

# Finance, Ecosophy and the Capitalist's Discourse: Approximations Between Berardi, Guattari and Lacan

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**Abstract:** It is intended, in this brief essay, to make a parallel between the authors Félix Guattari, Franco Berardi and Jacques Lacan, especially with regard to ecosophy (and its three registers, namely: that of the environment, that of subjectivity and that of social relations), the financial logic and its excesses (the financialization of everyday practices) and the capitalist discourse (version of the master's discourse, in Lacanian theory), respectively, aiming to criticize the current economic model and its repercussions in the ecological crisis of the Anthropocene. To this end, an introduction to the authors and their theories was established, a diagnosis of the contemporary context (as a diagnosis of the present, from a historical-conceptual interpretation), perspectives of analysis (based on interlocution), from the aforementioned authors, and ecosophy, art and new practices were listed for structural changes in view of the criticisms pointed out in the text. Finally, a conclusion was reached, open to discussion (more as a provocation, a reflection), in the face of issues such as ESG, circular economy and organizational culture. In this sense, it should be noted that such practices cannot serve only as marketing, as imposture (which often happens), but as effective actions, especially in the corporate field.

**Keywords:** Ecosophy, Financial Economy, Capitalism, Ecological Crisis, Anthropocene, Psychoanalysis, Politics

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## 1. Introduction

It is intended, in this brief essay, to make a parallel between authors, Félix Guattari, Franco Berardi and Jacques Lacan, especially with regard to ecosophy, financial logic and its excesses and the capitalist discourse, respectively, aiming to criticize the model current economic crisis, and its repercussions on the ecological crisis of the Anthropocene.

Among the concepts and notions created by Guattari (1930-1992), are those of transversality, ecosophy, chaosmosis, deterritorialization, refrain, singularity, production of subjectivity and integrated world capitalism. The philosopher also theorized on the issue of transdisciplinarity, desire, institutions and was, together with Deleuze, the most profound critic of psychoanalysis which, according to Michel Foucault, was a tactical enemy, while its strategic enemy would be power, fascism. Based on this criticism, he established with Gilles Deleuze what he called schizoanalysis (and Cartography and Minor Pragmatics).

Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), in turn, after studying Medicine, turned to Psychiatry and obtained his doctorate in

1932, with the thesis *On Paranoid Psychosis in its Relations with Personality*. After being analyzed by Rudolph Loewenstein, he joined the Paris Psychoanalytic Society (SPP) in 1934, and was elected a full member in 1938. It was after the Second World War that his teaching took on importance. He had contact with psychoanalysis through surrealism and from 1951, opposing the post-Freudians who promoted the Psychology of the Ego, proposes a return to Freud. Throughout his intellectual career, Lacan dialogued with the philosophical thought of authors such as Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Martin Heidegger, Alexander Koyré, Jean-Paul Sartre. His thinking influenced several contemporary philosophers, including Jacques Derrida, Slavoj Žižek, Alain Badiou.

Franco Berardi holds a degree in aesthetics from the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Bologna. Militant since adolescence, he passed through the Communist Youth, was a prominent figure in *Potere He operated* during May 1968, and was active in the Italian anarcho-sindicalist movement in the 1970s. He founded the magazine *A/ traverso* (1975–81) and was part of the staff of Radio Alice, Italy's first free radio station (1976–78). Along

with Antonio Negri and other intellectuals involved in the Italian Autonomist Movement, he went into exile in Paris. There, he worked with Félix Guattari in the field of schizoanalysis and attended Michel Foucault's seminars.

## 2. Diagnosis of the Present

It was Guattari who warned, still in the 1980s, in the work *The Three Ecologies*, that human ways of life evolve in a progressive deterioration, and that the relationship between subjectivity and its exteriority is found in a movement of implosion and regressive infantilization:

“Planet Earth is going through a period of intense technical-scientific transformations, in return for which phenomena of ecological imbalances are engendered that, if not remedied, at the limit, threaten life on its surface” [1].

Berardi, in a more recent work, *Insurreição – poéticas e Finanças*, written in 2011, during the world revolt called *Occupy*, in which a generalized rebellion against austerity opened a crack for a possible process of liberation against the dictatorship. financial, in a continuation of the criticism by Guattari, highlighted the philosophical concern to which his work intended to respond: questioning the infinite possibilities of language and the meaning of poetry as a way of reactivating the erotic body of society: the *Occupy process* had a hidden meaning, was a way of resisting the corporate capture of knowledge and subverting it, in order to activate the most intimate powers of language. Just as the French philosopher, Berardi, believes in language, in the power of poetry, as a revolutionary factor, an ethical-political articulation in Guattari's words:

“Only an ethical-political articulation – which I call ecosophy – between the three ecological registers (that of the environment, that of social relations and that of human subjectivity) could conveniently clarify such questions” [2].

