-standardization, critique

1.

To begin a discussion of the university, one must first consider its surroundings. This is especially true today, when context seems to have no limits and to allow for no independent operations. It does not seem possible at present for the university to enjoy autonomy, inwardness, or self-possession, or for it to claim authorship of, responsibility for, or sovereign authority over the decisions and historical tasks that it has been assigned—or that it was assigned in modernity. According to the modern understanding of the university, these were its obligations. Today, however, it

does not seem possible for the university to maintain any distance from its context or to preserve the difference, the separation, on the basis of which it emerged not so very long ago. The ramparts, moats, and barriers that often surrounded university campuses attested to this difference: the university presented itself as an other space, separated from the historical present in which it intervened, a *deus ex machina*, a present past or future anterior.

Can the university be considered a subject today? Can it be seen as a subject of modern knowledge, with this subject's two main commitments: to "fundamental research," on the one hand, and to "ends-oriented research," on the other? Is the university the subject of conflict, of class struggle, of the division of labor between truth and knowledge? Is it still a guiding principle—the guardian, regulator, and guarantor of knowledge in its different fields and practices? Does the university still oversee the instrumentalization of knowledge, its extension into various areas of practical activity? Is it the center of responsibility, the institution to which we look for universals or for enlightened ways of living? Is it responsible for the gradual, global modernization of objects and environments? Is the university responsible for the demarcation, hierarchical organization, and authority of the linguistic marketplace? Does the university still oversee the expansion of knowledge and its norms, generic taxonomies, and standards of behavior, competence, and relevance? Or is everything in the university now¹ a matter of heteronomy, surroundings, and exteriority? Is it therefore only out of habit that we treat the university as a separate name in the directory or a discrete item on the menu of institutions in the present, as if it still remained bound by the limits and barriers to which I have referred, the means by which it continues to feign immunity, to lay claim to autarchy and independence from what surrounds it?

Because it is also possible that the university is nothing but an avenue or off-ramp, a place where business, geo-military, and biopolitical machines meet and through which they pass. Fetishized as autonomous procedures of research and education, these machines do not in fact originate in a stable, recognizable, and localizable center. They regulate, administer, and stabilize the university, and not the other way around, as one would have supposed in modernity.

This becomes clear when the university enters directly and permanently into a *state of exception*. When its governance, its regulations, its autonomy, its normal temporality—that is, the time during which the *exception* is still measured against the stability of the norm—are confiscated, interrupted by the operations of business and the military, the university is immediately set to work, in the anarchy of decision-making and under the pressure of urgent demands. The university is captured by the temporality and the exigencies of the market, of survival, or of war, or by the planetary economy and the directives of this economy's world banks.

2.

But, to complicate the question, what happens to context if we imagine it from inside the university? To what extent has the university produced context as such, realizing itself in a vast “university city” or professionalized planet in which the acts, gestures, and areas that used to be outside the university’s reach have been totally [*totalitariamente*] subsumed by its “higher” protocols and habits? By this account, the university, for all its linguistic and disciplinary variety and mobility, would have been hierarchically internalized by the population. From preschool onward, the university would exercise its panoptic power over subjects and objects more exhaustively and automatically than ever. Indeed, it would wield this power especially over those who lack formal university training. All professionals, according to the intensity with which they have absorbed and let themselves be absorbed by the university’s discipline, not only monitor the objects that fall within their professional purview; they also monitor themselves and the desires that both dislocate and enable their professional performance and efficiency. In this disciplinarily determined society, we “secrete” the university, sweat it from our pores.²

We acquire university manners and a university perspective not only through our educational experience. We do not need to complete a specific course of study in order to be formatted by the university in its universality. Continuous bombardment by mass media suffices to in-form us (give us the form) of the university’s ideas and gestures, which produce efficient or inefficient, desirable or undesirable bodies. We are thus shaped ritually by demands and transformations that we seem not to have generated ourselves, but that we incorporate through our subjection to the standards that the media’s *messages* conjure for us. Our perspectives and behaviors tend toward advertising because, already in preschool, we are persuaded by ads. And preschools, like advertising and advertisers, are the products of universities. In preschool, the university conditions our sphincters so that they respond to stimuli that come not only from within our immediate, academic world (a conservative refuge), but mainly from the media matrix of screen and sound, delivered to our nervous systems with electric speed in the form of clips and advertisements. There is not an inch of publicity that is not determined by the university.³ The same is true of the production of strategic knowledge by businesses and the military. To be sure, this knowledge may be produced outside the university and may even be inaccessible to it because it is not for sale. But this strategic production is in fact in keeping with the method, the style, and the universality of the university. Although the centers of military and business knowledge production may no longer be empirically regulated or financed by the university, they are still structurally overseen by a university subjectivity. Internalized as science, this subjectivity is set to work in these places; it reproduces itself, spreads everywhere, and adapts to the

demands of market competitiveness, all without state regulation. There is no suspension of the university that does not belong to the university. Even the military coup and the torturing machine belong to the university.⁴

To what extent, then, is the university, seen from this perspective, more than ever the principle of subjection that produces and is produced as context? To what extent has the university expanded beyond its own boundaries, erasing the non-university that once stood opposed to it, in a rapacious and totalitarian fashion? To what extent has the university realized its universalization by knocking down the walls and eliminating the distance, the limit, the temporal difference between its inside and its outside?

And if this universalization did stand achieved, then what kind of an empire would the university create? What type of totalitarianism, and what sort of subjection, would it establish? Would it perhaps be a totality that would no longer require enclosures or interiors, because every exterior would already be within its enclosure? An electronic enclosure, for example,⁵ or a telematic one?⁶ Would it be a decentered totality, encompassing all administrative, economic, and public actions, all matters of credit and accreditation? Does the university, then, inform all of our undertakings, all of our hustle and bustle? Have all of our routines by now been colonized by the understanding that originates in university faculties? Or can we still think of and desire a university that maintains a reflexive distance from the present? Has such reflexivity not been exhausted by the clash among knowledges in circulation, made available for commercial transactions?

3.

The idea of the university as a historic and productive nucleus that safeguards knowledge and society has been surpassed by the actual operations of knowledge in the present. The biased understanding of the university as guide and guarantor rests on the modern belief, rooted in university common sense, that the university is the fundamental source of science, technology, the professions, and ethics secularized as professional performance. This bias collides with a reality that contradicts it.

