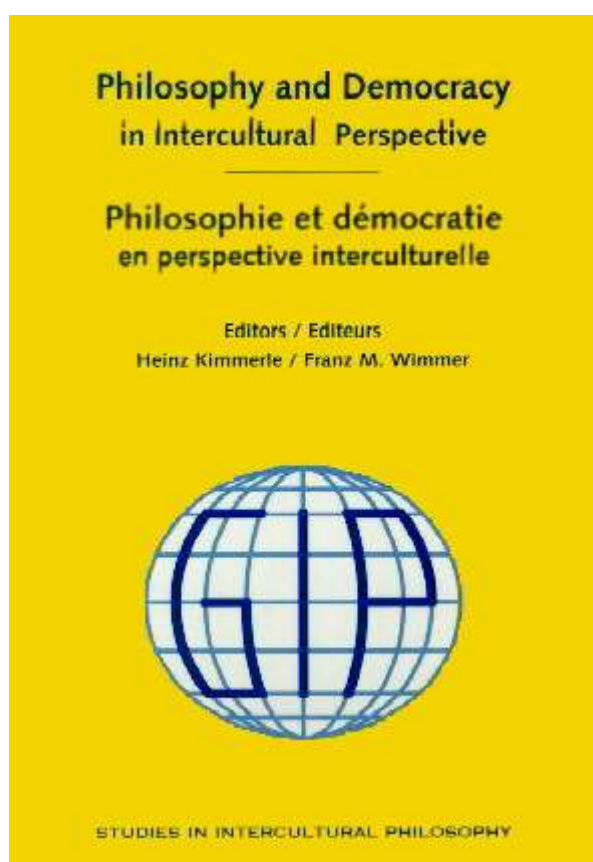


FASCISM AS THE LOOMING SHADOW OF DEMOCRACY *A critique of the xenophobic reason*

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After the tumbling of the Berlin Wall, with which, if we are to believe Francis Fukuyama, the end of ideologies has become definite and the universal validity of liberal democracy has been historically proved¹, the former West suddenly finds itself confronted with vehement outbursts of extreme-Right violence on home ground. German politicians who campaigned for the unification of both Germanies react shocked. Notwithstanding their political wisdom and vision they have not been aware of the fact that in the former, only ideologically anti-fascist, but in reality

totalitarian East-Germany after the unification nazi-sympathies would flare up in all their virulence: after a short period of euphoria the arsonary packs lounged their assaults on houses of Turkish families, cheered by the locals. Meanwhile in former West-Germany the neofascist Schönhuber surpassed the election threshold, in Austria Haider presented himself as the saviour of a frustrated middle-class and somewhat further across the border Alessandra Mussolini elevates a morally chastened version of her grandfather's literary legacy to an election programme. In Croatia the phoenix of the Ustase swarms up from the smoking rubble, while on the other side of the firing-line the Serbs build concentration camps. And recently young criminals in black blouses and trousers, proudly wearing swastica on their sleeves, marched through the streets of Moscow to assist the conservative forces that barricaded the building of the Russian Parliament.

The concern for extreme-Right and neo-fascist activities has been growing exponentially over the last 15 years. Extreme-Right, neo-fascist youth groups, parties and leaders meet each other regularly at international gatherings where, their gaze directed towards a unified Europe, even those antidemocrats try to reach consensus. Gradually an expanding network of contacts came into existence at different levels. A network that anchors itself more and more firmly in democratic structures.

Academics have not stayed behind. The Frenchman Faurisson has tried time and again to "prove" that the Holocaust was a cunning Allied lie. His views have met with the approval of many, including the Brit Irving, who recently has been digging through the released nazi handwritings in Moscow archives to find support for this "truth". Decent academics are starting to feel ill at ease, despite the fact that they know this is all devilish nonsense. Democracy shudders as if it attacked by a horrifying monster that dooms up at the horizon. But in reality this monster is produced by the dream of reason, as Goya's visionary etching puts it. Images from a recent past loom before our postmodern mind's eye - that is, on the TV screen. In violence directed against "foreigners", asylum seekers and Jews, national-chauvinism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and racism flare up. It seems evident that the intriguing of demagogues and the violent outbursts of the mobs should be seen in connection with each other, interpreted from historically proved theoretical models, and labelled as a revival of fascism. Usually, fascism is understood to be an ideological system fundamentally foreign to our democratic disposition. Or, to make a caricature: depending upon the theoretical framework as a "derailed", "alienated" or "perverse" mentality of power freaks or political opportunists.

