

THE IRREDUCIBLE CHAOS OF THE POSTMODERN SPECTACULARISED JFK EVENT

Abstract. *The following contribution attempts to problematise the JFK event by mapping modes of becoming as forms of departure from conventional socio-political structures, thereby introducing an anti-genealogical theoretical approach. The text constructs a concept of the event that parts from fidelity to a retrospectively created Badiouian Event on one hand, and on the other places an excessive libidinal Deleuzo-Guattarian and Lyotardian event in its lieu. A special emphasis is given to presenting the intersections between molar lines and the explosion of molecular moments within (and outside of) the so-called JFK event in order to indicate that a single interpretation of an event cannot become truly hegemonic. In this respect, the article focuses on presenting a critical analysis of Debord's theory of the Society of the Spectacle by providing the above-mentioned molecular instances; specifically, the article sketches out a vague transition from the subversive actions of the pop art and Beatnik movements to the JFK event in order to demystify Debord's Spectacle and Badiou's Event.*

Key words: *JFK, event, spectacle, Andy Warhol, the Beatniks, post-structuralism, postmodernism*

Andy Warhol (in Frank, 2013) phrased it lucidly: »He [John F. Kennedy] was handsome, young, smart, but it didn't bother me that much that he was dead. What bothered me was the way television and radio were programming everybody to feel so sad. It seemed like no matter how hard you tried, you couldn't get away from the thing«. The rise and fall of President Kennedy's heritage can be attributed to the then increasing power of the media. Kennedy acknowledged the importance of an active press and its contribution to constructing what tended to be called a free society (mostly with regard to the lack of freedom in the Soviet bloc) on one hand, and craftily took advantage of it to achieve his own ends on the other. Even 50

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years after his death, John F. Kennedy is still one of the media's most prominent and disputed heroes.

Kennedy used the media to broadcast his political messages (press conferences, public addresses, etc.) but also to portray himself as a new breed of a politician who is accessible, young and idealist (a televised tour of the White House, his birthday celebration etc.). The promptness with which Kennedy was lionised inaugurated him as the first celebrity-in-chief president and, at the same time, exposed him to incandescent love and hate among the American public both during his presidency and after his assassination. The latter, which from now on we shall call the JFK event, created an unprecedented media spectacle that shook both the United States and the world.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of Kennedy's assassination, we can read more and more of the same that has been multiplying in the last 50 years – conspiracies, sexscapades, and personal illnesses. Jill Abramson (2013) asks: "How many secrets remain not only about Kennedy's death but also about his life? Who is guarding them and why?". However, here we would like to pose different kinds of questions. In lieu of providing insights into these unanswerable questions, we would like to investigate the discursive framework of the media frenzy that gave birth to Kennedy's heritage. Why should we care about his private (sex or health) life or about the endless quest for the truth concerning his assassination? Do these topics obfuscate Kennedy's political heritage, if there is any at all? What about the people who, like Andy Warhol, did not care about his death, but took advantage of the newly established spectacular forces (of mass subjectivity production)? In other words, we will attempt to make (non)sense of the JFK event within a post-structuralist theoretical framework by exposing it to diverse libidinal excesses on one side, and to a multiplicity of spectacular interpretations on the other.

In the name of theory

To start things off, we will explain some of our theoretical insights and positions in order to make our writing more comprehensible and explicate some terms we will be (ab)using in the article. We would like to explore how exactly, if at all, we can articulate the JFK event in terms of a Badiouian event (2007)? What kind of rupture did it create in the circumstances of the time? What sort of void did it expose?

We would not like to claim there is absolutely no fidelity to the JFK event, of course there is; the fidelity that is inscribed in the millions lugubriously mourning for the elusive president who was depicted as the hero of an assassination spectacle. He *represented* hope, an opportunity lost, a

virtuality never having the chance to be actualised. The only fidelity we are ready to accept in (what we loosely and cynically name) the JFK event is the decision, albeit unconscious at the very best, to uniquely be faithful to the transformation of the logic of the situation; in the case of the JFK event, acknowledging, accepting, using and subverting the role of the spectacle in constructing both molar and molecular realities before and after Kennedy's assassination. A retrospective molar assessment of his presidential term views him as the trendsetter of the democratic party platform, but in reality were such trends not set by the libidinal excessive forces existing before, during and after the JFK event; forces that transgressed Kennedy's policies while still being drafted? How can we otherwise explain the Beatniks, the pop art movement, the rise of hippies, and the civil rights movement? This is not an attempt to rewrite history, but to free it from the dialectic hegemonic law of molar retrospective interpretation. This is also not an attempt at resignifying the event of the void of the elusive president, but a 'schizophrenisation', an anti-cartography based on releasing excessive libidinal energies that never form completely coherent narratives.

