

# lapo berti accelerated fantasies

An emergency exit  
for the Left?



series of books

THE  
**strong**  
OF THE FUTURE

7





**THE**  
**strong**  
**OF THE FUTURE**



**SF007 eng**

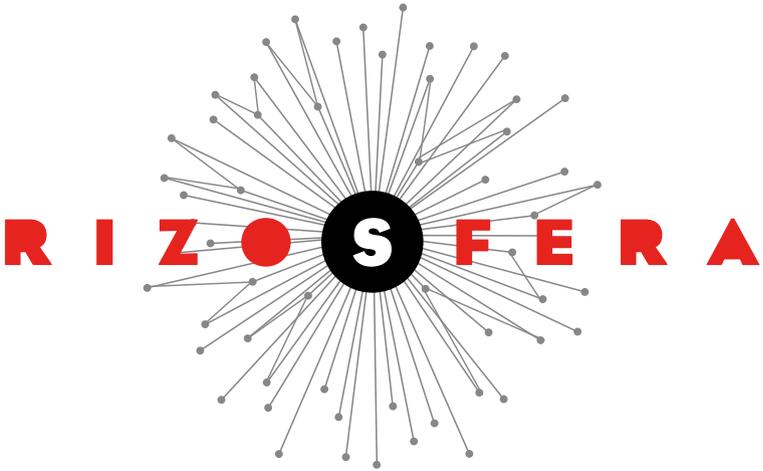
The book series entitled «The Strong of the Future» deals with accelerationist philosophy, in particular with the thought based on Nietzsche, Klossowski and Acéphale magazine, Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault and Lyotard.

## Issues:

- SF001 :: OBSOLETE CAPITALISM, **The Strong of the Future** (July 2016)
- SF002 :: OBSOLETE CAPITALISM, **Acceleration, Revolution and Money in Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus** (August 2016)
- SF003 :: EDMUND BERGER, **Grungy Accelerationism** (September 2016)
- SF004 :: OBSOLETE CAPITALISM, **Deleuze and the Algorithm of the Revolution** (October 2016)
- SF005 :: SIMON REYNOLDS - KATJA DIEFENBACH, **Technodeleuze and Mille Plateaux. Achim Szepanski's Interviews (1994-1996)** (January 2017)
- SF006 :: SARA BARANZONI - PAOLO VIGNOLA, **Bifurcating at the Root** (February 2017)
- SF007 :: LAPO BERTI, **Accelerated Fantasies** (March 2017)

## Next issue:

- SF008 :: EDMUND BERGER, **Underground Streams: A Micro-History of Herpistition and Esoteric Resistance** (April 2017)



Accelerated Fantasies ::  
translated in English by Ettore Lancellotti, Letizia Rustichelli  
and Paolo Davoli.

Anti-copyright, March 2017 Obsolete Capitalism



Creative Commons 4.0

*Attribuzione — Devi riconoscere una menzione di paternità adeguata, fornire un link alla licenza e indicare se sono state effettuate delle modi che. Puoi fare ciò in qualsiasi maniera ragionevole possibile, ma non con modalità tali da suggerire che il licenziante avalli te o il tuo utilizzo del materiale.*

Accelerated Fantasies, copyright by Lapo Berti (2015)

ISBN 9788875591007-6

# **Accelerated Fantasies**

Lapo Berti



# **Index**

Foreword ::	<b>11</b>
<b>Beyond the Ur-Staat of the hi-tech Leninism</b> by Obsolete Capitalism	
<b>Accelerated Fantasies</b> by Lapo Berti	<b>15</b>
<b>Biography</b>	<b>56</b>



# Beyond the Ur-Staat of hi-tech Leninism

by Obsolete Capitalism

Sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph, the figure standing out in the background of Srnicek and Williams' «Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics» shapes. After its reading the *Ur-Staat* shyly pipes out from the pages of the «Manifesto», a text that may be classified as speculative «sci-fi Marxism», where we sense an unmistakable scent of antique (more «steam-Marx» than «cyber-Marx»). Allende's Chilean “Cybersyn” experience or Slava Gerovitch's “Soviet-computing” references are not enough to pick up the thread which links socialist experimentation, economic program and Marxist ideology, sharply stopped in the 1970's. It is in fact the primordial State, or as Deleuze and Guattari used to define it, the primordial despotic State which rises itself as an institution, as a means to manage the hidden powers in the relationship among socialism, technology, computational calculation and ideology.

“Of all the institutions, [The Ur-staat] is perhaps the only one to appear fully armed in the brain of those who institute it”.<sup>1</sup> The myth of the primordial State as a mediator of the political conflict between classes in the light of an accelerationist and Marxist reading, matches with that “characteristi-

---

1 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 218 - University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1983.

cally intense energy” emanating from another original myth: Prometheism as an expression of blind faith in a positive, noble and forward-looking technique. Therefore Srnicek and Williams are to be placed paradoxically more in the dystopian science-fiction “steampunk” area (backward looking at the relationship between social progress and technology - what if the USSR had invented the Internet and given the personal computer to the masses?) than in the “cyberpunk” one. «Communism is Lenin - according to me» Mario Tronti recently said. Equally the «Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics» displays a peculiar hi-tech version of Leninism, thus positioning Srnicek and Williams’s text in the dominant XX century «collective worker» thought of the Left.

In the revised and modernized socialism of XXI century, as suggested by Srnicek e Williams, socialising the heavy industry is not politically productive, whereas the IT sector is. The new beast to tame is the cognitive capitalism of the «digital platforms». To the classic Hegel-Marx binomy of «capital and work», the two young intellectuals propose «robo-post-capitalism and freedom from work», while the State continues to represent an artificial entity subjugated to the new virtual circuiting of a digital mobility, enhanced to *travel-philosophy*. According to Srnicek and Williams, it is the capital in its objectivity to produce conflict over and over, whereas new subjectivities and singularities fade in the horizon of the events.

Lapo Berti has been one of the first<sup>2</sup> in Italy to express doubts on Srnicek e Williams's text and on their «postcapitalist planning» tesis. From his heretic post-operaist observatory Lapo Berti denounces in his «Accelerated Fantasies» some of the basic ideas of the manifesto, being the most interesting one the «constructionist fallacy» as an example of total faith in the compositional ability of a hi-tech socialist project. To be able to shape society according to one's ideals as pointed out by «sacred texts», still represents the forbidden and Faustian dream on which «any communist project historically collapses». According to Berti, communism has been -and still is - a secularised, historized process, «discontinued goods» in Tronti's words. Here lies the point of contact between the deleuzian-foucauldian-nietzschean «abstract accelerationist line» of the *Strong of the Future* and Berti's thought. In view of the heterogeneity of the systems and powers overlapping our society today, it is no longer possible to oppose the simple speculative and abstract text of a totalizing theory, were it Srnicek and Williams' s neo-marxist one.