In addition to this traditional perspective I would like to illuminate a number of less self-evident factors that might determine this historically recent phenomenon within western culture in a less evident way. Structural elements which can clarify the fascination for violence and totalitarianism within the democratic society. Of course my aim is not political, but primarily philosophical. My concern is not to propose solutions or possible strategies to counter this violence, because it goes without saying that at every level, the appropriate resources for that purpose should be activated. Fascist violence must be checked by the legitimate counter-violence of

police-forces, penal and political efforts must be made to curb the violence by means of a sharper investigation policy, heavier sanctions and stricter legislation. Perhaps we should even wager the possibility to suspend the civil rights of individuals that explicitly adhere to a fascist ideology. The intellectual violence also demands an adequate answer, analogously to that of Jean-Francois Lyotards critique to Faurrison in his book *Le Différend*.² And, in the long run, social-economic compensation programmes, cultural-pedagogical education and information projects might offer solutions in the preventive sense.

But, as I said, I'm not a political activist. My perspective is primarily a cultural-philosophical and epistemological one. I am not so much concerned with discovering the correlation between all the above mentioned phenomena, as with choosing a viewpoint from which extreme-Right violence and fascist attitudes can be analysed in such a manner that the relation between totalitarian violence and democratic rationality, which usually remain invisible, come to the fore. My guideline will be the writings of the French thinker Georges Bataille, a radical critic of western rationalism, who in 1933 wrote the text *La structure psychologique du fascisme*.³ In this text, he answers the thorny question, "Did the masses want fascism?", with a resolute "Yes!". Through his research, that stretches over a period of 40 years and contains a diversity of analyses, varying from art to economics, from eroticism to antropology, a fascinating insight is evoked: every coherent community presupposes an act of violence, a sacrifice, that needs to be reproduced time and again.

This peculiar line of thought, in which for the modern rational autonomous individual it looks like the the unthinkable is thought, is also one of sources of inspiration in the works of Jacques Derrida.⁴ From an unexpected angle he has formulated new insights in some 'fundamental' characteristics of the democratic attitude. That is why after the presentation of Bataille's views I will direct your attention to this Derridean perspective in order to specify the concept of violence and to indicate another relation between rationality and violence than that between democracy and fascism.

1. Modern rationality: controlling violence

But first Batailles analysis of prewar fascism and national-socialism. Although he is led by Marxist ideas and thus ignores neither social-economic nor political power aspects, he believes that those factors alone cannot adequately explain the masses' fascination for Hitler or Mussolini. According to him, all kinds of irrational factors, deeply rooted in collective consciousness, play a decisive role. These urges can no longer be expressed collectively by modern individuals because they would imply a denial of their rational identity. Since our western culture has renounced every transcendent reality and the authority that earthly rulers derived from this sovereign power, modern individuals have taken fate in their own hands. This resulted in a democratic political system based on representation and on the principle of one (wo)man one vote. In this political system critical rationality, that is to say: a scientific attitude gradually became the touchstone and highest authority of reality. Led by natural and human sciences modern man has focused on the severe regulation

of respectively his external and internal nature. Or in a Kantian terminology: man as an autonomous subject strives to be liberated from violent drives or heteronomous determinations.

Since the beginning of modern times, around 1800, after the French Revolution, so-called rational political action of an autonomous subject appears on the historical scene. The king is beheaded, the aristocracy displaced. The bourgeoisie became the fundament for collective action that revolves around a public debate where representatives, chosen by them, determine the direction in which the historical subject - the bourgeoisie, later the labourclass - can achieve freedom through diligent labour. The ideas, underlying this urge for freedom are rooted in the social-political utopia of Kant and Marx, and in the political philosophy of Hegel. The contemporary expressions of these utopia are the liberalist constitutional, the welfare and the socialist state. The degree to which freedom, equality and brotherhood are realized has always been the parameter to determine the democratic content of the nation-states that emerge in the 19th century.