And indeed, if we begin with the presupposition that science and the organization of knowledge and work are the offspring of the university, we soon see that it is the university's role not only to evaluate what is and is not knowledge, but also to control professional society and its multiple instantiations through the specialties that it imparts, the perceptions that it produces and through which it extends into everyday life. Because, whether they mean to or not, professionals administer, and are administered by, the objects that their professions assign them using university protocols. Moreover, generally speaking, discussions of these objects, inasmuch as

they are considered *serious* discussions, are circumscribed by the university's codes and customs.

If we begin, then, from this hypothesis, then not only science but also life's pragmatic plexus appear to be a product of the universality of the university, a universality always under construction. By this account or according to this biased understanding, the university, a product of society's passage to modernity, would be the origin and source of modern society, the principle that founds a university society, a disciplinary panopticon, an endless, infinitesimal modulation of bodies. The university thus appears to be the alma mater of society. And so it appeared in the context of "enlightened" modern society.

4.

The idea of the university as a national and state-run center for the administration and guidance of research and teaching is perhaps in the process of vanishing. What for Kant were institutions outside or at the margins of the university whose knowledge did not threaten or compete with it—academies, specialized societies—have perhaps become the centers of relevant knowledge.⁷ And yet, in many cases, this is a knowledge that cannot be taught, published, or administered by the university. Such marginal institutions, which did not concern the university or compete with it in the eighteenth century, today compete with it and concern it to such an extent that they depict *it* as marginal, as propaedeutic, subordinate, and productive of merely parasitic knowledge.⁸ The fact that there are now powerful regions of knowledge not susceptible to university evaluation already suffices to threaten the macrocentric architecture of the modern university. That the current reality of the university is not compatible with the idea of the university as a controlling nucleus of knowledge becomes even more palpable when we look to extramural sites: the centers that, as we have seen, grow outside or at the margins of the university's administration. Not only does the university not control these centers today; it lacks the right to control them, and often it cannot even gain commercial access to the knowledge and information that is produced and administered by them.

The growth of these strategic and mercantile research enclaves, and the sort of technical-scientific competence that they possess, would seem to suggest that they have surpassed the university. The university has been left behind by the knowledge that these enclaves generate; it has been recast as an institution for the mass reproduction of a knowledge that has been devalued, deprived of its status as a mercantile, geopolitical secret. The telematic commodification of knowledge gradually renders useless the idea of a state-university centralization of knowledge with educational-spiritual and historico-national aims (as in Schleiermacher, Fichte, or Humboldt) or educational-technical and historico-national-imperial aims (as in

Descartes, Napoleon, or Comte).⁹ The relation between the suppliers and the users of knowledge tends to take a form resembling the relation between the producers and the consumers of commodities. Knowledge has been losing its historical “use value.”¹⁰ And instead of being transmitted by the university to civil society for the “spiritual and moral education of the nation,”¹¹ it is gradually transformed, through advertising, into pure exchange value, aestheticized and auratic. That there are important regions of knowledge that are not susceptible to university evaluation and control; that the university does not have the right to access relevant knowledge, even according to the protocols of buying and selling; that it does not, in general, decide what can be researched and taught—all of this indicates that the university’s status as a controlling and productive center of knowledge is (and has always been?) an illusion produced by a modern philosophical discourse about the university. Still, however devalued and inapplicable to the current state of affairs it may be, this discourse would appear to be the only discourse on the university that we have. What, then, is the difference between these centers of knowledge and the university if the former already belong structurally and performatively to the latter?

5.

For a long time, the university thought of itself as the totality of forms of knowledge and teaching, gathered together under a single principle, united by a single narrative, a single tradition or history, despite the vicissitudes of its geographic-linguistic displacements and annexations and the movements of its revolutions. An inclination to unite, a desire for complete union, had marked Western thought and recurred as a maxim since ancient Greek philosophy: what united was good, and what dissolved or separated was bad. Beginning in the twelfth century, although the word *universitas* referred administratively to a gathering of people belonging to a guild, the utopia of a total encyclopedia of knowledge was made into an ideal,¹² and it constituted one of the teleological principles of the university, part of its metanarrative of unity and plenitude. The university thus thought of itself, from the very beginning, as a totalizing, totalitarian system, one whose task was to assimilate, to institute as knowledge, or to designate as non-knowledge a range of practices, products, codes, and methods, according to general criteria. A variety of shifting activities and states of knowledge had to be assigned places and hierarchically organized by the university, placed inside and outside, above and below in the scholastic encyclopedia.

Thus the university presented itself as a living and malleable machine that could digest, expel, locate, and dislocate knowledges and undertakings that had been dispersed in different traditions. Before the university delivered its judgments, these knowledges and tasks were “pagan,” spread out across various languages and

territories, belonging to no public or Western hierarchy, guided only by their own strength.

The university therefore brought together “other” languages and experiences, irreducible to each other, lacking a common tradition or a common history. It assimilated them, validating them by inscribing them in a single tradition of authorized knowledge.

The identity and the logic of the university, its unity and familiarity, its immensity and prestige, the presence and public power of its knowledge and its undertakings was thus the result of a process of gathering, homogenizing, and immunizing dispersed and dissimilar activities and experiences. And in many cases, these were activities persecuted and condemned by the university. Consider the medieval university’s contempt for, its condemnation of, and, at the same time, its fear of the monstrosities produced by Bruno, Galileo, and Descartes. These were monstrosities whose strangeness, from the moment they first appeared, threatened and disgusted the universality defined by the university of the time. These phenomena, which at first violated the law, universality, the reigning paradigm, and which therefore remained clandestine and imperceptible, became after a time, and a posteriori, the very heart of the university, the statute, the principle of guidance and prescription, the subjectivity, the law, the new universality and immunity of the university regime.