The irregular, transcendent «social metabolism» often recalled by Berti cannot be driven by a superior project, if that is the case an inevitable return to absolutism and spiritualization of the Ur-Staat will take place. Moreover in his «Accelerated Fantasies», Berti declares the death of any «revolutionary vanguard» and of its braking triangular thought in the foreground, a thought that locates progressive trajectories where some illuminated and competent groups fulfill strategic roles of synthesis and behind which the

---

2 "Accelerated Fantasies" was written in the first months of 2015 and will be published in English language in the collective volume "Money, Revolution and Philosophy of the Future" OCFP /Rizosfera in late 2017.

tamed masses should rise up following an insuflating order. Supporting the «death certificate» of the revolution as an «unexpected jump» pampered by political agitprop groups and promoting the revolution as an «accelerated process of singularization» we close quoting the words of another heretic thinker of the Italian Left, Gianni Celati, in one of his interviews, significantly entitled “Against the avant-garde”:

*In these new literary or visual avant-garde, a false alternative is always at stake: to be up ahead or to be beyond, to be smarter or to be naive. The smarter ones are those who have seen more, understood more and know the new line of breach. The naive ones are those who believe in a line which the smarter ones have already understood it won't work. According to me if the distinctive fact of the avant garde is this false alternative - meant as «excessive hegelism», (the negative, the critique, etc.) - then all this world is finished, especially after the development of the counterculture and the flourishing of the Pop Art. There is no longer an issue of infinite progression but of intensities, of lines of joy, cultural expressions that have nothing in common with the critique. What has finished then is the critique itself, the idea of substituting a theory with a supposed «better one», instead of intercepting movements, motions, social earthquakes, points of flight and new solutions.<sup>3</sup>*

---

3 Gianni Celati, *Contro le avanguardie*, online magazine Doppiozero, interview published in Italian on 18th March 2016. <http://www.doppiozero.com/materiali/avanguardia-e-falsa-alternativa>

# Accelerated Fantasies

## An emergency exit for the Left?

by Lapo Berti

*“I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions. But laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilised society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors”*  
(Thomas Jefferson).

### Introduction

The authors of the *Manifesto* speak a dialect that is not among those I know best within the babel of different languages in which the Left, a little in every country, loses itself as well as the thread of the political debate; but let us try to make things clear by looking at facts and processes.

Firstly, I appreciate the pragmatic approach and the blunt language. It seems a breath of fresh air, compared to the ideological quibbling and the ‘Dannuntianism’ under which a gre-

at part of the Italian Left has buried its ability to elaborate and communicate sensible and feasible ideas. The whole work is permeated by a tension, which I deem as extremely positive, between the sufficiently clear – though analytically groundless – vision of a world that has profoundly changed compared to the one on which the traditional Left used to calibrate its propositions and behaviours, and the deeply perceived necessity of keeping pace with new developments, especially in the technological sphere. Secondly, I appreciate the clear rejection of leftist politics conceived as “folk politics of localism, direct action and relentless horizontalism” (03.MANIFESTO: On the Future). Finally, I agree with the perception that we need to prepare ourselves for a cultural struggle, which, in my opinion, will inevitably last for a long period of time – for some decades at least, in order to nurture the germs of a new anthropological mutation. I also appreciate the critique that targets the return to Keynesian economics, which provides further proof of the Left’s mental idleness, as well as the acknowledgment of the impossibility of reproducing a Fordist environment similar to the one that, for decades, provided a foundation for social-democratic programmes.

In other words, they suggest to depart and explore other oceans in search for new shores. I agree. Let us proceed with a closer examination.

Accelerationism presents itself as a programme aimed at freeing Leftist politics from a minority conservative drift, deemed guilty of a total lack of an up-to-date analysis of today's social structure, and of the inability to recognise the cultural, and even anthropological, mutation that affected the world populations in the final part of the second millennium. The inability to live the present causes to lose the ability to attend the future as well. As it often happens to those aristocratic families in decay, the Left has become prisoner of a glorious past, wrapped in its mythical aura, but remains unable to procure the means to preserve the family's wealth. The weeds do the rest, making the old manors impenetrable. Accelerationism sweeps all that away, attempts to resolutely seize the dynamics of the present and to proceed towards a rather nebulous and uncertain future.

The analysis, which provides the background for this programme and should support it, seems quite lacking, if not even dull and superficial. Additionally, the insistent recourse to metaphors rather than conceptual cuts and analytical perspectives does not help. Another vacuum, which often makes the argumentation vulnerable, consists in the absence of a theory on how society functions. But we will discuss this topic later on.

I am tempted to comment point by point this text so filled with illusions and provocations, beside relevant topics. Howe-

ver, I will limit myself to few scattered remarks, followed by some general considerations.

### **Scattered remarks**

In my opinion, the most disappointing section is the one dedicated to the “Conjuncture”. The elements chosen define it, despite being right, seem obvious and randomly listed, rather than organised according to a far-reaching design. They do not have the formidable power of opening new interpretative horizons, as the apodictic declaration that opens *The Communist Manifesto* continues to do: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” Even without the presumption of mocking the vibrancy and the universality of this sentence, we should manage to identify the key to access the present, which would then constitute the one and only chance of gazing into the future. I believe that, until we deeply understand and analyse why we are here, today, we will not succeed in imagining a different future and, above all, in finding a feasible transition. The crucial turning point, which we should focus on, are the seventies, that decisive decade which started with the termination of the convertibility of the U.S. dollar to gold, ending the world of the gold standard, and finished with the rise to power of Reagan and Thatcher. In the middle of

that decade many other things happened, but it was there, in those two episodes, that history changed its course. And, as it happens almost always during authentic and crucial historical turning points, nobody noticed anything and everyone kept staring at an object that was not there anymore. Naturally, I do not think that Nixon, Reagan and Thatcher chose their history: it was history that chose them, because all those social, cultural and economic forces and energies that had driven the thirty years of Keynesian compromise – or Social Democratic, if you prefer – had been exhausted. We ought to understand the reasons why that democratically operated U-turn gathered the prevailing consensus, and why, in the whole world, the Left and its various expressions have been unable since then to elaborate a successful and persuasive programme. One answer has been attempted, and probably it is the right one: the composition of the social body had changed. Nonetheless, nobody in the Left, besides the use of some metaphors (from the more ancient ones, as the ‘social worker’, to the more recent ones, such as the ‘multitude’), has actually come to terms with the real structure of modern society; with all the lives that interact in it; with the concrete approaches on which individuals figure or refuse to figure the course of their lives, and share pieces of images whose source is ever more uncertain; with the ways through which they gain conscience of themselves as formally free individuals living in a society. Nobody has tried to understand which avenues the “pursuit of happiness” has taken, both

at an individual and – providing it exists – at a collective level. There is a great deal to reflect on, in any case it is from here that we ought to restart from, in order to restore a feasible image of the society we live in. It is going to be a long and rough ride, which probably does not concede nor allow accelerations.