With respect to social-economic policy, optimal utility and efficiency is aspired. Even the production is rationalized and "waste" as much as possible avoided or reinvested. The luxurious dissipation of the former aristocracy has come to an end. Once limits of economic rationality are transgressed, this waste in a way is experienced as a form of violence, as a heteronomous force. Thus utilitarianism and productive rationality, so characteristic for the industrialising western nation-state of the 19th century does not only apply to goods, but also are applicable to individual behaviour: from the beginning of the 19e century offenders of the law are no longer tortured or beheaded, but locked away in prisons and asylums in order to be resocialized and subjected to therapies so that they may function again after serving their sentences. As resources of labour power they must not be wasted. Violence and dissipation or wast are slowly reduced at all levels. The ideological discours of bourgeois society for a long time understood this reduction of violence as the result of a humanisation of society. Where violence persist, its ecstatic excesses are checked by marginalisation or sanctions.⁵ The laws as the institutional outcome of a democratic debate are eventually enforced. I will return to this formula, so self-evident and natural that normally we do not recognize the paradox that underlies it.

2. Ecstatic violence as a collective experience

Thus, on the surface modern individuals derive their identities and those of their communities, finally the modern state, from this productive rationality. Bataille criticizes this all-encompassing rationality. He points out that pre-modern communities derived their identity from a force transcending the social structure. A sacred or sovereign force, beyond reach of human influence and intrinsically uncontrollable, and as such taboo. Man did not possess absolute control over this force and was at times even possessed by it. That is why the incidental contacts with the sacrosanct or its earthly representatives demanded strict rituals and regulations. Only sacrifices, that is, the violent destruction of human beings, animals or useful objects, constituted momentarily an admission to the sacred. These rituals, which

evoked a chain of regulated violence, enabled people to come into contact with their ancestors, totemic animals or gods. The violence that was involved in the sacrifices spread to those present. They were inflamed by the violence of the excesses, of the dissipation and destruction, that in modern eyes meant nothing but the waste of goods and labour power. Important from a modern point of view is the fact that in these rituals the laws that intended to ban violence from daily life - moral laws such as: "thou shalt not kill" and "thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife": that is the prohibition of killing and of free sexuality - these laws and prohibitions were transgressed. Paradoxically an intense communal experience, embodied in ancestry, totem or gods was the aim. Ecstasy, orgies, alcohol, even drugs, in any case waste and violence constituted the scenery for these necessary, periodically recurring rituals. Just like the saturnalia in the Roman Empire and the carnival in the Catholic world, the established order was turned upside down for a short period of time. For Bataille this leads to the conclusion that the law is established by its periodical transgressions. Collective identity is experienced the moment laws are transgressed and the limits of individual existence dissolve. In this horrifying violent experience the community is reborn.

As such transgressive violence has played an eminent role in the history of western culture. The existence of carnival already indicates that in our modern, bourgeois society that can no longer recognize dissipation, regulated excess still has an outlet and is tolerated. As improbable as it may seem, Christian culture is even rooted in a violent sacrifice: the crucifixion of Christ. Every Sunday this sacrifice is symbolically reproduced in the Eucharist ("this is my body, this is my blood"). The rightful heirs to this sacrifice are found in the heretics that are publicly burned and in the public executions of criminals before 1800. In those rituals the wounded body of society, and by implication that of the sovereign, is healed by the destruction of the transgressor. The outlaw is experienced as the Other or the Stranger, as the Xenos within the community. The re-established purity of the social body incarnated in the King, that was stained by the negating act of the heretic or the criminal, is experienced in the punishing violence. The sacrifices purges. It is a catharsis. But politically this purifying violence has an ambivalent quality: sometimes, rather than resulting in support for the authorities, it results in revolt. Every festivity contains the seeds of a revolt. Therefore Bataille concludes that this ecstasy encompasses a subversiveness that can, in spite of the manifestation of power, turn against the sovereign.

The question that is immediately raised is whether modern humanist society, after the death of God and the expulsion of the absolute power, after the abolition of public executions, can still be analysed from this perspective of transgression. It is for certain that a fragmented field of transgressions has survived. But they are made productive. All kinds of regulated transgressions, performed in casinos, in drugs dealing coffeshops, footballstadiums and brothels emerge as post-ritualistic practices in which people are enabled to experience the limits of their rationalized daily life. According to Bataille, these practices offer individuals an opportunity to a communication that exceeds the limits of an autonomous subject. The fascination to

let oneself go and to experience a heteronomous force has obviously survived in the margins of modern society. The present day policy to locate the consumption of drugs, gambling, football riots and prostitution in well delineated zones - coffeshop, casino, stadium and the so called: streetwalkers district - seems to be a compromise towards this existential need for transgressive excesses. But in a world without gods, reigned by an efficient production, distribution and consumption of goods it seems as if these excesses no longer strengthen the collective bond between individuals, but because of the immorality that still colours these experiences finally atomizes them more than before. The legal-fiscal control of these "excesses" only seems to intensify the rational production of goods. And perhaps this circulation of goods and the identification of the participants with these goods is the only binding force within our post-capitalist society.