Instead of reading the JFK event within the Badiouian cosmos of fidelity, we would like to expose it to a Lyotardian "perpetual displacement, an eternal turning rather than a splitting" (Hamilton Grant in Lyotard, 2004: xxx). From this point of view, we posit the infidelity to the event by tracing libidinal energies that skid across and traverse the socio-political by conducting an anti-genealogy of desire to create an account of the real singular position of multiplicities that cannot be reduced to semiotic and discursive models. Infidelity is impossible to elude: "The cry which resounds in your helplessness, unfaithful one, is not your wife's, nor yours, it's true: it is the noise made on the [libidinal] band by the impossibility of several co-present intensities" (Lyotard, 2004: 39). Anti-genealogy aims to invoke an ambition that moves beyond a simple de-essentialisation of the analytical field by adding a disengagement of Foucauldian biopower and biopolitics, justified by introducing a double reading of the concept of the Real as the inverse side of the structure. By invoking the positive Real¹, we are establishing a contextualised autonomy of the production of a nomadic subject in place of an Act/Event. Hence, anti-genealogy refills the Foucauldian genealogical critique with a psychological (schizoanalytic) moment that was originally inscribed in it by Nietzsche – namely, desire.

Deleuze and Guattari (2009: 277) speak of two kinds of radically different social investments, namely the molar and the molecular, that constantly

¹ We base our notion of the positive Real on Deleuze and Guattari's constructivist conception of desire without lack and their consequential uttering that: "The real is not impossible; on the contrary, within the real everything is possible, everything becomes possible" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009: 27).

subordinate each other and in their endless oscillations form the delirium as a general matrix of every unconscious social investment:

One is a subjugated group investment, as much in its sovereign form as in its colonial formations of the gregarious aggregate, which socially and physically represses the desire of persons; the other, a subject-group investment in the transverse multiplicities that convey desire as a molecular phenomenon, that is, as partial objects and flows, as opposed to aggregates and persons (ibid.: 280).

Further, when transposing the above to a wider level of the socius we could talk about two poles, paranoiac and schizophrenic. If the paranoiac pole can be said to counterinvest, overinvest and disinvest figures of free desire and erects mass phenomena, the schizophrenic pole flees and follows the lines of flight of desire, madness breaks through the walls of molar aggregates (ibid.: 277). In reality, of course, we cannot delimit these flows as precisely and distinctly as we can in theory; these types of investments (individual, social, unconscious; all at the same time) are mixed up, always in conflict with each other, schizophrenising both individuals and societies, making them experience the ever present state of delirium: "At the deepest level of society there is delirium, because delirium is the investment of a socius as such, beyond goals" (ibid.: 364–5).

The anti-genealogical moment in our analysis does not resort to Foucauldian physical pleasures as a post-telos of an emancipatory critique, but it does allow it, as a hegemonic particularised universal, to become one of the possible outcomes of coordinated socio-political practices. In schizoanalytic philosophical terms, such a theoretical formulation could be articulated as an invasion of the positive Real into the sphere of the impossible Real. The positive Real thus presents itself as a possible realisation of all possibilities, as a vibrant performativity that exists in the hegemonic link of the great Other and, at the same time, eschews it by becoming (new). The difference between the two forms of the Real springs up between conscientious usurpings of symbolic ideas as empty signifiers (the negative Real) and unconscious affirmative productions of desiring-machines (the positive Real).

Anti-genealogy thus distances itself from the concept of lack and invokes excess in its stead. Because lack presents itself as a binary opposite of wholeness it can be called, in political terms, negative resistance (always referring to an existing place of power). In contrast, positivity derived from excess does not only affirm being per se, but it also affirms the possibility of both essence and lack as only two options that present themselves as performative practices within the socio-political. In political terms, such an affirmative expression of a subject's autonomy could be labelled subversion.