What the university was unwilling to tolerate, in each case, was the lawless gestation of law and the gestation of politics without politics. But this is the “methodical error” that inheres in creative activity. We can see everywhere that the university is against any activity that removes, separates, or exempts itself from institutional methodologies. Unlike academic research—which ensures the effectiveness and productivity of its results through methods that determine and standardize “normal” procedures—the creative work of genius (as in Kant), of genealogy (as in Nietzsche), or of destruction (as in Heidegger) does not take rules as given but rather suspends them.¹³

The university has thus, according to its “idea,” sought to be not the totality of this or that possible world, but rather the *universitas* including all possible worlds. It has always aspired, according to its “idea,” to be a universal library without limits. But that the university integrates and absorbs the “minor,” non-university knowledges that it once feared and sought to counter, and that in this way the university constitutes its *communitas*—this does not mean that it leaves these knowledges intact or incorporates them as they were in their pre-academic existence. The transplantation and recontextualization of these non-university knowledges, their gradual integration into a cosmopolitan institution that is universalizing in its modes and methodologies, presupposes the reorganization and reformatting of the integrated knowledges, which surrender their singularity to the university. They are

finally subordinated to the university, with its integrating tendencies, where there are still differences, to be sure, but these do not make a difference to the university. This integrated institution expands from time to time and occasionally diversifies its protocols in order to appropriate the barbarism that confronts it.

6.

It was Kant who first argued openly that the university should be rethought so that the external, para-university processes of production and reflection would come to constitute the university's very center and the principle of its autonomy. By recasting the "anarchy" of the "Inferior Faculty," or the Faculty of Philosophy, as the "Superior Faculty," Kant established the university's reflexive "outside," its limit or membrane, as its Superior Faculty. He displaced the wall that had separated the university's outside from its inside, situating it in the placeless or atopic center of the university, the site of its essential conflict. The university thus became *the conflict of the faculties*, and so it remained until the crisis of the modern university in May 1968.

After Kant, the university could only fulfill its unifying imperative, and remain the gathering place that it was supposed to be, within the "internal court" that was the Faculty of Philosophy, a sovereign forum that was not subordinated to any established law or rule, but rather reflexively dislocated itself from these, asking about their truth and the conditions of possibility of all instituted knowledge. The Faculty of Philosophy was thus granted an exceptional status that nevertheless safeguarded the law that it interrogated, in an esoteric community of the learned.

7.

But consider the contemporary state of affairs, the relation between the primary unity that is encoded in the word "uni-versity," the diversity of knowledges that it would supposedly systematize, and the mode of this gathering.

Today we seem to be witnessing the collapse of the organic unity of knowledge, a unity that Husserl sought to reestablish.¹⁴ But what is collapsing is first and foremost the very process of inquiring into unity and into principle or foundation. Knowledge today makes itself available as something essentially dispersed. And by "dispersed" I do not mean that the different disciplines and specializations have no contact with each other, that they are atomized or cloistered, without any communicating doors or windows between them. By "dispersed" I mean instead that the ideal of a unity of different kinds of knowledge under a single principle¹⁵ can no longer be realized programmatically; nor is there a reflexive principle that encompasses all the disciplines in a sovereign fashion, without belonging to any of them, thus establishing itself as the "knowledge of knowledge" or the truth of knowledge.¹⁶ The university's unity can no longer be thought of as its "knowledge of

knowledge.” A unitary meta-knowledge liberated from contingency, a knowledge that could gather together and guide the university in the midst of the events in which it is submerged, is no longer conceivable. Such a meta-knowledge, one that would grant the university freedom of movement in the midst of contingency, is no longer possible. The university is unable to reflect on itself and its context from a standpoint outside the market and prior to the fall into the exchange of knowledge. And this inability or impossibility—the university’s giving in to the tensions of contingency—constitutes the non-modern crisis of the modern university.

8.

If we were to create a map of today’s academic practices, marking identities and hierarchies with little flags, we would see that the lines of influence, the colonizations, grafts, and transplants, the compromises and translations have intersected so often that we would find flags of all kinds everywhere. We would see that places have given way to passages on the move, that, after the rise of the market in the age of telecommunications, exchange no longer involves movement from one place to another, because places themselves have become passages. The flags have appeared, and each discipline on the map is so changeful or undecidable that its position keeps shifting, like the map as a whole. The map itself has lost its internal differentiations and has become a passage. Each standpoint on the map is placeless, in process, without a pure present, and thus undecidable, without a fixed identity. At the same time, we see that checkpoints, passports, and protocols for crossing become stricter and more oppressive every day, and that they operate in various registers and at various scales. These lurking border controls, applied more or less intensely, are inevitably part of today’s cross-cutting pedagogy of de-differentiation.

9.

But now more than ever, under the regime of telematics, differences are gathered together in the luminous flow of the virtual directory. The desire to gather together and thoroughly archive what exists is realized in telematics, which seems to emerge as the technological culmination of the encyclopedic project of the modern university. Informatics and television thus become universities, sites for the electronic gathering together of differences.

But what does “gathering together” mean here? What kind of unity does the indefinite flow of electricity offer? It may be that the digital logic of the information market, which compels every subject and object to make itself available in a communicational form, will dismantle all perspectives on the real, in a continuous performativity deprived of a general point of view. Telematics does not allow for any meta-narrative capable of articulating reflections on the world into a unified world, because the meta-narrator or -reader is always already a datum in the network.

Nevertheless, telematics itself constitutes a de facto support or surface for the heterogeneous diffusion of things, things all connected by the “and”: the “and” as the last place, the de facto place, of meta-narrative. The telematic surface, blind and limitless in its capacity for absorption, offers itself as a “place” where the diversity of things can be found. In this sense, it presents itself as a uni-versity, but one far removed from the Enlightenment and medieval ideals of the university as a total encyclopedia or as the mind of a God who knows all things according to organic and hierarchical principles. The informatization of society allows for the emergence of a technological university, one whose unity does not reside in a reflexive meta-narrative that subsumes differences or in a pure, self-centering presence. It resides instead in the oscillation of differences and unstable multiplicities, in the ocean of electric currents in which all things are lost.

10.

There was a time when the word *university* magnetized enthusiasm and sounded epic, and the scholar seemed to be a hero and a sort of priest. Many qualities were gathered together under and implied by the name of the university and made it worthy of such exclusive recognition. These qualities included autonomy from the state and society; a status as archive and center of universal knowledge; responsibility for the education and the construction of the spirit of the people; the capacity to confer qualifications on the workforce; a status as the source and center of universal knowledge; and the “knowledge of knowledge,” or the ability to pose the question of the truth, whether of science, of justice, or of the law. This university was the keeper and regulator of progress as well as the shaper of the nation-state’s language. These were some of the many ways of naming the university’s “mission” and therefore the missionary university.

To be sure, the currents that affect knowledge, the state, the people, language, spirit, truth, nature, and history today do not run counter to what Kant called the “university industry.” They do not block the expanded circulation of knowledge in the market or counter the imperative to professionalize. But they have undoubtedly diminished the epic splendor that the university once enjoyed, and deprived it of its former status as the heroine and guide of nations and of humanity as a whole.