3. The expulsion of the stranger/xenos

What Bataille is describing is a peculiar entanglement of the fear for a desintegrating force that threaten the identity of a community and at the same time a fascination with it. The popular expression of this affect is horror. This fascination with purifying violence by the masses is in a sense exploited by fascism and national-socialism. When Bataille wonders, around 1933, why the masses fall for the leaders and crypto-"rituals" of Italian fascism and German national-socialism, he reshapes the regular social-economic and political explanations from his so-called "mythological-anthropological" or "heterological" perspective.⁶ According to him, Hitler and Mussolini embody the pre-modern sacrosanct, from which they derive their charisma. Feared and adored they are positioned above the law, which they, like their pre-modern predecessors, ultimately embody entirely. They can even by their own decision enforce it. Because of their questionable courtship with democratic politics and their connection to the military apparatus, Bataille believes that both autocrats are a "ghostly return of imperial sovereignty". Hitler and Mussolini appeal to a pre-modern subversive sensitivity and a religious susceptibility. In addition, the charisma of the Führer and the Duce is magnified by the ritual character of party meetings, that achieved a hypnotic effect by making cunning use of the mass media. In this sense the modern society with its humanist legitimation - we must realize that the racism the nazi's adhered to is bread by 19th century antropological and filological theories - is still determined by this ambivalent affect of fascination and repulsion.

Both nations, Italy and Germany, were desintegrating and only by a purifying violent sacrifice this desintegrating could be stopped. As the heretics and criminals, what is punished and ostracized is the Stranger, the Xenos. From the Bataillean perspective, the expulsion of gypsies, communists, homosexuals and Jews can be understood as the necessary sacrifice for the establishment of a new, national-socialist or fascist identity and a new collective experience in distraught Germany and Italy of after World War I.

However, this appeal to racial purity appears to be a function of the democratic aspirations to freedom, the pivotal idea of modern life. This aspiration, on which

political parties survive, concerns the establishment of a non-violent situation free of heteronomous influences in which everyone who meets the requirements of rationality can enjoy their freedom. The purified situation is represented by the various utopias which offer a humanist variation of the Christian idea of deliverance. In this sense socialist or liberalist utopia are but theoretical extrapolations of ecstatic experiences. Since there is no longer a transcendent power, only in the violent transgressions purity can be experienced, as a liberating ecstasy. Yet this freedom can be realized only through the disciplined struggle against and the emancipation from the violent.⁷ The "purity", Bataille seems to implicate, only exists in a total, all-encompassing experience that coincides with the short-lasting destruction of the order, that is in the revolt. When this revolt becomes a revolution, terror lies in wait to secure the purity of the community from within. Only terror seems to be the alternative in a world without transcendence. But this unchained violence must finally become catastrophic, because it will intensify itself by lack of aim and restraints. Purity doesn't exist either before or after the violent transgression. Therefore purity as an idea is theatrical and as an experience is cruel and even deadly. Something which fascism knows unconsciously, and on which it depends, but which finally also implicates her decline and ruin.

4. The identity-complex of western culture

With his analysis of rising fascism, Bataille indirectly criticizes one of the main characteristics of western culture: its aspirations for purity and the tendency to reduce the Xenos to the Same, to identity. The transgressive violence within society seems to be merely the spectacular counterpart of the hidden and legitimated violence towards outsiders that emerges from a compulsive need for identity. This compulsion can be translated historically as colonialism and imperialism and reveals itself socially as fundamental xenophobia. At an ideological level, xenophobia is inherent in both fascism and democracy, although in the latter case the totalitarian drives are less explicit.

This fundamental characteristic of western culture has a long tradition, which most strongly reveals itself in philosophical and scientific thinking, that is in its critical rationality. This tradition manifested itself in metaphysical ideas from Plato to Hegel. In Hegel's idealistic all-encompassing theory, in which the Enlightenment excels, it achieves its ultimate expression. In Hegel's dialectically structured system, every negation or denial, in which Bataille's notion of transgression is rooted - but which is also criticized by him⁸ -, is seen as a moment of the system itself, that is, as an indirect self-affirmation. Every criticism is ultimately resolved in an all-encompassing order, resulting finally in what Hegel terms the absolute Spirit. It is not my intention to explain that obscure concept here. Suffice it to say that Hegel considers History to be the necessary realization of the World Spirit in time. This realization is progressive, cumulative and emancipatory. So Hegel contends that the civil society which starts to take shape at the end of the 18th century, is the necessary result of a historical process of emancipation. The last phase in this development takes place in his time, and consists of the establishment of the state, with a

political structure of constitutional monarchy based on the example of England's constitutional monarchy.