The only fidelity that can be deduced from whatever we may call the JFK event is fidelity to the spectacularised society which, in our language, does not endorse a totalitarian Debordian construction of the Spectacle. That is why we have to denounce the Badiouian event that is based on a religious fidelity that attempts to create its respective (retrospective) truth; we have to reject a project of immobilisation, even if it is in the name of *egaliberté*, precisely because it is in the name of a molar, structural *egaliberté*. Nor would we like to invoke an ultimately good field of molecular desire, for we would rather speak of an: “at once ambivalent signification and tension, dissimulated into one another. Not only *and/or*, but the silent comma: ‘,’” (Lyotard, 2004: 112).

The Beatniks and Andy Warhol – demystifying the Spectacle

The Beatniks formed a small group of disenfranchised wanderers included and excluded from conventional American life. As Deleuze and Guattari (2004: 21) would say, the Beatniks take the route of the American rhizome: “successive lateral offshoots in immediate connection with an outside”. They *lived* a literal flee from the statistically condensed ideal of the middle-class American dream and social conventions, forming an escape to the private realm (of fictive unhindered personal freedom), one could almost say. In asserting the latter, we can almost feel ourselves being dragged into an Arendtian (1959: 58) conceptualisation of the private where all people are considered to be imprisoned in the subjectivity of their own singular experience. However, desire is coextensive with the social, tarnishing the public-private dichotomy, and the above could only have been said if it were not for the unexpected and sudden literary successes of the Beatniks. A surge of postmodern (ir)rationality flows through their works; a postmodern project that is in a constant flux of not reaching its prophesised breaking of the wall because it hits the molar wall of socio-political reality: »At lilac evening I walked with every muscle aching among the lights of 27th and Welton in the Denver colored section, wishing I were a Negro, feeling that the best the white world had offered was not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night« (Kerouac, 2001: 105) and: »I wished I were a Denver Mexican, or even a poor overworked Jap, anything but what I was so drearily, a ‘white man’ disillusioned«.

The Beatniks, at least up until the mid-1960s, did not opt for a political and legal battle against conventional American life; they broke through the imaginary walls, created their own plains of life, plunged into the margins, and wrote. Their struggle was the struggle of a lived experience installed within a literary machine that produced intensities. All of their work was micro-political, investing a multitude of socio-political particularities, but never in an institutionalised, moralistic or coherent manner.

A molar (media) usurpation of their works saw their non-philosophy of just 'living life as it is' and 'being left alone' metamorphose into, via Kennedy's elevation of the spectacle, a programme of the civil rights and the hippie movements with their politicisation of the private. What started as a departure from the convention of the middle-class' long-term plan to achieve the American dream embodied in the slogan 'rags to riches' (the quest for material wealth through social mobility) was subverted by the lived practices of the Beatniks; firstly, as lived micro-realities and, secondly, as widely distributed literary realities, thanks to the obscenity trial involving Ginsberg's *Howl* in 1957 (Ferlinghetti, 1984). This trial, in no way initiated by any of the Beatniks, consequently spectacularised their literary works and propelled them to become regarded as classics of American literature and commenced the postmodernist movement. In their lives and literature, two spheres that cannot be separated, they never opted for nihilism (at least not in its conventional sense) but, on the contrary, sought to create their own dream – endless open roads, individual madness, pleasures, intensities, disorganised chaos etc. The Beatniks were a multiplicity that was governed by some sort of common ethos that dealt with issues such as spiritual liberation, sexual revolution, the struggle against censorship, demystification of the laws against drugs, and ecological consciousness. Is it even possible to read Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* within the confines of a stereotypical 1950s' American household? We read it as an enacted search for intensity that flees all conventions and takes the reader into grotesque lands of the addict's underground: "You see control can never be a means to any practical end... It can never be a means to anything but more control... Like junk..." (Burroughs, 2010: 137). And on the mention of control, they too were exposed to molar shackles and structural conditions: strenuous short-term jobs, social and police violence, racism, homophobia; in short, issues that were about to be addressed on a grand scale in the following decade, maybe even due to the spectacularisation of the Beatniks' micro-subversions.