All the emblems of the epic university now constitute its *kitsch*, the kitsch of knowledge and history. And it could not be otherwise in a context where what was heroic about science and creation, what made them matters of teleological drama and utopian transcendence, has been gradually replaced by the operational immanence of curricular administration, metrics for achievement and intelligence, and systems of accreditation that are as liberal as supermarkets. The humanist and progressive emblems of the modern university—emblems that are everywhere in its

current administrative discourse—serve only to adorn and disguise its public relations and marketing campaigns. Such emblems, in any case, represent neither the meaning nor the program, neither the everyday life nor the administration of the university. On the contrary, it is the university administration that at once deploys these emblems and limits their scope and significance.

The academic, humanitarian, and progressive values that are ascribed to the university today contribute to its status as kitsch. Although the university promotes the auratic values, signatures, and sphinxes of tradition,¹⁷ the logic of exchange in fact negates these values. The commercialization of education is aestheticized in the university's efforts to market itself.¹⁸

11.

In modernity, political, artistic, and academic practices as well as the various practices of everyday life were endowed with and guided by narratives with transcendent meaning, informed by philosophies of the emancipation of the subject in the process of production and invention of his or her life (as in Lyotard). These practices occasioned hyperbolic arguments about the subject's conditions and limits. In the current, non-modern context, by contrast, these practices confront the dissolution of such philosophies of history, the decline of the forms of fundamental speculation that depended on autonomy and distance from the demands of efficiency. In fact, this might be a way to translate the term *globalization*: as a set of practices that are increasingly functional and efficient, that depend on no metanarrative or meaning, and that allow for no suspension of their own governing logic or guiding method. On the other hand, we might call *modern* all practices governed not only by the immediate efficiency of their methods, but also, in the last instance, by hyperbolic arguments about their conditions. Globalization would thus be the process of withdrawing from the modern, not the process of approaching it. The dictatorships in the Southern Cone allowed for the transition from an ideological and critical modernity to a present with no ideologies and no tradition of critical hyperbole. But anyone can see that in the limitless horizon of globalization, ideologies have in fact proliferated more than ever before. Globalization proclaims itself more pluralist, more tolerant, and more democratic with respect to ideology and critique. But the idea that any ideology, as long as it is expressed in "civil" terms, must be included on the menu of democracy is one of the clearest symptoms of the death or decline of the ideological in the modern sense. The weakening of ideology is thus linked to its proliferation. It is the ruin of the ideological as a guiding principle for practice that leads to the proliferation of ideologies. Because no single ideology can guide or even aspire to guide us, all ideologies can appear lined up next to one another as in a pluralist costume party. Ideological tension, conflict, confrontation, and condemnation all arise in contexts in which the principle of reflexivity is thought to guide

history, the state, and education. In modernity, ideological disputes and confrontations thus determine the course of events. Globalization, on the other hand, perceives any guiding ideology as tyrannical, as an attempt to wield coercive power over the facts (the market), and a restraint from which we have to free ourselves for the sake of “fluidity.” Today, ideology proliferates, no longer as a governing function, but as a matter of variety or of supply and demand, a menu of options, a symbolic decoration, or a marketing tactic. Recast as a matter of *dressing well*, ideology is deprived of its semantic density but simultaneously preserved, lightly, as an advertising tool.

12.

Facts govern. “The crisis of modernity is related to the defeat of ideology by facts. But already in modernity facts triumphed over ideologies. One could argue that facts have always outstripped meaning. In modernity, however, it was possible to rise above facts and the rule of their logic. Modernity was characterized, even defined, by this possibility of ideological and discursive transcendence.”¹⁹

The specificity of globalization inheres in the impossibility of such discursive and critical transcendence or distance. For it is not merely a question of the destruction of one or another ideology by facts. Rather, we have witnessed the destruction of ideology as such, of the possibility of ideology. It is not possible or desirable to recover from what happens through recourse to ideology. It is no longer possible to treat ideology as a principle of meaning or a means by which to understand what occurs. And whether we call what occurs globally today “advanced capitalism,” “post-industrial society,” or “integrated world capitalism,” the fact remains that capitalism no longer constitutes an ideology. Capitalism today is characterized by its functional facticity, its ability to work with any ideology, to incorporate it as a technology immanent to its operations. Present-day capitalism thus reveals that all ideology has in fact served as means to its post-ideological consolidation.

13.

The system of categories, limits, and relations that make up the “transcendental architectonic” of the modern university is first proposed in Kant’s *Conflict of the Faculties* (1798) and in a series of German philosophical writings that were produced for and that marked the creation of the University of Berlin in 1810.²⁰ Or rather, this is one hypothesis, one way of distinguishing the modern university from the medieval institution that preceded it. And if we accept this hypothesis, then we also have to note that when we talk about the crisis of the modern university, we are also talking about the total or partial inapplicability of the Kantian table of categories. We are therefore talking about the displacement of the university, its relocation outside the boundaries established by modern categories. The university now occupies a place outside not only the common codes of modernity, but any common

codes at all.²¹ This displacement points to the impossibility of situating the contemporary university cartographically, and the impossibility of any metanarrative that would let us give an account of knowledge in the present. Modern categories—the state, the people, language, autonomy, reflexivity, truth, history, progress, and so forth—have lost their ideological power. This is not a conceptual crisis prompted by the emergence of new university categories to compensate for the failure of the old. We are instead faced with a crisis of discourse, of categorization as such. Such a crisis of discourse can neither be regulated nor reined in by discourse, at least not by a discourse that relies on categories. (There may indeed be another discourse that does not depend on categories, and such a discourse may indeed prove capable of speaking to us about the university.) We are left without categories for analyzing this crisis of categories. This also applies to the category of crisis, which so often recurs in our discourse.

In this sense, we are compelled to admit that we do not know what is happening to education or to politics. We are left without a knowledge that we could use to chart a course through this contingency. Categories cannot help us to think the present of the university or the present in general. The Kantian gesture has become impossible, and we can no longer ask, as he did: what is the present? We are uncomfortable with categorization, but at the same time we are uncomfortable without it. Every time we deploy a general category in an effort to determine our present, we confront the insignificance and inconsequence of this determination. We confront indeterminacy, but we also face the fact that every effort at determination is contingent, is yet one more addition to the general context of contingency.