This social-political philosophy leans on a logical analysis of self-consciousness.⁹ Thinking, according to Hegel, has an universal structure that is valid for everyone and everything, including the reality outside of self-consciousness. Although contradiction motorizes the Spirit and its historical expressions, finally it aspires to solve every contradiction. With Marx, this contradiction acquires a materialist connotation in the form of class-struggle. This contradiction or paradox, too, seen in terms of material conflicts of interests, will be resolved in the socialist, "harmonious and pure" society. Relevant for this exposition is the perceived necessity of all conflicts, all paradoxes being resolved. The Hegelian human being finally can live neither with conflict, nor with the perceived contradiction.

Given this identity-logic complex within western culture one can say that the heir of this tradition, modern man, is by definition xenophobic: while his ancestors before him colonized Afrika, Asia and America, he tries to colonize the inner worlds of the Xenos completely in order to establish a well-limited normality.¹⁰ The Alien or Xenos in man is reduced to the Identical. Seen from a point of view of the autonomous subject everything that transgresses the laws of identity was experienced as threatening, as violence that by force or pedagogical coercion had to be incorporated into the system. It had to be reformed, encapsulated, disciplined and normalized. In modern times, as Michel Foucault extensively has analysed, this did no longer take place by exclusion, as in the past, but by coercing the Xenos to speak, by legal confessions. Precisely in this form of a disciplining discourse human sciences are, to speak with Roland Barthes, fascist: not because it prevents people from speaking, but because it forces people to speak in identifying terms.¹¹

From this perspective Hegel's philosophy is the ultimate expression of the proto-bourgeois society that gradually came into existence the century before he articulated his state-philosophy. In his own time in which the masses in modern sense started to articulate themselves this identity-logic still had a strong impact on the collective consciousness.

For 19th century man the Xenos is only tolerable as an unthreatening, exotic curiosity or as a cheap tool. As soon as the latter influences the existence of the former directly, he is isolated and forced to integrate. Does this fail, then expulsion ensues by "enforcing the laws". This violence of the law becomes explicit the moment a democracy has become implausible and starts to disintegrate.

5. Democracy: paradox and nihilism

Thus, Bataille's point is that in a modern democracy, the suppressed heterogeneous, through the total experience which it offers and the purity which it aspires, acquires a stifling grip on daily life when democracy finds itself in a crisis. This crisis reveals itself once the transcendence is lost, that is when modern politics comes in conflict with its utopian pretence.¹² Democracy nowadays, in the form of a declining welfare state, seems to be completely caught up in juridical, economic, political and ecological paradoxes evoked by its own logic.¹³ After the end of the ideologies or as

Lyotard puts it: the end of the Great Narratives the restrained violence of its critical rationality creates inevitably paradox after paradox. The result is crisis, a critical situation, that is not solved but intensified by critical rationality. The democratic community begins to dissolve: the endless debate paralyses collective actions. Although aspired equality provides cohesion, critical rationality implicates at the same time fragmentation. Democracy formally aspires to recognize the unicity of groups and individuals with their varying norms. But the more effective democracy works, that is the more groups see their interests served and are enabled to realize their norms and values as a specific lifestyle, the more identification with the formal totality becomes problematic. The democratic community desintegrates by virtue of the endless critique from within or the paradoxical outcome of the debate. In this time of the death of God and the end of ideologies it seems that no all-encompassing truth can guide this splitting proces of critical rationality.

The peculiar entanglement of this splitting violence and rationality finds its *raison d'être* perhaps in a second characteristic of modern world, that was merciless analysed by Nietzsche: nihilism sprouting from a severe will to truth. In the end there is a complete devaluation of our culture, rendering it meaningless and without direction, that is: senseless. Although critical rationality motivates the infinity of the democratic debate, the will to truth implicates in a negative sense that no value or meaning can count on an universal acceptance. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why nowadays the debate gradually dissolves into a aimless casuistry. In our hectic times this political casuistry seems to be held together mainly by the iron and ironical logic of the global circulation of goods.