## 1.2 (On the conjuncture)

The “breakdown of the planetary climatic system” and the consequential “terminal resource depletion” have both an obvious political leverage, but these topics cannot be brandished naïvely, after more than forty years from the catastrophic predictions of “The Club of Rome” (*ceteris paribus*, i.e. all other things being equal). In order to live up to the problems that the Club identified, we should discuss them in the perspective of a theory on the Anthropocene, that is, taking into account the fact that the presence of the human kind on the Earth has produced a new and probably irreversible scenario, though still manageable through necessary adjustments that the environment dictates us by means of natural catastrophes. Most likely a new philosophical and anthropological perspective is revealing itself, one that should induce us to radically rethink the relationship between nature and mankind as well as the way in which our societies live nature. This would entail recon-

sidering our institutions, our written and unwritten norms, to which we have entrusted, in a millenary course, the possibility of reproducing our race on the base of that anthropological invention that society is. It is a gigantic endeavour, for which we cannot spot, not even on the far horizon, energies capable of sustaining such a task.

For what concerns the “enduring financial crisis”, its existence is undeniable. Nevertheless, the crisis perhaps should be summoned for the opposite reason to the one advocated in the Manifesto: not as a sign of weakness of capitalism, but rather as a celebration of its dynamism. I believe, and I always have, that financial crises are endemic, if not even functional, to the capitalistic system, because they are closely linked to its *modus operandi* and emanate from its propensity to overcome any limit or obstacle, which represents its primary core as well as its factor of perpetual attraction. The idea that capitalism is digging its own grave from crisis to crisis until the final one – a conception that has been solemnly christened by the “law on the tendency of the rate of profit to fall” – has miserably sunk after colliding with the hard and unforeseeable dynamic of innovation and it appears by now childishly comforting and dangerously misleading. The political and institutional reactions to financial crises, and the possible conflicts that arise with them, are one of the fundamental engines of social transformation. Today our panacea is austerity, which, despite being short-si-

ghted and ineffective, constitutes an answer to distortions and deviations caused by the previous model (the Keynesian one). Seventy years ago, we responded with Keynesianism and the New Deal, which proved to be successful because they managed to solve the extremes of the previous model (*laissez-faire* economics). Crises, including financial ones, certify that capitalism is in good health. Policies are actually mere epiphanies of the capitalistic metabolic process. *En passant*, I do not think that the increasing automation of production lines is “evidence of the secular crisis of capitalism”, but rather of the inexhaustible energy that capitalism is able to produce through technological and scientific innovation, aimed at regenerating and expanding the sources of profit. What appears to be in crisis, secular or not, is society as a whole, which is called to govern these processes but has proven to be incapable of doing so for too long a time. Such a governance vacuum has been filled by a power that is new and old at the same time, but anyway explosive, i.e. financial and economic power. No counter-power has stood up, if we exclude – as we should – those pathetic, if not faked, attempts to regulate markets (antitrust).

Anyway, I think we all agree on the fact that financial crises, as all crises, represent also an opportunity. The issue that no theory has yet tackled is that we do not possess adequate instruments to understand the range of truly feasible prospects as well as the ways to convert them into reality. A void that no

rhetorical exercise can fill. Perhaps this is what the *Manifesto* intends to argue at 1.3 (*On the conjuncture*).

### 1.5 (On the conjuncture)

Preaching a “systematic approach to building a new economy” surely makes the argument sound appealing, but nobody has yet explained what this bears, although many currently practise discoursing on a new economy and prescribing new recipes, more or less doomed or purely abstract. “To build” a new economic system – in the actual meaning of the term, that is, to conceive a new model and to execute it – is a very tough endeavour and, frankly, I do not know whether it is within our society’s reach. Additionally, recent history shows that it is extremely dangerous and socially expensive even to *attempt* building it. Economic *laissez-faire* has dominated and continues to dominate because it has taken a different direction and it focused predominantly (though not exclusively) on the “spontaneous” interaction between the choices that men make based on their individual interests, even though their motivations may not be entirely individualistic and egoistic.

The same is true, obviously, when we affirm that a “post-capitalist planning” is necessary (3.8).

In my opinion, at present the only still-viable avenue is “local” disturbance (not in a geographical sense), that is, limited to those specific topics and characterised by dominant processes which appear from time to time in the evolution of society. I hope it is clear that I am not referring at all to new forms of “neo-primitivist localism”, which the authors of the *Manifesto* rightly criticise and reject. These “disturbances” will probably spread on the web and generate cumulative processes, but they will hardly form a critical mass. Unless catastrophic events happen.

### 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7 (*MANIFESTO: on the future*)

“All of us want to work less”, “Capitalism has begun to constrain the productive forces of technology” (actually, it has always done so, in one way or another), “We do not want to return to Fordism”, “to unleash latent productive forces”, “to accelerate the process of technological evolution”. We cannot disagree with these slogans which, if ever, have the defect of being too general. However, the rub is later, when we need to pass onto action. We have already seen in history the refusal to work. We can try again, but the chances of success have not improved. In the meanwhile, the world and the workers’ charter have radically changed (see the *Excursus* below).

## *General considerations*

### *The scandal of economic and financial power*

I have already said how I was struck by the lack of analysis of the Accelerationist hypothesis. I also want to stress that this is the least Marxian, if not the most anti-Marxian, conduct. According to Marx the crucial effort was constituted by the critique of the present, not by the elaboration of solutions for the future. Here is the opposite: the solution anticipates the critique, it eludes it. I believe instead that in the whole world the Left has lost, and continues to loose, not because it has not proposed the right answers, but because it has not been able to elaborate a correct and critical vision of the present world, of the metamorphoses of capitalism and, thus, to offer a successful and persuasive story, meeting people's changed needs and expectations. Nobody in the Left has yet had the intellectual bravery and the critical skills to explain why, at the end of the seventies, the successful political programmes took the name of Reaganism and Thatcherism. In such a perspective, at least two topics seem to pose a tough challenge to those who want to understand what is involved and what is at stake.