We appear to be indifferent when it comes to the university and politics: “It’s all the same to us.” But in fact nothing is indifferent to us, and every gesture retains a profane necessity.

14.

That we cannot determine the present through the use of categories does not mean that we live in an age of unconditional fluidity. It merely means we do not and cannot know what the present is any longer. That we live in our present with this kind of categorial confusion or indeterminacy does not mean that this present is not in fact complexly determined—or that inasmuch as we are submerged in such complexity, we are not the effects of the material a priori that circumscribes and determines us, and that we cannot determine or reduce to meaning. The disempowerment of discourse at least lets us rid ourselves of this prejudice: the assumption that the discursive is coextensive with or exhausted by the categorial. This assumption prevented the university from reckoning with what was repressed by and excluded from categorial thought, and from opening itself up to the possibility of a post-categorial, post-determinative thought.

15.

Indeed, just by speaking of the modern university, of its structure and codes, we may attest to its failure. For it may be that we can only speak of what is failing or breaking down, what has been dislodged from the position of “subject” and downgraded to the status of object. It may be that we can only speak of what has deteriorated. So when we speak of the modern university, we do so because the power that it claimed and that sustained it has declined. The language of the modern university thus seems ready to be philologically dismantled because the modern university itself has already been dismantled in fact.

The modern structure of the university no longer enjoys the invisibility that once guaranteed its integrity and force. We all speak of the modern university and the modern state and its crises, just as we speak of the crises of the people, the nation, progress, teleology, and epic. The essence of the university is widely perceived, discussed, criticized, and defined. It is a commodity, ripe for use and commentary.

Now, when we speak of the decline of the modern university’s force we imply that this decline or failure results from the advent of another force. Such an “other,” emergent force, we imagine, is neither visible nor discursively representable. Instead it would constitute—invisibly—the invisible condition of possibility of the visible. By this account, we could neither delimit nor situate this new force, since we are ourselves situated by it and even determined by it as it acts behind our backs.

We cannot delimit this force, but we can sense it. We sense it indirectly, and in fact we necessarily presuppose it when we make observations about the ordinary workings of the modern university, its codes, and its architectonics. We could call this emergent force “the non-modern university,” remaining mindful of the fact that we only have outmoded, disempowered words with which to speak of this force that obscurely determines us today. The word *university* is itself one of these words.

My attempt to theorize the present of the university, in the sense of making its invisible conditions visible, is thus also characterized by categorial impotence.

16.

Even if we do not thematize it, all of us speak about the university inasmuch as we speak *like* it. Every object speaks about the university; the university speaks through objects. And who could talk “about” it from a position “above” it, if, as is becoming clear, any discourse, any authoritative speech, any serious, professional speech, presupposes the university’s backing and support? Who or what could speak “about” it by holding themselves above it, then, except for the university itself, speaking through its own professionals or its own logic? For a long time now, moreover, it has been considered problematic for anything to attempt to account

for itself, to explain itself. For how could such an explanation avoid becoming a part of the body it was supposed to be explaining, a part that would in turn require an explanation, and so on?

How, then, can we speak about the university without speaking like the university? How can we avoid its style in our effort to rise above the university and achieve theoretical autonomy from it? And how, if we ever managed to achieve this, could we make ourselves be heard by the university? For if anyone were to speak about the university in a language that was not the university's, would he or she be taken into account? And if so, wouldn't this discourse be appropriated by the university immediately, becoming its *medium*, its latest guru?

Here we encounter a poetic difficulty in the language of criticism, which risks returning, in what it says, to what it wants to unsay. How, in what language, could we *not* speak contextually about context? How, in what language, could we *not speak* categorially about university categories? How, in what language, should we read the language of the university? And how, in what language, could we not speak in the language of the university and still be heard by it? How, for that matter, could we *not* speak, and still be heard? How can we make ourselves heard without letting ourselves be assimilated?

17.

In the modern university, critical distance, the language of that distance, was reserved for the Faculty of Philosophy, located at the limits of knowledge. In Kant's architectonic, this faculty withdraws from—in order to interrogate—knowledge, established powers (or governments), and dominant public languages. It asks about the “truth” of existing institutions. Enjoying an exceptional status, it withdraws from the system currently in force. The walls surrounding the university signal this withdrawal, this autonomy. And the fall of these walls indicates the end of the modern university.

18.

In the Kantian scheme, the task of the Faculty of Philosophy is not to exert a pedagogical influence on the people through curricular discipline. The Faculty of Philosophy is neither educational nor edifying. It cannot be so if its express task is to interrogate “the secret judgments of common reason,” a task that necessarily exceeds the juridical limits of the present. Rather than speaking from within the preexisting possibilities of language, philosophy seeks the conditions of those possibilities. Rather than making itself heard in language, philosophy tries to make the juridical limits of language audible, to make us sense the linguistic limits that circumscribe the truth and meaning of the professional faculties and of executive power. The linguistic atopia that is the Faculty of Philosophy makes it possible to

think power and possibility beyond the limits of executive power and beyond the limits of language, defined as a privileged place for the inscription of power, which “forces” us to speak in a certain way. The mission of the Faculty of Philosophy thus demands the impossible: thinking power without power, thinking law without the authority of the law, and speaking about language beyond the limits of language. This impossible task motivates the modern Faculty of Philosophy from within. Its reflective possibilities are therefore not determined by any linguistic canon. This faculty is sovereign. In keeping with the interests of its own sovereignty, it exceeds existing codes and the norms of public speech. Hence its break with common standards of communicability.

If we can call this (non-)place or outside of power “esoteric,” then the Faculty of Philosophy is esoteric to such an extent that, as Kant argues, its members do not publish even if their writings may circulate in the public sphere. They do not publish because their idiolect is unintelligible according to the standards of both current speech and royal language.²² Interrogatively seeking the present’s conditions of possibility, the modern Faculty of Philosophy, for Kant, also represents a possibility of historical intervention. Here is where its force resides. This force is neither executive nor constructive, but rather reflexive and critical.

Kant proposes an inversion of the faculties and their conflict: the inferior faculty or Faculty of Philosophy is placed at the center of the university, and it displaces the superior faculties of theology, law, and medicine. This inversion marks the passage from the medieval university to the modern university, a university whose theological center is secularized, recast as a site of inquiry into the conditions of knowledge and established power, autonomy and the history of emancipation: a faculty whose members seek the historico-transcendental conditions of truth.