Until recently, only an all-encompassing sense of purpose of a political nature could cover up nihilism. But conflicts of interest, at a political level, have become intolerable because of the exhaustion of the utopian potential, as Habermas calls it¹⁴, and cannot even be understood any longer as a promise of reconciliation. When paradoxes are perceived as intolerable the search for clarity and security becomes more insistent. Due to the disappearance of ideologies, which has shut the door to the future, the only possibility seems to look for answers in the past. By definition such a search is nostalgic and conservative. Here, the opportunistic politics of neo-fascism join with the fate of young people who have no future and can only break out of their apathy by consuming their collective identity in an absolute present, in the transgression of norms guaranteed by laws and in the expulsion of traditionally vulnerable groups who are also treated as scum by democracy. They are not after a revolution. They just want the thrilling experience of the violence in order to communicate with each other. In the sacrificial violence as the outcome of the crisis within rationality they perhaps experience stronger bonds than society gives them.

6. Derrida: The force of law

But is this the only possibility to outlive the intrinsic relation between rationality and violence? Is this destructive reaction the only and necessary outcome or can we, once we are conscious of the fact violence is a necessary trait of critical rationality and

therefor of democracy, articulate this hidden violence in a different way? If we presuppose that fascism in western democratic culture is potentially a part of each one of us¹⁵, under what circumstances this fascist trait is triggered in us? It has perhaps something to do with the violent experience of the paradox or to put it in a different way: with the threatening awareness of an aporetic existence, with a irreconcilable differend or an unerasable difference. Although stated in different terminology this was the outcome of a research executed shortly after the war by Theodor Adorno, one of the most notorious critics of Hegels identity-logic. From a philosophical point of view orientated towards the empirical sciences, he analyzed the structure of the fascist personality. The role of intolerable nihilism and the paradoxes emerging from it are translated into social-psychological terms. Adorno concluded, among other things, that the fascistoid personality cannot endure contradiction. The resulting impotence drove him to dissolve the paradox, violently if need be. This inability to endure the tension of an existential aporia would make him more receptive to fascism. By means of a idea of a harmonious purity he could give meaning, a purpose and a direction, that is: sense to his disordered life. It is illustrative for the entanglement of democracy and fascism that, when Adorno after emigrating with his Institut für Sozialforschung to America to extend his research, he came to the conclusion that most Americans fitted the profile of this fascist personality. As a result he changed the title of his book and instead of referring to the fascist personality, he called it *Studies in the Authoritarian Personality* (1950).

Adorno's research raises the following questions. As the violence of rationality, this aporia, triggers the actual violence than the question raised is: can we put this fundamental aporia, in which we seem to be stuck because of a lack of transcendency, to work in a positive sense? Can postmodern man, lacking transcendency, live a contradictory existence? Can he, to put it more nietzschean than hegelian, endure the violence of rationality? Can he accept the loss of the dialectical quality of life and live its tragic quality? Let me conclude this lecture by indicating a direction in which possible, but always provisional 'answers' might be found.

To Lyotard the crisis in which we live is the postmodern condition humaine. He shares this proposition with a lot of other so-called thinkers of difference, who were inspired by the works of Bataille. This difference articulates itself as a violent cleavage in rationality itself, as a differing force that prevents rationality to be all-encompassing and to breach the abyss between thought and being.¹⁶ Jacques Derrida is one of the most radical thinkers who extended this line of thought. He determined this principal differentiating and deferring force als 'différance'.¹⁷ Recently he articulated this set of epistemological and methodological remarks and insights in an ethico-political field. In his text on the force of the law¹⁸ he qualifies this *différance* as follows: "Il s'agit toujours pour moi de la force différentielle, de la différence comme différence de force, de la force comme différence ou force de différence (la différence est une force différée-différente)..."(928). By locating violence in this way it has lost its totalitarian impact. Instead of identifying and unifying - and as a result: instead of excluding and destroying - the conception of violence as Derrida brings to the fore is differentiating and withdrawing from an all-encompassing conclusion.

By deconstructing Hegel, adapting Nietzsche and actualizing Bataille Derrida analyses democracy from a radical, aporetic point of view. The methodological aspect of the aporia of democracy comes to the fore once we try to answer the question how to legitimate the democratic process democratically? Derrida tackles this problem by determining the conditions of the possibility of the Law in a non-kantian, but bataillean way. In the expression 'enforcer la loi' or the English expression 'the enforceability of the law or of the contract' the constitutive aporia Bataille tracked down in western thought, is once more given. This violence from which the law derives its power to intervene, Derrida states, "n'est pas une possibilité extérieure ou secondaire qui viendrait s'ajouter ou non, supplémentairement, au droit."¹⁹ It is an essential characteristic. To Derrida in a final analyses it is impossible to make a difference between legitimate violence or power and an 'originate' act of violence.