Firstly, although for at least twenty years the topic of globa-

lisation has been among the most popular in the global public debate, we are still far away from tackling all its implications. We still lack a complete understanding of the fact that the majority of economic, social, cultural, psychological and, hence, political problems, which cause dramas in single countries and then spread to the world arena, are simply the product of flows and tension fields generated by globalisation, that is, the progressive interconnection of choices and destinies of all the inhabitants of the planet. We are in the middle of a wading, at the heart of a transition between total orders. Local, less local and general crises that we are experiencing in every aspect of our collective life, including terrorism, are nothing but the inevitable shocks connected to this gigantic process of adjustment of global society. And it is in the fault lines of this process, at the turning points that force us nearly every day to choose or to passively endure, that the opportunities for change have settled and offer themselves. Even in an Accelerationist perspective.

Secondly, it is surprising that an Accelerationist eye did not notice that nowadays finance constitutes the main factor of acceleration of capitalistic processes and the protagonist of the acceleration imprinted on the evolution of the whole system. The global financial concentration, which represents the domain of a 1% or actually 0.1% of the global population, is the most shocking result of the globalisation process. The sudden and gusting accelerations that occur in global finance are sub-

verting yesterday's world in ways and extents that we still struggle to understand. The reaction, if there is one, is weak and hesitant. The institutions that are supposed to grant the social assimilation of those development processes most dangerous for the tenure of society wander around the economic environment like stunned boxers. There will not be any feasible nor accessible tomorrow, if we do not get to the bottom of the wild disorder shaped by global finance as well as of the unbearable wound that affects the social body through the weapon of extreme inequality and demolition of any form of political (and democratic) governance.

In other words, the most serious and stunning shortcoming of the *Manifesto* seems to be, in my opinion, the total absence of any reference to the problematic of power, which instead I think is the source of every problem. If there is a truly catastrophic happening which will permanently mark our era, that is the subjugation of political power to economics, with the consequent development of a global oligarchic power able to erase the sphere of political mediation. We are dealing with a turning point that could end the modern era as we have known it, characterised by the generous though unsuccessful attempt to get everyone involved in power and to transform all people into investors in that supreme endeavour that is governing society.

Nowadays, while observers, who do not observe much nor understand much, indulge in listing all the defects of democracy and the lack of legitimacy of governments and politicians, the main problem, i.e. the “hollowness” of democracy, goes unnoticed. Democracy has lost its soul, that is, social struggle. It was social struggle that conferred sense and content to representation, to intermediaries. Nowadays, power has moved away from democratic institutions, which have become empty containers, and it has been transferred elsewhere, in the hands of a minority that governs global industrial and financial giants, which in fact are not subjected to any general democratic rule and are able to tame and even dictate the rules that concern them directly. Social struggle has lost its traditional habitat, the Fordist factory, and it has been fragmented into molecular movements that are incapable of developing a form of hegemony. Work does not possess anymore the powerful leverage of socialisation which alimeted the struggle. We are not dealing with tendencies, we are talking about facts that have already happened and that leave us helpless and aphasic. We must turn back and look again into society with eyes free from preconceptions and already-rusty ideologies, perhaps with the help of some algorithms.

The change which we have just referred to is an event that undermines at its roots the democratic covenant which, although in an increasingly unsatisfactory way, guaranteed the cohe-

sion of modern societies. If we want to be considerate, or even just effective, this is the level at which we need to throw down our political gauntlet of the present. We have to rewrite the implicit and explicit social contract embedded in our constitutions, which does not include any control on economic power. And there is no other way than pressuring and persuading governments to profit of this motion and to mobilize themselves in the wake of a reform of fundamental laws in order to finally put limits and restrictions to the acquisition and exercise of economic power making it socially sustainable. If we cannot change laws and institutions regulating our society, it will be highly unlikely to harness the outrageous powers which threaten us.

### *The Constructionist fallacy*

Unfortunately, there is one thing that correlates the innovative and healthily provocative attitude of the *Accelerationist Manifesto* to the more pleonastic share of the Left, that is, what I would define as the «constructionist fallacy», in the end nothing but the aporia against which historically all Communist endeavours of any kind have collided. I am referring to the indication that social realities can be modelled based on a responsible project, regardless of its nature and of the approach

ch through which we came to define it. If the idea that a sensible plan is capable of influencing significantly social evolution could still have some plausibility when applied to small and sufficiently simple societies, it would be categorically impossible to apply it to the complexity of global society. Unfortunately for everybody, economic and social change advances based on the interaction on a plethora of behaviours and choices, whose effects are mostly unpredictable but in very general terms. Neither with high frequency monitoring. And what matters more is that they are mainly uncontrollable.

For me this constitutes a decisive and irrevocable point. I care deeply about it, and I consider it as a sort of point of Archimedes on which to found a new way of looking at social development, which uses the present as a lever to raise the future up at the level of our eyes. I believe that it will be impossible to pursue new collective plans of social action without gaining, through analysis, a full understanding of which factors contribute to determine social development and, more generally, of how the metabolism of society functions. There are structures, behaviours, values, which to a great extent are the result of an infinity of actions repeated and embedded in any kind of project. I think that a sort of social DNA exists, one which mutates slowly and imperceptibly only according to deviations from the norm selected and upheld by time and experience. This was, and perhaps still is, a task that pertains to social conflict.

Sometimes their adjustment takes the form of a general crisis, which deeply shakes the pillars that support and safeguard the reproduction of society avoiding self-destructive impulses, which yet exist and, at times, disclose themselves.

The authors of the *Manifesto* appear to be aware, at least partially, of such issue, to the extent that in 3.21 (*MANIFESTO: on the future*) they explicitly declare that “whilst we cannot predict the precise result of our actions, we can determine probabilistically likely ranges of outcomes.” The problem is that afterwards they do not unwind all the implications that, from this consideration, inevitably reverberate themselves onto the whole structure of their discourse.

The plans through which smaller or bigger groups of persons pursue precise social change goals constitute only one of the factors at play, and often not even the most relevant, neither when they involve big slices of the population. They can certainly trigger shifts, sediment new values, new practices, new rules, but, even then, they go beyond if not against what the original plan explicitly envisaged. The heterogenesis of goals is one of the systemic characteristics of the social world in which we are immersed. The most famous and surprising example is probably the one illustrated by Adam Smith under the label of “invisible hand”. It represents a status quo hardly acceptable by a *homo faber* that has managed to domesticate nature but fails to domesticate the society where he lives.