Although the Faculty of Philosophy thus withdraws from the present by interrogating the limits of its meaning, it does not withdraw from history. Rather, it creates a place for a possible history, using its powers of reading and withdrawal.

19.

For us, the non-modern crisis of the modern university arrived with the dictatorship—that is, with the transition. Chilean sociologists including José Joaquín Brunner and Manuel Antonio Garretón and, later, members of the political class under the influence of the dominant language of the social sciences used the word *transition* to refer to the re-democratization of society after the end of Chile’s military dictatorship. Sociologically, they argued, “the beginning of the transition coincided with the last phase of the military regime.” The transition thus “begins with the authoritarian plebiscite in 1988. . . and comes to an end with the inauguration of the democratically elected government in December 1989.”²³ The university’s “transition” starts with the beginning of the end of the military regime and continues

until the full, or fuller, recovery of the university's autonomy—that is, the advent of its new heteronomy in the market, after the Ley de Universidades of 1981.

By this account, both the political and the university transitions begin with the end of the military regime and of the tenure of the delegate rectors, and they come to an end with the arrival of democracy. These narratives show that the term *transition* has a merely sociological meaning for us.

This understanding of transition overlaps with the general way in which twentieth-century studies of transition (as in the work of Claus Offe) approach the passage to democracy. “Transitology” proceeds by mapping an empirical field and establishing transitional typologies. The types of transition include war situations (for instance, the European transitions to democracy after the First World War; the post-fascist transitions to democracy in Germany, Italy, and Japan); transitions to democracy from military dictatorships without war or after intermittent wars (Greece, Spain, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay); and transitions in the nations of the former Eastern Bloc (beginning with the Soviet Union's transition, which transitology considers a transition to democracy in a context where there is no historical memory of democracy). Transitology maintains that the origin or ground of the passage to democracy is not democratic but determined by wars, lost wars, military coups, economic disasters, and all kinds of calamities. What sociology calls transition thus does not refer to the period of *translatio* from the modern state to the post-state market or globalized state, or globalization without a state. For us, in the Southern Cone, this period coincided with dictatorships and various other sorts of calamities.

For us—and we cannot say where this “us” begins and where it ends—transition therefore names not the passage from dictatorship to democracy, but the transformation that dictatorship itself brought about: the displacement of the state as the center and subject of national history, and its replacement by the ex-centric, post-state market. We can now see that the military coup was for us the *big bang* of globalization, a displacement that, in a broader sense, led to the loss of modern history's guiding categories: the state, the people, knowledge, history, autonomy, and so forth.

20.

Transition annihilates “class struggle,” a symbol of modern antagonistic politics centered on the state as a hegemonic apparatus. Transition dissolves ideology into marketing and the public into publicity. The transition from the modern state into the post-state or globalized market thus also coincides with the definitive collapse of the modern university, the university constituted by the division of labor between “ends-oriented” research and “fundamental” or philosophical research, between instrumental time and speculative time.

If the conflict or class struggle between “physical-technical labor” (*physis*) and “critical-intellectual labor” (*meta-physis*) constituted the antagonistic axis of modern history, modern politics, and the modern university, then the end of this history, politics, and university arrives when the conflict is abolished. The conflict expires during the transition. The dictatorship thus effected a transition from the “formal” to the “real subsumption of capital.”²⁴ It abolished the conflict of the faculties, the difference between physical and intellectual labor. It curbed or thwarted modern negativity, uncannily consummating the aspirations of the avant-garde in a plane of immanence within a horizon that cannot be overcome. The dictatorship functioned as a passage to a capitalist end of history, and of the social division of labor, where capital is what remains and negativity what vanishes.

21.

For us, the word *transition*, used sociologically, does not evoke epic changes or transformations. On the contrary, it leads to despair—the kind of despair that we might associate with a degenerative disease only diagnosed belatedly, after it is too late for a cure.

22.

The dictatorship was thus effectively the scene of transition, where the state dissolved itself and gave way to the globalized market. This implies corollaries that point in at least two directions simultaneously:

- a) The relation between knowledge and power that obtained under the state and nation changes. It becomes a matter of post-state, transnational, and market-driven Deleuzian becoming. This can be seen in the standardization of labor subjectivity and professional subjectivity brought about by the Reforma Educacional de 1997 (Educational Reform of 1997), but already begun in the 1979 with the Directivas Presidenciales sobre la Educación (Presidential Directives on Education). Until recently, labor subjectivity was standardized by means of wages and according to teleological principles linked to history, the economy, and national industry. These principles were disseminated by a public educational apparatus, but they were also contested in ideological struggles whose teleologies were themselves underwritten by the modern nation-state. As an educational subject, the state expressed the limits of pluralistic tolerance in its political constitution and in its civil and criminal laws. This subject, the state, thus acted by means of ideology and repression. Until recently, state industries depended for their progress and functioning on what Althusser called ideological state apparatuses: the state’s systems of edu-

cation and communication, its political parties, churches, and unions. These systems served to regulate workers' habits and to limit their demands for wages and their actions, so that they remained in keeping with constitutionally established norms of conduct, setting aside emotion or consigning it to the margins.

This standardization of labor subjectivity by the university and the state entered a crisis when it confronted another mode of standardization, one that did not center on the nation-state or the institutions to which this state gave rise in modernity. The requirements of business (from national industry to the transnational telematic corporation) finally exceeded the limits of the nation-state, demanding another scale for the standardization of actions, another realm of possibilities for shaping workers' behavior and subjectivity. This new, global business apparatus required a relaxation in the political economy of gestures, and gave pride of place to the gestural and emotional *lapsus* in order to capitalize on it, leading to a liberalization of behaviors. Behaviors that had long been prohibited became key sites for the capture of workers and the creation of profit or extraction of surplus value for capital. Hence the ethnic, sexual, disciplinary, emotional, and gestural democratization of labor and the disciplinary university apparatus. Hence the imperative to liberate—to transnationalize, transexualize, and trans-discipline—the laboring body. Work, the site of workers' exploitation and exhaustion, was moved into the opaque parts of the body that had previously been deemed unproductive.