Were there no spectacle, there would be no Beatniks. We have used the concept of the spectacle numerous times in this article, but failed to theoretically account for it up until now. "The spectacle is the acme of ideology, for in its full flower it exposes and manifests the essence of all ideological systems: the impoverishment, enslavement and negation of real life" proclaims Debord (2008: 136), the founder of the theory of the Society of the Spectacle. The latter obviously rests on the presupposition of the inexhaustibility of the power of ideology that functions in multiple social spheres only to regulate class antagonisms. It acknowledges and visualises all known forms of dominance, however only in its own ideological mendacity – as false conscientiousness. Debord's Spectacle is ubiquitous and all-encompassing, centralised in its own dispersity and clamped in the hands of the capitalist

bourgeoisie. Ontological foundationalism and dialectical determinism, as the two driving forces of Debord's theory, appear as an abstraction of the world reduced to mere representation. The subject is killed. The human being and his/her creativity are sacrificed at the expense of making out a holistic theory of the social (which was actually transformed into the economic in Debord's process of theoretisation).

Debord's reflections on the Spectacle have, even if founded on foundationalist ontology, successfully summarised the basic manifestory form of the media. Spectacles appear as clusters of images, mediated by the (mostly visual) media, which points to the attempt to reduce life to the register of the imaginary-symbolic. With this being said, we have to break away from Debord's conceptualisation by claiming that spectacles are always a reaction to a specific event, which by no means reduces their positive function. Namely, spectacles function as inventors of perfect immanence – in Foucault's words, they are neither ideology nor direct repression, but the pure production of reality. Therefore, spectacles do not take on the form of reality, as Debord would likely claim, but create it and at the same time remain its constituent part. For us, there is no Spectacle, there are only spectacles. Let us elaborate on the issue of the Spectacle's totality a little more. As lines of flight are primary to the social field, spectacles' recuperations arrive only as a reaction. Lines of flight are defined by their multiplicity; ergo, spectacles have to adapt themselves to become multiplicities as well. Spectacles' branching, differentiability and spatiality are forms of functioning that are put into place in order to reach each separate multiplicity. Each effort to tame chaos (and the heterogeneity of vital multiplicities) hits a wall of resistance, which cannot be classified as resistance *per se*. Economic, cultural and political effects of spectacles can explicitly act only on a statically statistical molar level. A reduction of the spectacle's effects to the class level only would effectively reify (objectify) the human and his activities. Still, even the most diversified spectacle cannot affect all dimensions of molecularised subjectivities. Their functionings are always caught up in the relativity of their own effects and bump into elusive subjectivities that spring up in a myriad of shapes and sizes. If, on one hand, they successfully appeal to the repression of class antagonisms by objectification and supply of pleasure and fun, they run into elusions that originate from other dimensions (be they ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, political stances etc.), on the other.

The theory of spectacles thus opens up a space where we can conceptualise spectacles as specific technologies of power. Hence, we can speak of spectacular biopower that applies technologies of control and attempts to modify populations or, in Foucault's (2003: 246) phrasing, of a general implementation of power effects and an attempt at a serial production of subjectivities, which would act both as docile bodies as well as docile minds.

Spectacular biopower can thus be highly effective on a molar level where it constructs public opinion. Can it be equally effective on a molecular level where libidinal excesses are in constant flux?

If we have shown how the Beatniks unintentionally became spectacularised, consequently spreading their ideas and lives to a broad American audience, triggering a loose cultural and political revolution, let us now examine how spectacles can be usurped for individual advancement and, at the same time, to some extent autonomously create collective images that leave a lasting legacy of a specific era.

The emergence of pop art and the rise of Andy Warhol, especially, in the early 1960s are quite indicative of what we are trying to present. Warhol unambiguously embodied the emptiness of contemporary consumerist society; while witnessing two of the most prominent events of post-war American history (the civil rights movement and Kennedy's assassination) he never showed any empathy for these events or their partakers. On the contrary, his ostensible moral and political detachment was the substance of his artwork.