Everyday life in a society is constituted by a myriad of individual decisions and choices that implicate a temporal and spatial integration between its members and a more or less extensive cooperation, being it explicit or implicit. Only a minimum part of such decisions and choices is the result of a prior agreement between the individuals involved and even a smaller part comes from a shared plan aimed at reaching clear goals.

All these decisions and choices are made, firstly, in a context characterised mainly by foregoing and assimilated rules, and only to a minimum extent by rules resulting from developments and transformations, and, secondly, under the stress of incentives and disincentives that these rules generate.

In every society, the system of rules, which we must say is almost never entirely coherent, is crucial, as crucial is the way in which rules are enforced and equally crucial is the extent to which these are spontaneously respected as well as inversely the amount of people that does not respect them. The influence that individuals, alone or in partnership, are able to exercise on the process of development and enactment of rules measures precisely the amount of power that each person possesses in order to play a part in determining the destinies of society. It is clear that a single individual, especially if isolated, holds only an infinitesimal, if not null, power of influence, while the bulk of power is placed in the hands of those who are institutionally

charged with crafting and administering the rules, as well as in the hands of those who find themselves endowed with a huge power of influence for non-institutional reasons, as in the case of managers of gigantic economic and financial enterprises that dominate the global stage. The game for power, where destinies of society are decided, is played by these actors. At the moment, the outcome of the match, at least in the short term, is marked.

The constructionist fallacy hides itself in the most unthinkable places. “We can make capitalism work for most of us rather than for only a relative handful” (Reich 2015, 21). “We believe that any post-capitalism will require post-capitalist planning” (*#ACCELERATE MANIFESTO for an Accelerationist Politics, 3.8: on the future*). “A new economic paradigm is rising” (Rifkin 2014). In cultural contexts very distant one from another but with similar emphases, this is the myth of Faustian origin that hovers among the rows of a kind of Left which, well aware of the tragic defeats of the twentieth century, has abandoned the perspective of a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and is now looking for a more realistic and persuasive objective, but still assumes of bearing the potential to “shepherd” society.

When I hear talking about “projects”, “programmes”, and “planning” in the political and social sphere, I feel dismayed and concerned, because I know how much history warns us

that every time a group of men, even if well-intentioned, aspire to implement a project of social change, to plan a transformation of society, sooner or later, in front of an inevitably recalcitrant reality, the temptation of using some coercion arises, a little violence to force reality to conform itself to the project. The results are widely known. I believe that nobody intends to repeat those facts, although many, sooner or later, will be tempted to do so, oblivious to history and blinded by utopia. We must find other ways.

The issue nowadays is not to devise another “receipt for the cook-shops of the future”, borrowing the ironic words of a well-known political activist of the XIX century. Western social history is full of receipts. In the best of cases, they served to establish the success of few intellectuals. Even Tronti agreed: “To put the project of a future society before the analysis of the present one is a bourgeois ideological flaw that only oppressed peasants and intellectual vanguards could possibly inherit” (*Workers and Capital*, 1966).

## *The myth of acceleration*

Let us now take into account what the use of the term “accelerationism” suggests. It would be a revolution that does not go “against” the *status quo*, as all those conceived and attempted until now, but rather “towards” it, “not to withdraw from the process, but to go further, to ‘accelerate the process’”, as indicates one of the precursors of Accelerationism (Deleuze and Guattari 1975, 272). We are dealing with a proactive revolution with respect to the status quo that it intends to change. Assuming that we can call it ‘revolution’, and that there really is a revolution, as Deleuze and Guattari were wondering, rightly alleging some uncertainty. A touch of caution that the Accelerationists have boldly set aside.

Accelerationism seems to be more a section of aesthetics, in the wake of the myth of velocity promoted by Italian Futurism, rather than a new political perspective. This brings to our mind the words that Walter Benjamin used to condemn futurism as “the introduction of aesthetics into political life”, words which were then recollected by a stern critic of accelerationism (Noys 2014, 17), especially when he argues that there is a “discrepancy between the existence of powerful means of production and their insufficient usage in the process of production”, which manifests itself through unemployment and the lack of market outlets and which conceives imperialistic war as a “rebellion of

technology” (Benjamin 1966, 48). Obviously, I do not want to argue that this is the direction in which Accelerationism is moving, at least in its Leftist component, but I find pretty evident that it is founded on a similar idealization of technology, and of the process accelerations that it generates. The metaphor of the amusement park, in which Benjamin saw a sort of antidote to a possible technological intoxication of society, is at the same time the projection of the experience of velocity to which humanity is bound to give in. However, he still counted on Communism and on the power of the proletariat.

In the end, the Accelerationist call to “the productive forces of technology”, to the necessity “to unleash latent productive forces”, “to accelerate the process of technological evolution”, as “a springboard to launch towards post-capitalism”, bears a markedly ideological inflection, certainly not a factual one. The unwavering certainty of being able to bend the technological outcomes of capitalist development in favour of alternative social employments is not founded on any analysis of real aspects of the world pre-existent to artificially intelligent machines, nor it considers the unprecedented issues that this brings with respect to the possible subversion of the relationship between man and machine. Once again, this brings to our mind a remote but significant episode, rightfully recalled by Noys too (2014, 27), that is, the Leninist dream of a “proletarian Taylorism” which by boosting productivity would have

freed time for workers to participate in the construction of the new socialist regime. We know what happened. But we are also aware that it could not have gone differently, because innovation, being it capitalistic, organizational or technological, bears the signs of the context in which it has been conceived and of the purposes which must serve. Today we are facing scientific and technological innovations that replace lively labour at an accelerated pace and on a scale never seen before. We should rejoice of that, instead we are busy searching for ways to avoid that this “freed” labour turns itself directly into useless labour, that is, unemployed workforce. This is a terrible issue, which, I fear, we cannot even attempt to solve unless we radically question the procedures that regulate at present the distribution (and redistribution) of income and wealth. The Communist utopia of a society that governs technology and machines has not changed. Nonetheless, this is a gauntlet that must be taken up, albeit not with the optimism of the mentality that animates the Accelerationists. The mounting wave of techno-science originated by capitalism is contentious, and it is possible to force it, within certain limits, to break on other shores, generating dynamics that today seem unthinkable.