In this sense, business becomes microphysically mimetic and panoptic in relation to the bodies from which it obtains surplus value. It permeates, "saves," and sequesters these bodies in their hidden folds. It weakens the super-ego and instead sets the secrets of the body to work.²⁵

- b) The current transition presupposes that another mutation has already taken place: a mutation in the mode of production of representation. This change not only affects our understanding of key concepts that we once deployed to understand knowledge, power, labor, and so forth; it affects our vocabulary and our understanding as a whole. Today, concepts as such are undergoing a change. Irregularly and unsystematically, to be sure, a change in the mode of production of meaning is taking place. Since language dictates that we must either be passively suffering from or the active agents of this change, we are suffering from a shift in our whole lexicon, a change in the meaning of all the words with which

we made sense of the modern world. Our words—and especially the categories still used in sociology to refer to and relate power and knowledge or know-how—have become dissociated from their consecrated meanings, and their objective efficacy has thus been undermined. This is especially true for anyone who still has an experiential memory of what these categories used to refer to.

Pre-dictatorship democracy was organized around the axis of the state as the subject of ideology, history, and developmentalist humanism. It was essentially ideological and worked through discursive confrontations, engagements with historical projects representing conflicting social interests. In this context, of which we retain only a memory in our informatic present, democracy referred to a territory made up of ideological blocs that struggled with one another for leadership of the state, defined as the subject of national history aligned with international economic and ideological interests. Before the dictatorship, ideologies, sensibilities, and metanarratives thus guided politics.

After the dictatorship, by contrast, democracy revolves around the decentered axis of the global market. In this context, the state's modernization means not so much, as is claimed, its infrastructural improvement or its de-bureaucratization, but rather its demise as a subject of ideology and site of decision-making, power, and leadership at the center of the nation's economy and history. This does not change the fact that, in order to bring about the state's extinction, the dictatorship needed the state. No longer the subject of politics, the state becomes the site of the market's discontinuous, ad hoc, and efficient regulation. It becomes heteronomous, subservient to the market.

23.

The word *transition* is thus used—and not innocently—to refer to a state of affairs that neither transitions nor is on the way to transition. This is why we are suspicious of the word. We sense that the state of affairs in which we live will undergo no transformation, or that the transition has already taken place. After this, there will be no further transition, for the current state of affairs threatens to become permanent. As it is currently used, the word *transition* posits movement and transformation in what is in fact a stationary and unchanging reality, and we are all victims of this positing. We thus live with the effects of an inaccurate name for the present. For the word *transition* also carries, in many cases, the modern sense or memory of change, revolution, and progress. These are no longer possible except as clichés that recur in advertising campaigns. We therefore refer to our present using a misnomer that covers over what it seeks to name.

24.

Today transition is what will not leave, a conservative stasis that persists and will persist without anything to take its place. The experience of the new has become an old memory that we only retain as information. The transition hosts all guests, however foreign they may be. No matter how diverse the guest list may be, what results is a circle that repeats itself ad infinitum, that allows for no experience of the new. In this transition, nothing new takes place in the modern, transformative sense. Nothing happens that is unexpected, surprising, or unforeseen. The multi-form spectacle, for all its proliferating variety, produces only boredom, weariness, the sense that everything repeats itself in a rote fashion. All the diverse events that take place during this transition, various though they are, make no difference to transition itself, which remains identical in its multiplicity. Modernity was excitement, expectation, the enthusiastic response to the inassimilable revolution. Transition is lasting boredom, enclosed within a horizon of limitless plausibility.

25.

Since the transition, the world has been one, despite the variety of forces that give it shape. Nothing happens outside the global economy or the transcultural order to which it gives rise. Diverse and dispersed, irregular and unstable, the world has nevertheless been one, from the standpoint of the support that gives it structure. Its unity is complex, and the conflicts that take place in it are likewise complex to the point of undecidability. It is in this context, in which all worlds are one,²⁶ that the local is forged, together with the complex relations between the local and the global. The sovereignty of nations and subjects is circumscribed by the neo-cosmopolitanism of the transnational economy. And the same is true of identities and cultural, ethnic, and sexual differences. The point of departure for all difference is the complex identity of multinational capitalism, the explosive liberalization and reterritorialization of the traditions and bodies that it impersonates.

26.

The world is already here. And it contains the possible, the compossible, and the “impossible.”²⁷ No value or quality transcends the economic game. Every substance is a special effect in the market economy. There is no “beyond” capitalism. Late capitalism has no exteriority. “The previous model of conflict involving antagonistic blocs has come to an end.”²⁸

If the world is already here, and any exchange of objects or subjectivities—any conversation, or this very text—has always already fallen into the market and been made to serve some kind of capitalization or surplus value extraction, then this means that anything that is debatable or arguable is only debatable or arguable in the immanence of the market. All demands for political justice, economic justice,

and social repair are likewise not demands for a “beyond,” but demands immanent to the market and inseparable from the heteronomy that it enforces in the process of its consolidation. In this sense, it is worth underscoring the irrelevance of ideologies and schemes of value in the current as opposed to the modern context. For in the latter, the “use values” of ideologies still antagonized their “exchange values.”

27.

Late capitalism survives under various kinds of political regimes, and not only democratic ones. Late capitalism claims, makes use of, and produces any and every ideology or quality. It is itself neither an ideology nor a pastiche of ideologies, but rather the truth of every ideology. In its mass mediated applications, ideology becomes a means for the unfolding of global capitalism and the rhizomatic processes of financial flows. Capitalism is the fragmentary, unessential facticity that by turns produces and causes a crisis in the essential; it is a facticity that informs aesthetics, sexualities, and epistemes as it takes various forms.

28.

Nothing is essential to capitalism today. It has no canon. It lacks a specific regime of plausibility (limits). And if a world or cosmos is always made up of a “compossible” range of qualities—if it is constituted by a “compossibility” that excludes the existential elements of other worlds or series that threaten to destroy this one—then capitalism in the present does not make up a world. It enforces no restraint (*katek-hon*), but rather confuses and collapses various kinds or series of compossibility, in an explosion of “transcompossibility” like a whirlwind after the destruction of all possible worlds.

29.

“The best of all possible worlds” was not “the best” because it was most moral or because it sheltered its inhabitants most hospitably. It was “the best” because it was “the most varied,” because its various series were heterogeneous. And if one world triumphed over all others with its *conatus*, with its qualitative “weight,” today’s capitalism is a non-world, an “impossible” place where “possible series” exist in the absence of a world. It is in this sense that we must understand both democratic pluralism and actually existing late capitalist liberalism, which has nothing to do with democracy or ideological liberalism or liberal politics.