There is a prodigious libidinal charge at stake when it comes to Andy Warhol. Urging on sexual activities in the Factory, filming them, and using the footage – one wonders was it for provocation only or did he actually enjoy people being (sexually) free? Addressing the civil rights governmental violence in Birmingham – was this an expression of empathy for the freedom fighters or emotionless recuperation of historical events? Much of the same can be asked of his portrayal of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and her mourning for JFK? How can we make any sense of these pop art expressions? The ambiguity of Warhol's artistic expression, scrambling the codes of the molar phenomenon, cannot be dealt with as unequivocal immobilised meanings. It can, however, be recuperated by a capitalist decoding and made into profitable commodities. Hence, we can speak of a double bind movement, spectacles being (ab)used on several levels by several marginal forces and hegemonic powers at the same instance for different (intentional and unintentional, conscious and unconscious) purposes; schizophrenia and paranoia at once embodied in Warhol and in capitalism; an ethos of excessive freedom (of expression) bordering on fascism (in regard to the hegemonic moral norm) within a rigid society that was propelled into a whirlwind of consumption, advertising images and soulless industrial capitalism.

Pop art can thus be conceptualised as a form of anti-artistic reflection of the spectacularised nature of societies from the 1950s onward but, at the same time, it is itself a self-alienated product of its object. The main word here would be cynicism or irony; employing aspects of mass culture and using them to make new patchworks. In other words, Warhol's reckless disregard for life in general paradoxically led him to enjoy the excessive

material betterments of his life. From our theoretical perspective, the pop art movement engenders subversion at its best, especially when it comes to the utilisation of media, lionisation, senselessness, consumption, emptiness, elusiveness... Hence, pop art was a line of flight that parted from the semiotic and discursive limits of the structure by creating its own form of articulating and usurping it, while never letting go of, one could even say embracing, their mutual interconnectedness. What we are aiming at here can adequately be described by Lyotard's (2004: 56) notion of libidinal stupidity where one cannot speak of the profundity of stupidity, but of immensity, the absence of measure. Libidinal stupidity thus: "rests on the destruction of the subject capable of answering for its words and deeds, it rests on the loss of identity".

What we trace as anti-genealogical traits of fleeing (becoming) in this text have, of course, their rudiments in history; however, they unfold and are incipient in their own right, but are at the same time in constant relation to the powers that be. Spectacularisation opened up a field of publically articulating their lines of flight while exposing themselves to reterritorialisations and recuperations. "Everywhere there exist the molecular and the molar: their disjunction is a relation of included disjunction" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009: 340). Postmodernism opened up a rupture within which it was not necessary for them to achieve molar revolutions in the classical sense, that is to say, in the reversal of positions in any and all spheres of social life. Instead, these micro-becomings were given the liberty to articulate themselves in a subversive manner, eluding whole discourses and creating their own on the basis of Nietzschean forgetting, embracing madness, feminisation, ethnisation etc.

JFK's heritage disputed

In Clymer's (2013) analysis of American high school textbooks, it becomes apparent how the assessments of Kennedy's political heritage have changed over the last five decades: "the picture has evolved from a charismatic young president who inspired youths around the world to a deeply flawed one whose oratory outstripped his accomplishments".

For starters, we need not go further than enumerating just a few key associations that spring up upon the mention of JFK: the first celebrity-in-chief president, sexscapades, womanising, exuberant lifestyle, drug abuse, Camelot, conspiracy theories and assassination, New Frontier, missile crisis, CIA, Marilyn Monroe. Even if the hero-like image spectacularly produced before and especially after his assassination has somewhat tarnished Kennedy's heritage, he still remains one of the most infamous presidents of the United States.

However, will a coherent account of Kennedy's supposed success/failure (disputed policy achievements) ever be presented? Is Kennedy's spectacularisation a consequence of the never actualised super goals promised by his sparkly speeches, good looks and all-out flamboyant family lifestyle? Or the 'what if' that will never come to be answered? All of these questions have to partly pertain to the spectacular idolatry that the architects of the Camelot myth created on one hand, and to their opposers on the other. Between these two options, a wide search for conspiracies accumulated regarding the reasons for the President's assassination...