Accelerationists obviously stress the profound mutations that scientific and technological development is causing, particularly in the field of labour. Captured by the growth of the Marxian general intellect, they do not seem to notice that the

critical fault line which splits the global labour market is not the historical Fordist one between material and intellectual work, but the one between routine and non-routine work. To the growth and management of the general intellect, what matters is the relatively small sub-group of non-routine and highly qualified intellectual labour, which represents slightly more than 18% of the whole workforce. More generally, in the United States routine jobs represented about 60% of employment but in the mid-seventies they dropped to 40%, while the opposite was true for non-routine jobs. This proves us that the notion of “cognitive-cultural capitalism”, although it understands one of the aspects that characterise nowadays the evolution of global capitalism, seems extremely incomplete and reductive with respect to the actual overall economic situation. Capitalism continues to be a very complex and diverse being, in which very different economic dimensions and social relationships cohabit and clash. There coexist stratified capitalist entities, generated by different seasons and characterised by different dynamics. The physical and social space that capitalism inhabits is not homogenous, it is affected by internal conflicts. Capitalism is always at war with itself, and is condemned to that struggle that Sisyphus experienced, that is, a process of creative destruction which determines its incoercible dynamism. From this process new capitalistic entities continue to emerge, and enter into conflict with pre-existing ones. The tune is given by scientific and technological innovation which constantly remo-

dels the software embedded in those processes of production and, more generally, in those economic process through which the reproduction of society expresses itself. “Cognitive-cultural capitalism”, if we want to use this term, simply refers to the last manifestation of the endless process of creative destruction that has taken over the top of global capitalism. Its most prominent feature is an increasingly extensive and intensive application of knowledge to financial and production processes. To confuse one part with the whole lot and to extend the definition of “cognitive-cultural capitalism” to present capitalism as a whole means to loose track of the contradictions that characterise it, the lines of flight that continue to be drawn, creating room for change that risks to remain unnoticed. “Cognitive-cultural capitalism” defines the leading tendency, the force that demolishes and at the same time rebuilds, but it does not necessarily describe the capitalism of the future. To bet on the possibility of domesticating such tendency and to turn it against capitalism itself is an illusion that can only help perpetuating the Left’s irrelevance. The Accelerationist hypothesis will hold or fall depending on this bet. The impression I get is that Accelerationists are underestimating, perhaps deliberately, the robustness and even the inseparability of the link that connects scientific and technological development to capitalism, and that they are unaware of how powerful are the incentives embedded in market economy. On these incentives we should operate.

To conclude, in general it seems to me that the only interesting and promising aspect of the Accelerationist approach is the proposal, certainly innovative with respect to the ideology of the Left as a whole, to try to place ourselves not just “against”, but mainly “within” the processes of transformation induced by technological development. We should move in the wake of those innovations produced by capitalistic companies and try to deviate their course, to alter their digits. It is not a totally new idea. It is the same idea that Tronti adopted many years ago in the introduction of *Workers and Capital*, that says that, “the weapons used for proletarian uprisings have always been taken from the armoury of their superiors”. However, in the Accelerationist proposal of accelerating the present processes to go and storm the future the “constructionist fallacy”, as I called it, appears, that is, the idea that we can deliberately accelerate and govern social processes towards a previously and arbitrarily chosen destination. We remain closed in the asphyxiating kitchen of the future. The present, with its opportunities, its fractures and its circumstances, remains outside the door.

The key to our era is without any doubt “Moore’s law”, that is, the accomplishment of the acceleration that characterises the way in which technology and science, through their innovations, enter our lives modifying our rhythms and contents, and remodelling our society. Hence, Accelerationism identifies well one of the most prominent factors of our mutual destiny,

but, I think, it is unable to grasp the intimate mechanism of the acceleration underway, which is the exponential accumulation that we see in the power of data elaboration of a microchip or in the amount of data stocked in digital format. These are the phenomena subverting the foundations of our civilization, and not technological acceleration per se, which reappears more or less regularly in the course of economic development. All this happens under the tight control of the intrinsic incentives of capitalism and under a regime of substantial randomness, in the sense that nobody makes plans or guides it towards a definite destination. A new alteration of the human species is probably emerging, the *homo informaticus*, a man that feeds himself with information and releases information in the environment where he lives. We must clear that this IT dimension has always existed in the life of the *homo sapiens*, but up until the digital revolution the amount of information that the individual was able to process was averagely much smaller and, more importantly, static, while the information that he voluntarily or involuntarily released in his environment used to get completely lost. Nowadays, any individual, provided with the most common computer instruments, is able to tap an enormous amount of information, and he can process it for the most disparate reasons. But, what is most important and surprising, is that a rapidly growing proportion of the information that we input into our environment simply by interacting with our counterparts is stored away and made available for the most unthinkable

purposes. These are the famous *big data*, which are invading and revolutionising the digital environment by which our lives are already absorbed. For better or for worse, our lives will be increasingly influenced by the manipulation of these gigantic databases. They will be used to deliver us services that we cannot even imagine today, or to radically transform the fruition of existing ones, but they could be also used to make increasingly insignificant our choices, which will be anticipated by an artificial intelligence capable of read through our daily routines, such as the automated fast food which already knows what our favourite breakfast is and delivers it to our table after expressly making it. Or like the robotic doctor, which will have stored all the information regarding our health and will be able to make an extremely precise diagnosis by confronting our symptoms with the ones stored in his immense database. Today, already, governments attempt to monitor with prehistoric equipment the factors that determine our perception of happiness in order to conform their policies in real time. Today, already, experimental psychology pretends to be able to identify which background elements are capable of morbidly nudging individuals to make choices that governments believe to be more appropriate. It is convenient, though scary, to imagine the scenario that will materialise when these policies become ready to take advantage of the systematic elaboration of huge databases. Moreover, at the moment the greatest global enterprises are the ones which gather and explore the *big data*. Who will be respon-

sible for making decisions about the access to these data and their use? Additionally, are we facing the emerging of a new and tragic gap between those who hold and have access to *big data* and those who do not?

On the background it appears the possibility that another characteristic of the *homo informaticus* might emerge, a potentially more shocking one. The millenary predisposition of human beings to associate themselves in groups might get transformed into a compulsive inclination to connect themselves with their counterparts through the Internet, subverting the universal meaning of living in a society. In such a way we would assist to the crush of society that has been matured in the thirty-years period in which a crook individualism accompanied and favoured the assertion of the neo-liberalist project. It would be the burial of the famous and notorious sentence pronounced by Margaret Thatcher: “Who is society? There is no such a thing! There are individual men and women”. A society made of interconnected individuals, searching for lost reasons to spend time together.

Once again, I think that these are some of the most relevant issues posed by the exponential acceleration of information technology, in a world where velocity has imposed itself on human behaviours overwhelming their rhythm. However, these issues remain unnoticed and underestimated by Accelerationism.