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Acknowledgments

Originally published in Spanish in Willy Thayer, *El fragmento repetido: Escritos en estado de excepción* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Metales Pesados, 2006).

Notes

1. For us, this “now” is determined by the Ley de Universidades (Law of Universities) of 1981. *Translators’ Note*: The Ley General de Universidades, promulgated by Chile’s military government in 1981, allowed for the privatization of Chilean higher education. The law also divided the national university system into regional units that became independent entities.
2. All of the objects that surround us, objects produced and manipulated by the professions, behave in ways determined by the university. At least this is what we demand of them: specificity, efficiency, functionality, portability, availability, and serial reproducibility. Media advertisements then promote these objects, heightening the functionality and normality assigned to them by the historical *episteme* that produces them. This whole apparatus is constructed, overseen, and regulated by the professional faculties.
3. Even the faults, slips, professional shortcomings, and resistances of the advertiser or director, even the cuts in service or power outages in the wired or wireless circuits of habit, and even naive or primary reactions are inscribed in and typified by the tele-university.
4. Psychiatrists, doctors, engineers, veterinarians, lawyers, and psychologists are all part of the torturing machine.
5. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*.
6. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*.
7. Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*.
8. Derrida, *Filosofía como institución*.
9. Schleiermacher, *Occasional Thoughts*; Fichte, “Deduced Scheme”; Humboldt, “Organisation der Höheren Wissenschaftlichen Anstalten”; Descartes, *Œuvres complètes*; Tuilier, *L’Université de Paris*; Comte, *Oeuvres d’Auguste Comte*.
10. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*.
11. Humboldt, “Organisation der Höheren Wissenschaftlichen Anstalten.”
12. Durkheim, *Evolution of Educational Thought*.
13. “No part of the aim of normal science is to call forth new sorts of phenomena. . . . Nor do scientists normally aim to invent new theories, and they are often intolerant of those invented by others. Instead, normal-scientific research is directed to the articulation of those phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies. . . . [D]uring the period when the paradigm is successful, the profession will have solved problems that its members could scarcely have imagined and would never have undertaken without commitment to the paradigm. . . . [The paradigm] assures [scientists] that the facts they seek are important. From Tycho Brahe to E. O. Lawrence, some scientists have acquired great reputations not from any novelty of their discoveries, but from the precision, reliability, and scope of the methods they developed for the redetermination of a previously known sort of fact.” Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 24–26.

14. Husserl, *Crisis of the European Sciences*.
15. Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*.
16. Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*.
17. The value, for instance, of Andrés Bello, Gabriela Mistral, Santo Tomás, Blas Cañas, Bernardo O'Higgins, San Estanislao de Koska, Pedro de Valdivia, Miguel de Cervantes, of the República, of Nacional, of Las Américas. *Translators' note*: These names refer to Chilean universities as well as to famous Chilean historical figures and institutions.
18. What does the Consejo Nacional de Educación (National Education Council), that academic version of the Servicio Nacional del Consumidor (National Consumer Service), assess? Is its task to assess academic quality or excellence in the highly commercial context of Chilean higher education created by the 1981 Ley General de Universidades? What does "academic quality" mean in this context? What value is promoted today in posters, deans' addresses, or ministerial discourses on education, under the rubric of "academic excellence"? Is it possible for academic quality to constitute a value that transcends the facticity of academic marketing? Rather, in the media promotion of "quality," we see the metamorphosis of transcendent use value into flattened exchange value. What value motivates the academic "shopping" in which thousands of applicants engage every year? Who is the "subject" of this shopping, and what is its object? What "values" guide students in their choice of majors, or the promotion of courses of study in universities? What signifier has embellished the university year after year since 1981?
19. Rojas Contreras, "Fin del texto."
20. Fichte, "Deduced Scheme"; Schleiermacher, *Occasional Thoughts*.
21. "[One] could believe, at that time [when Kant wrote] that. . . a debate on the topics of teaching, knowledge, and philosophy could at least be posed in terms of responsibility. The instances invoked—the State, the sovereign, the people, knowledge, action, truth, the university—held a place in discourse that was guaranteed, decideable, and, in every sense of this word, 'representable'; and a common code could guarantee, at least on faith, a minimum of translatability for any possible discourse in such a context. Could we say as much today? Could we agree to debate together about the responsibility proper to the university? . . . [I]f a code guaranteed a problematic, whatever the discord of the positions taken or the contradictions of the forces present, then we would feel better in the university. But we feel bad, who would dare say otherwise? And those who feel good are perhaps hiding something, from others or from themselves." "The Western university is a very recent *construction* or artifact, and we already sense that it is *finished*." Derrida, "Mochlos," 87, 90.
22. Referring to the Prussian king Frederick William's censorious response to *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*, Kant writes: "I have done no harm to the public *religion of the land*. This is already clear from the fact that the book in question is not at all suitable to the public: to them it is an unintelligible, closed book, only a debate among scholars of the faculty of which the people take no notice." Kant, *Conflict*, 15.
23. Garretón, *Hacia una nueva era*.
24. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1. See especially the appendix "Results of the Immediate Process of Production," the unpublished seventh part of *Capital's* first volume.
25. If in modernity freedom was defined as the absence of "external impediments" (as in Hobbes), globalized capitalism enforces freedom, eliminating inner resistances as it valorizes the externalization of the interior. Psychology in its various modes works for busi-

ness, liberating the productive force or power of the anomalous and the repressed. Hence capitalists' interest in philosophies, occultisms, and Orientalisms that, claiming secret knowledge, seem compatible with the micro-technologies that extract relative surplus value. Business's interest in Orientalisms speaks to the receding of macrophysical models of profit-making (the state, the factory, bureaucracy, the school, and so on) and attests to the emergence of models of production in which work is immediately tied to capital, without the disciplinary mediation of state bureaucracies.

26. Cuéllar, "Caso México."
27. The term is from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. For Leibniz, a world is always a "compossible" series of qualitative differences. The *impossible* refers to the kind of difference that cannot enter this series or world without destroying it, leading to another series of compossibles, another possible world in competition and existential contact with the first. Today capitalism, viewed through this lens, is characterized by an explosion of the worlds of compossibility, which are now mixed together in a transcompossibility, in which possibles and impossibles coexist. In this sense, capitalism is not a series, a formula, or a likeness; it has become an unlikeness, outside every series, that cannot be accounted for in any discourse.
28. Cuéllar, "Caso México."

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