However, the problems involved in tracing the possibility of justice - and the same goes for the possibility of democracy - that is: executing a quasi-transcendental analytique are, to speak with Derrida, "infinis si on peut dire en eux-même, parce qu'ils exigent l'expérience de l'aporie qui n'est pas sans rapport avec ce que j'appelais tout à l'heure le mystique"²⁰. Suddenly transcendency, even the name of God is introduced in the Derridean vocabulary, when he tries to evoke the originating force that in a non-discursive way legitimates the law and democracy. He starts speaking in terms of the negative theology, even makes a comparison with this mystical tradition when he speaks about his own project.

This mystical foundation of the law and of democracy vaguely has connotations with the Bataillean sacred, by which modern individuals are fascinated and that fills them with disgust. But of course for Derrida 'le mystique' concerns the limits of language, the impossibility to discursively express the last origin. As I already mentioned, it therefore is not surprising that he makes a comparison with the negative theology, when speaking about the quasi-transcendental foundation of democracy. Speaking about God again has as its implication the selfsplitting effects I mentioned before. It means that "this voice multiplies itself, dividing within itself: it says one thing and its contrary"²¹. It is "the end of monologism". To Derrida one of the essential traits of all negative theology is "passing to the limit, then crossing a frontier, including that of a community..."²². Transgression, transcendency and speaking about God, i.e. of an all-encompassing totality in this mystical sense is culminating in the experience of an aporia. This impossible discours is fed by the paradoxical knowledge that the conditions of possibility or the transcendentale of this discours never can enter into it, but nevertheless is always present as an experience that goes without saying: "What if the exoteric aporia therefore remained in a certain way irreducible, calling for an endurance, or shall we rather say an expérience other than consisting in opposing, from both sides of an indivisible line, an other concept, a nonvulgar concept, to the so-called vulgar concept?"²³.

But of course this philosophical attitude cannot easily be translated to a political praxis. On the question whether "today there is a 'politics' and a 'law' of negative theology? A juridico-political lesson to be drawn from the possibility of this

theology?" Derrida answers: "No, not to be drawn, not to be deduced as from a program, from premises or axioms. But there would no more be any 'politics', 'law' or 'morals' without this possibility"²⁴.

Although Derridean 'mystique' seems to be so self-absorbed that criticizing it seems impossible, critical rationality is still at the basis of the democratic process he envisages. It only affirms in a radical sense its source: violence. This 'quasi-transcendental' project Derrida philosophically qualifies as 'la démocratie à venir'²⁵ or 'la démocratie ajournée'²⁶. The result is a never-ending process motorized by the question: "Mais un démocrate n'a-t-il pas la responsabilité de penser les axiomes ou les fondements de la démocratie?"²⁷. In a sense the postmodern democrat has to interiorize the splitting violence, by being aware of totalizing urges that are part of him as well. Precisely this literal re-reflexion constitutes the difference between fascistic and democratic violence, the difference between - as Deleuze and Guattari stated - totalitarian-fascistoid and schizophrenic-anarchistic violence.²⁸

Derrida's analyses of the 'originating' force of the democratic process is not based on harmony or consensus, but on a structural dissensus, characterized by a obstructing, splitting violence. Once we interpret this from a psychological point of view, we can not avoid the observation that the democratic spirit is per definition and literary ecstatic: the radical democrat transformnes himself during the democratic in an impossible 'object' of xenophobia. Or to formulate it in a positive sense: he speaks in the painful awareness that a political statement and a practical guideline generates effects that inescapably will force him to change his position, to become Other. And being a good democrat he has to affirm this change. This becoming an Other, this 'Be-fremdung'²⁹ is in final analyses not choosing for a substantial item whatsoever, but attaining an open and structural attitude wherein the Other is respected and xenophobia, so explicitly manifested in fascism and implicitly present in democracy, has its catastrophic effects.