A strong belief persists that the *New Frontier* programme focused too much on international affairs rather than domestic problems. However, it consisted of a broad array of social and economic reforms that, from today's perspective, could even be called socialistic in their reach. Immediately after coming to power, Kennedy's administration employed decisive and effective anti-recessionary policies by rapidly increasing public spending through executive branch action, hence avoiding lengthy legislative procedures or appropriations. Even though the Kennedy administration indebted the state by USD 10 billion in just the first year, his term ended with a 8.3% decline in total debt per GDP thanks to the average 14% annual GDP growth (Kelly, 2000: 79–83). The Kennedy administration introduced an extensive housing programme, reintroduced food stamps and provided free meals at (selected poverty-area) schools, introduced an accelerated public works programme, extended social security, unemployment and welfare benefits, provided extensive financial support for the modernisation and continuation of vocational training programmes, investments in public infrastructure (post offices, roads, railways, nursing homes, hospitals etc.), provided for vaccination, extensive support for farmers (loans, raising incomes, family farm assistance and reclamation), and federal funds for scholarships, student loans, libraries, school lunches, all of which released local funds that could be used for construction and salaries (United States Department of Labor, 2013). But were these domestic achievements, culminating in Johnson's *Great Society*, not possible on account of the aggressive north-south relations, supported by US intelligence (Rabe in Chomsky, 2003), that guaranteed the United States a privileged position in the global economy?

Or was it the conflict with the financial lobbies that pulled the trigger? The curious case of Kennedy's Executive Order 11110 (The American Presidency Project, 2013), which provided a legal basis for issuing an interest-free and debt-free currency backed by silver reserves in the U.S. Treasury, thus circumventing the privately owned Federal Reserve, which charged (and still is charging) interest when creating and lending money to the Federal Government. If put into effect, the U.S. Government supposedly could have

obtained the ability to create its own money, thus tilting power in favour of the State rather than private banks.

There is also the issue of civil rights and the Kennedy administration's engagement with it. Especially at the start of his term, he oscillated between indecisiveness and executive corrections: exhausting legal remedies as a way of enforcing already passed civil rights legislation, threats of imprisonment if funds were not handed over to desegregated public schools, creating commissions for equal job opportunities etc. (Bryant, 2007). Due to the lack of real intent for major overhauls of federal legislation in the legislature (even though the Democratic Party dominated both houses of Congress in Kennedy's term) President Kennedy, on the advice of Bobby Kennedy, at that time the Attorney-General, attempted to shift responsibility for voter registration issues to the state level (Schlesinger, 1965: 934). Even though the Kennedy administration publically vocalised its support for the extension of civil rights, the failure to achieve a comprehensive legislative overhaul triggered militancy both on the side of the grass roots movement and on the side of local authorities as could be seen in the respective cases of the Free Raiders movement and the Birmingham affair. Not only did this stir up domestic attention, but it also evoked international attention, which must have represented a gruelling influence on an administration that was in an ideological war with the Soviet Union (Schwab, 1974). The accumulation of these external pressures raises the question of how much Kennedy finally contributed to passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and consequently the 1965 Voting Rights Act (Reeves, 1993: 550-4; Schlesinger, 1965: 995-6). Were Kennedy's actions then triggered by judicial decisions, grass root movements, and international pressures rather than his own will? Or was he simply caught up in the structurally preconditioned limitations of the horizontal and vertical separation of powers that, at the time, was profoundly perplexing, given the southern opposition issue?

Maybe it was his dealings with the CIA after the *Bay of Pigs* debacle. According to Chomsky (1993), a firm believer in the insignificance of Kennedy's assassination, the CIA was re-established in favour of the White House while many claim that the CIA cooperated with Johnson on the assassination. The list could keep on going with similarly disputed foreign policy issues like the Vietnam war, the Cuban missile crisis etc.

The president who came into political being on account of the spectacularisation of his charismatic persona and lastingly embedded himself into the collective memory with his death – a spectacularisation that gave rise to speculation and socio-political paranoia on a scale never witnessed before – opened up a field of unforgiving, endless vicissitudes between madness and normality, schizophrenia and paranoia, the molar and the molecular; in short, to a delirium of postmodernism on the political turf as well. Kennedy's

heritage remains unclear due to the unambiguous speculative particularistic (ab)uses of spectacles.

What of it?

In short, what we propose here is a reading of history that gives rise to the postmodern condition of schizophrenisation where we cannot and, to a certain degree, must not decide between innumerable options of socio-political being (economy, culture, civil rights, human rights, justice, distribution, freedom, safety). Schizophrenisation, in this sense, not only implies a possibility of a revolutionary charge or change, but also an irrevocable embeddedness into the structural conditions of the powers that be. It reveals the senselessness of the common position, which presents all derived future possibilities and options as equally (in)appropriate.