Another fallacy is hidden, in my opinion, in the creases of the argument on the “revolutionary vanguard” that intellectually anticipates and materially guides the people, but we will discuss it another time. I care only to mention some food for thought. Could the “revolutionary vanguard” be reappearing disguised as the “super-humans of the future” or as the “Übermensch”, recalling a Nietzschean suggestion revamped years ago by Deleuze and Guattari in a pretty obscure text, which seems to be dear to many Accelerationists that deem it as the foundation of their standpoint? Should we not have doubts on the compatibility of this “line of flight” with the democratic aspirations that we still have? Given that we are in a Nietzschean context, it inevitably comes to my mind that passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* in which Nietzsche explicitly contrasts the “humans of the future”, the “new philosophers”, the “rulers”, with democracy, conceived as a form of decay of political organisation and human degradation. We must not trivialise these topics, they are relevant, but I notice here more of a bundle of issues rather than a hint to a solution.

## **Footnotes on velocity and acceleration.**

To stress on acceleration, as accelerationists do, is somehow misleading, because it tempts to ignore the “quality” of processes generated by scientific and technological development. In the end, economic development, since it is founded on innovation, has always been “accelerationist”. Some form of Moore’s law has always been operating there. So that is not the point. Actually, the most decisive and distinctive aspect of the present moment seems to be the velocity that scientific and technological progress allows to reach in certain fields associated with data elaboration, lending to them an absolutely new and shocking outlook and locating them outside human capacity. It creates an artificial world in which, for the first time on such a vast scale, humans are not in control anymore, but instead they are dependent on the machines that they have created. This would mean an explosive development, which could constitute “the greatest event of human history”, but it could also be the last one, according to the dramatic warning issued in 2014 by a group of very qualified scientists (Stephen Hawking, Stuart Russell, Max Tegmart and Frank Wilczek).

“Technological singularity” is near, wrote in 2005 the controversial American futurologist, computer scientist and writer Raymond Kurzweil, meaning that we are getting closer to the moment in which technological progress will allow the

creation of a form of intelligence superior to the human one, which will determine the end of human race. In 1993 Vernor Vinge, another controversial American sci-fi writer, as well as mathematician and computer scientist, had already written on the same topic that “we are on the edge of a change comparable to the rise of human life on Earth.” Experience teaches us that futurologists’ forecasts are written on the sand, but the technological trajectory marked by the quite cryptic haven of singularity seems at least plausible, and anyway it warns us that we are moving towards a threshold beyond which there is a truly unknown future. For the first time in its millennial history, humanity would find itself deprived of what characterised its evolution the most, that is, the progressive appropriation of wisdom and the growing control, mediated by technology, over the environment where it lives. This perspective seems in contrast with what goes under the label of Anthropocene, but instead it could weld itself well to it. In both cases, at the moment we do not hold the necessary cultural or political instruments to face it. And certainly we will not receive them from the naïve Accelerationist fantasy.

## **A negative acceleration: digression on labour**

In the United States the third millennium opened with a decade in which new jobs were created. It had never happened. The forgoing decades had always brought an average 20% rise in unemployment. And there is more. Between 1998 and 2013, the number of hours worked in the private sector remained substantially steady at 194 billion. In the meantime, population grew by 40 million people, output from the same group of firms rose by 42%. Economic inequality has been constantly growing too, reaching levels that we saw last in the 1920s. Labour, after the splendour of the thirty post-war years, has become a problem again. Nowadays that is the key issue. and, as always, society, and not capitalism, is expected to find a solution.

Let us try to schematise. We call labour the activity through which humans create the conditions that allow the survival of them and their race. There has been, at the dawn of time, an age in which labour was immediately available for an individual. Even in complete loneliness, he knew what he had to do to procure himself food and to protect himself from dangers and adversities, and he used to employ all his energy to do so. The payback was, indeed, survival and the possibility of reproducing himself. Since mankind started to live in society, work has become a social activity, mediated by social relationships. Work does not rest anymore in the direct and immediate

availability of the single person, but it is subject to some form of social cooperation, and it requires the individual to relate himself to other human beings and to subject himself to rules imposed by these forms of cooperation. Labour becomes the cornerstone and the foundation of the individual's social being, and at the same time it makes him dependent on the social relations within which his working activity takes place. Men now depend on labour, their subsistence depends on labour. The economic evolution of society, or more precisely the evolution of the economic conditions that make social reproduction possible, identifies itself mainly with the evolution of the conditions that regulate access to work and the way in which it is executed. The process has gone through several steps, all marked in particular by economic development. But this is not the place to review them.

Today we know that one of the main factors that affect the possibility of accessing a job is the degree and quality of the competences we possess. This is the factor that increasingly influences the structure of the labour market and affects the jobs' ranking, which in turn determines which jobs are available at a certain degree of skills. The labour market at the global level is struck nowadays by two forces, two tendency pressures, which greatly influence its structure. On the one hand, there is the huge thrust of globalisation, which is causing a coerced, and painful, reallocation of the global workforce, driven by the pri-

ce differential of labour in different economic areas of the world. National and regional labour markets can be represented as a gigantic system of communicating vessels where an arduous realignment of wages is underway, which takes time and causes significant social disruptions. In the Chinese industrial labour market salaries rose by 10% every year between 2000 and 2005, and by averagely 10% between 2005 and 2010, while the Chinese government has set the target of a minimum wage growth of 13% until 2015. Such process has an end, although not exactly a foreseeable one, which will virtually be the creation of a single global labour market. This will not last, like any productive and distributive arrangement under a capitalistic regime. But this is not the path that we are taking.

On the other hand, there is the ever more powerful and accelerated thrust of technological innovation which absorbs into its production processes vast and growing amounts of knowledge. Productive tasks are increasingly entrusted to algorithms that do not need human interference but at the moment of their planning (for now at least). They are not just material tasks, which imply physical action, but also abstract operations, which imply intellectual activity. Human labour, in both its forms of expression, physical and intellectual, is more and more efficiently replaced by the work of machines, with exponential cost reductions. Machines become progressively more “rational” and men only have to assist them. For now,

they only think about what they are ordered to think about, through algorithms that substitute specific thinking steps. But the moment in which they will become autonomous even in their reasoning, in the sense that they will be able to build new algorithms by themselves, is not far away.