NOTES

1. See: Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*. Toronto 1992.
2. See: Jean-François Lyotard, *Le Différend*. Parijs 1983, p. 16/31.
3. Georges Bataille, in: *Oeuvres Complètes I*. Parijs 1970, p. 339-371. See also: "Essais de sociologie", in: *Oeuvres Complètes II*. Parijs 1970, p. 205-249.
4. See: Jacques Derrida, "De l'économie réstreint à l'économie générale. Un hegelianisme sans réserve" in: *L'écriture et la différence*. Parijs 1967, p. 369-408.
5. See for a critique on this thesis of humanisation: Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir. La naissance de la prison*. Parijs 1975; *Histoire de la sexualité 1. La volonté de savoir*. Introduction, Parijs 1976. Foucault has been influenced to a high degree by Bataille's writings.
6. See: Georges Bataille, *Oeuvres Complètes II*. Parijs 1970, p. 167-203.
7. I have attempted to analyse the resistance and the demise of the counter-movements of the sixties and seventies from both Bataille's and Foucault's perspective in *De opstand van het lichaam. Over verzet en zelfveraring bij Foucault en Bataille*, SUA, Amsterdam 1989, p. 123-168.
8. See: "La critique des fondements de la dialectique hégélienne" in: *Oeuvres Complètes I*, o.c., p. 277-290.
9. See: G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes en Wissenschaft der Logik*, in: *Werke* Bd. 3,5 en

6, Frankfurt a/M 1970.

10. Foucault is describing this process from a perspective of the discours in *Les mots et les choses* (1966) and later from a perspective of powerrelations in the above mentioned texts published in the seventies.

11. See: Roland Barthes, *Leçon*. Parijs 1978, p. 14.

12. I cannot go into this here, but one might ask whether precisely the post-capitalist situation in which our worldwide culture now finds itself - a situation determined by the consumption of lifestyles and images instead of traditional role patterns - can prevent a revival of pre-war fascism. This makes the situation no less dangerous, and perhaps even more so, since fascist tendencies and democratic structures have become so closely interwoven.

13. The welfare state, with its encapsulating, therapeutic mechanisms, in which for each problem an institutional solution is sought and which absorbs everything in it as in a wollen blanket, has hidden crypto-fascist tendencies, according to Vittorio Hösle, precisely because of its tendency to control all internal and external violence, making individuals dependent. See: *Philosophie der ökologischen Krise*. Moskauer Vorträge, München 1991.

14. See: Jürgen Habermas, *Die neue Unübersichtlichkeit*. Frankfurt a/M 1985, p. 152.

15. See: Gilles Deleuze en Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie. L'Anti-Oedipe* (Parijs 1972). See also the introduction to the American translation written by Foucault: "How does one keep from being fascist, even (especially) when one believes oneself to be a revolutionary militant? How do we rid our speech and our acts, our hearts and our pleasures, of fascism? How do we ferret out the fascism that is ingrained in our behavior?"(xiii)

16. In fact this is an essential question implicated in the works of Nietzsche. It is his line of thought actualized by Bataille, from which thinkers of difference have inherited the paradoxical quality that is so typical for their writings. See: Henk Oosterling, "Philosophie als Kunst? Kunst als Poros, Aporie als Kunstgriff" in: *Nietzsche: Die Kunst der Sprache und die Sprache der Kunst*. R. Duhamel & E. Oger (eds.), Würzburg 1994, p. 50-77.

17. See: 'La Différance' in: *Marges de la philosophie*, Parijs 1972.

18. See: 'Force de loi: le "fondement mystique de l'autorité"/Force of Law: the "Mystical Foundation of Authority".' in: *Cardozo Law Review*, vol. 11, july/aug. 1990, nrs. 5-6. One of his last texts is translated under the title: *Aporias*, Stanford California 1993.

19. *La force de loi*, o.c., p. 924.

20. Idem, p. 946.

21. *Derrida and Negative Theology*. Harold Coward and Toby Foshay (eds.), New York 1992, p. 283.

22. Idem, p. 284.

23. *Aporias*, o.c., p. 14.

24. *Derrida and Negative Theology*, o.c., p. 319.

25. See: *Du droit à la philosophie*, Parijs 1990, p. 41.

26. Jacques Derrida, *L'Autre cap*. Parijs 1991, p. 103.

27. Idem p. 112.

28. See: *L'Anti-Oedipe*, o.c., p. 439.

29. The english language does not allow me to express the specific difference between 'becoming a stranger' in a positive/affirmative and a negative or dialectical sense. The german words 'befremden' and 'entfremden'/'verfremden' are more suited to express this transformation.