What, then, changed with Kennedy? We propose that the nature of the spectacle changed. What Debord failed to acknowledge is the fact that the subject is never eliminated from the social formula; on the contrary, subjectivity is produced by spectacles and produces the spectacles in return. Even more, it is the subject (lived experience), be it collective (social movements that are never really unified as Lyotard depicted) or individual (the cases of Warhol, Kerouac, Burroughs) that pushes life forward. Spectacularised or not spectacularised in the political sense (collective memory) was the question prior to the JFK event. After this event, everything has become spectacularised; politics is the first in line to use, abuse, be used and abused by it.

The heritage of Kennedy as the elusive president, as Norman Mailer (in Abramson, 2013) already labelled him in 1960, ends up in the irreducible chaos of the postmodern spectacle, which is differentiated into a thousand libidinal images on one hand, and the structural (molar) production of subjectivities that mourn the lionised hero-President on the other. We can thus provocatively state that, from a structural point of view, Kennedy represents (of course) the empty void that has become symptomatic of politics in late capitalist societies. The name of the post-political void is Kennedy – form over content, privacy over the public, civil rights over economic rights, military power over democratic right, and conspiracies over meta-narratives. However, on the micro levels of (American) society, grass root movements and subversions thrive on their newly gained and fought for civil rights, inventing and taking advantage of these same voids but at the same time being recuperated into the capitalist machinery of making profits. Schizophrenisation has no limits. The intersections between molar (conscientious) lines and the explosion of molecular (unconscious) moments within the so-called JFK event (or in the turbulent 1960s) are hard to grasp. However, it is

not troublesome to indicate that a single interpretation of the event cannot become truly hegemonic.

The structuration and translation (molar resignification, that is the exclusion of the statistical negligible out of analysis) of any form of excess into the terms of an antagonistic struggle for hegemony, present themselves as the invasion of the traumatic incapability of the wholeness of the structure that can be included in the Event retrospectively; the Event that already contains the ethical and moral component of becoming molar. Our form of post-structuralism, as presented here, does not desire to be infested by or infest any aspect of life with a (post)telos but, on the contrary, strives to free life of all shackles in order to think and create something new via the concept of excess:

Instead of fixing territories, setting up shields, or installing garrisons, libidinal investments traverse the entire metamorphic range of these unlimited displacements. The shores are disfigured and identities wrecked in this postcritical torrent which engulfs Kant's safe seat as much as the garrisons of the psychoanalytic superego (Hamilton Grant in Lyotard, 2004: xxx).

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So then, should we celebrate Kennedy or detest him? Should we invoke Eros or Thanatos? Neither of these bipolarisms is adequate; we live, we feel, we criticise, we endorse, but most of all we flee whether in the privacy of our unconscious being or the public domain of politics as they are all inextricably intertwined. A coherent synthesis will not be possible from our stance. Oscillations between our libidinal excesses and molar investitures, inscriptions in the paranoid machines and schizo-breakthroughs are not (and never will be) surmountable. We are left with a fictive choice: act upon our possibilities and create an alternative reality derived from our present situation or subject ourselves to the powers that be. We face this problem of not being able to answer all the questions (or any, for that matter) that spring up in the socio-political. But we are endowed with the possibility to challenge all the answers provided by everybody else, exposing them to a thousand eruptions of our indigestible desires that are not fit to fit into the predetermined identitarian packages provided by the hegemonic order. Take the example of JFK who (was) never allowed to be subsumed by a straightforward (one-way) historical/hysterical analysis (even if due to his premature death). We will never be completely recuperated by capital, the spectacle, by science, by narratives because we never produced anything but: »own wild cooking pederasty and intoxication« (Ginsberg, 1956). We will forever be schizophrenised-schizophrenising. On the other hand, our systems will forever be lacking wholeness and consistency as the pop socialists of today

correctly depict. They also share our delirium by being deeply involved in what they critique and depart from – there is no clear-cut divide, there is no Žižek or Badiou without the ludicrous and absurd forms of capitalism, Maoism or Stalinism. The dualism between thinking and doing seems to be fitfully alive in Žižek's and Badiou's work and it should remain like that; for all we know, systemic fascism might still have been alive if there were no postmodern irruptions of chaotic events.

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