The world imagined by Marx and then by Keynes, a world where most of the work intended to the reproduction of men and society is done by machines, and where men see the time they have to dedicate to their job drastically reduced, is getting dangerously nearer. Dangerously because, on the contrary, we perceive as extremely distant – we cannot visualise them – institutions able to govern a world where the necessary work time is severely reduced, and potentially nullified, but where paradoxically men’s ability to secure means of subsistence and all that offered by an immense production apparatus is attached exactly to the necessary work. And this paradox generates another one, even more terrible, that is, the time freed does not bear any freedom, but only an increase in needs. The more scientific and technological development instilled in the regime of these machines frees human lifetime from the burden of work, the poorer men will get.

The potential implications are at the same time disturbing and intriguing, depending on the kind of “philosophy” that we follow. If the need of using human labour for the production

of goods and services defaults, then the fundamental mechanism that allocates purchasing power, which in turn constitutes the basic requirement for the existence and functioning of those institutions peculiar of our society, i.e. markets, will also default. This would create a paradoxical short circuit. In front of a mounting technical possibility of producing goods and services in virtually unlimited quantities, there would not be anymore the necessary instruments to distribute them to those who need or want them. Once again, we must acknowledge that new scenarios are emerging, ones in front of which we are completely helpless.

Nowadays we are facing a production system that is increasingly permeated and influenced by the relentless acceleration of digital technology, and that presents two potentially harmful features. On the one hand, the fact that property of accumulated technological capital finishes in the hands of a small group of people, who seize also the profits that it generates. On the other hand, the rising economic inequality which is dividing society ever more boldly, dissolving its core that has been so far the basement and stronghold of democracy. White-collar workers, who for better or for worse marked the history of twentieth-century democracies, seems to be disappearing since it was made obsolete by the superior “intellect” of machines. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, cognitive computing, and genetic programming are literally engulfing the informational

content of many jobs, hollowing individuals' professional assets out, especially those based on knowledge. What is scary is that machines manage such knowledge much better than how human beings managed it so far. Another daunting aspect is that the elaboration capacity of these machines is available, at present, to very few people. Accelerationism seems to be aware of these matters, but it does not have anything relevant to say about them.

It is clear that our society is helpless in facing these courses of technological and, primarily, cognitive overturning; its institutional apparatus, or if you prefer its software, is completely inadequate to tackle the impending issues. There is a need for shaping new values and institutions capable of absorbing into the social metabolism these volatile innovations. The key question might be: what can be done so that the working time released by the advent of smart machines does not fade into unemployment, but becomes vacant time returned to everyone's life? The question is not new, but rather standard. However, it has remained unanswered. *Hic Rhodus, hic saltus*. Those who truly want to tackle the focal issue at the dusk of the modern era need to find an answer to this question. Supposing that it could be possible to deliberately accelerate the process of innovation that is driving us here, the solution would not be acceleration itself. The answer is hidden in the deep mystery of those impulses that once in a while induce human being

to research new forms of cooperation, thereby generating new social institutions. However, nowadays we live in dark times: forms of cooperation are dangerously crumbling, lifting that veil of trust that has bonded our societies so far. Beside the one celebrated by the Accelerationists, there is even here a gradual acceleration underway, which entails destructive processes that are closing our future down rather than opening it.

The world that we are facing bears a great resemblance to the one envisioned more than sixty years ago by a brilliant twenty-nine-year-old American writer, Kurt Vonnegut. A world where machines dominate and men are divided into two categories based on a sort of IQ: those who deal with machines, namely the dominant class, and those who have been expropriated of their intellect and ability to work by machines and now live in lousy subsistence conditions. The truly pertinent question could then be not “What to do”, but “Why in sixty years we haven’t managed to do anything?” In the period of highest Fordist acceleration, Ford himself identified and solved the matter, doubling the wage of his employees so that they could buy the cars produced by his assembly lines. Who will play Ford’s role today?

Actually, the problem is much more complex. As often happens for matters that concern society, there are two answers: a maximal and a minimal one. There is a founded suspicion that,

provided that some sufficiently general action is taken shortly, the solution to prevail will be the minimal one. The maximal solution would imply that we addressed the problem of how ought to be governed a society in which scientific and technological development is shrinking the role of direct human labour to a negligible percentage. The new and ground-breaking circumstance, which we are facing due to a new wave of technological innovations, is that the myth of the liberation of men from the yoke of labour and physical fatigue is basically coming true. We are getting asymptotically nearer to the moment when all the labour necessary for the material reproduction of humanity could be done by systems of machines. Common wealth would not be represented anymore by the sum of all goods and services made available and by the corresponding size of the transactions necessary to purchase them, but by the amount of free time. The problem is: based on which criteria, through which institutions, we could determine the allocation of the total amount of free time? Even on this topic, there are many suggestions that come from a similar area of thought, which goes under the labels of citizen's dividend or quantitative easing for people. However, these do not seem to fit the kind of hypotheses and solutions achievable in the short term.

The minimal solution would consist in the adoption of one of the many measures aimed at assigning a minimum wage to all those who, for one reason or another, do not manage

to earn it on the market, or, in a more extensive version, to everyone indistinctly. The side effects of these two versions of minimal solution are widely known and debated. Apart from all the considerations on their possible impact on the system of incentives that governs human choices, I am going to mention here only one general consequence, which sums up all the others: each one of these solutions would imply a more or less extensive socialisation of wealth. And this is an issue to which, up to now, nobody has found a non-utopian answer.

This is not the place to discuss this matter. For now, I am going to simply restate that the creation of an acceptable social and economic order will have to come across this issue and will have to come to terms with the unsustainable and devastating drifts on which the crisis of the last few years has shed light.

## Biography

### Lapo Berti

An Italian economist and former member of the Italian Antitrust Authority (1993—2010), Berti was Professor of Economic and Financial Politics at the University of Cosenza. His practice looked at problems of monetary theory and the history of economic thought, as well as economic politics. During the 1960s he collaborated with Mario Tronti and other Marxist intellectuals within Italian Communist heresy defined as “workerism”. In the 1970s he co-edited with Sergio Bologna the Marxist magazine *Primo Maggio*. Most recently he published *Il mercato oltre le ideologie* (Università Bocconi Editore, 2006), *Le stagioni dell’antitrust* (with Andrea Pezzoli, Università Bocconi Editore, 2010), *Trattatello sulla felicità* (LUISS University Press, 2013) and, with others, *Birth of Digital Populism* (Obsolete Capitalism Free Press, 2014) and *Money, revolution and philosophy of the future* (Obsolete Capitalism Free Press, 2017). In 2016 Rizosfera published Berti’s interview *Marx, Money and Capital* (Rhizonomics book series).