A response to the ecological crisis (which does not only concern, it should be emphasized, environmental problems, of nature) must concern not only the relations of visible forces, but also the domains of sensitivity, intelligence and desire. This is because Integrated World Capitalism establishes immense zones of misery, hunger and death. Ecological issues evoke a problematization that becomes transversal to other fault lines. Berardi, in a similar sense, had denounced that the social body, unable to free itself from the abstract trap of financial algorithms, entered a long process of asphyxia. Guattari, thinking about how to proceed in the face of such a collapse, stated that

“It is, each time, to look into what could be the devices of an individual and collective resingularization, instead of going in the sense of a machining by the media, synonymous with desolation and despair” [3].

A diagnosis of the present close to the aforementioned reflections is carried out by Lacan, when conceptualizing the Capitalist's Discourse. This discourse differs from the four discourses that produce social bonds: that of the hysteric, that of the master, that of the university student and that of the psychoanalyst. The DC can be superficially equated with the

master's discourse, but, unlike the former, it is not a regulator (through the master and slave dialectic), it is segregating. This discourse does not produce a social bond, because there is no relationship between subject and otherness, the “subject” is related to objects, manufactured by science and technology.

In the capitalist discourse, the other is not clear, the object cause of desire is *gadget* (this is the other of this discourse), knowledge is technology and S1 (the master-signifier, originating in the signifying chain) is power, the capital. In this discourse, there is an induced autism, in which insatiable subjects remain in the illusion of completeness with a “connectable” partner.

In this sense, Chernobyl and Aids, two of the most striking facts of the 1980s, with consequences that are still present (from the first, the proliferation of the incidence of cancer in the population, aggravated by radiation, from the second, the expansion of the syndrome, with mutations of the virus), brutally revealed to us the limits of humanity's technical-scientific powers and the “reverse gears” that “nature” can reserve for us.

## 3. Perspectives

The same ethical-political perspective according to Guattari, crosses the issues of racism, phallogocentrism, the disasters bequeathed by an urbanism that wants to be modern, of an artistic creation freed from the market system, of a pedagogy capable of inventing its social mediators: here is the principle of ecosophy. And, as such, it presents itself in its social, mental and environmental facets.

In terms of social ecosophy, practices are needed that reinvent ways of being in the family, in the urban context, at work. In mental ecosophy, in turn, the philosopher recalls that the subject's relationship with the body needs to be reinvented, with the “ghost”, over time, with the “mysteries” of life and death. In this field, we need to look for antidotes to media and telematics standardization, the conformism of fashions, advertising manipulations. His way of operating is similar to that of the artist.

“If there is no rearticulation of the three fundamental registers of ecology, we can unfortunately foreshadow the escalation of all dangers: those of racism, religious fanaticism, schisms nationalists falling into reactionary closures, those of the exploitation of child labor, the oppression of women” [4].

Guattari alerts to the fact that those who deal with subjectivity, the *psi professionals*, approach it “wearing gloves”, that is, in an unreasonable distance, taking care not to distance it from paradigms borrowed from the hard sciences. From their perspective, it is urgent that such professionals get rid of all scientific references and metaphors to forge new paradigms, preferably of ethical-aesthetic inspiration. Thus, this perspective is inseparable from the assemblage of enunciation that makes it take shape, as a fact and as an expressive process. And, in this way, it is ethically unsustainable for *psi operators* to shelter in a neutrality founded on the control of the unconscious and a

scientific *corpus*. *the psi* fields establish themselves as an interface and extension of aesthetic fields.

Berardi [5] adds that individual and social bodies are seriously affected by scientism and its correlates:

“In the sphere of current bioeconomic totalitarianism, the incorporation of technolinguistic automatisms produced by semiocapital produced a form that is not manifested by the external domination of the acts of the body, but by the mutation of the social organism itself” [6].

Such mutations, incorporations of mechanisms and automatisms, lead to what Guattari had denounced in the field of urbanism, when he affirmed that men like Donald Trump, who take over entire neighborhoods of New York, Atlantic City, etc, to supposedly “renovate” them. ” (today we would say “revitalize them”), only generate an increase in rents and, at the same time, reject tens of thousands of poor families: “most of them are condemned to become *homeless*, the equivalent of the dead fish of environmental ecology” [7]. In Brazil, in Rio Grande do Sul in particular, we have the example of the many families that will be evicted to complete the new Guaíba bridge, or even those that have already been evicted and transferred to the outskirts, far from the urban center, to expand the Airport, among others.

These automatisms tend to decenter their focus of power from the structures of production of goods and services to structures that produce signs, syntax and subjectivity, through the control they exert over the media, advertising, polls. Therefore, Integrated World Capitalism (CMI), that is, inscribed in different structures, not only social, but subjective.

The CMI rests on four semiotic regimes: economic semiotics, which concern financial, banking and accounting instruments; legal semiotics, related to property titles and legislation; technical-scientific semiotics, supported by plans, diagrams, research, statistics; and semiotics of subjectivation, some coinciding with the others, but also relating to architecture, urbanism, collective facilities, etc.

In the CMI, there is no longer a causal hierarchy between these semiotic regimes (as Marxism postulated). The object of the CMI is a single block: productive-economic-subjective. Therefore, Guattari highlighted that “one of the key problems of analysis that social ecology and mental ecology should face is the introjection of repressive power by the oppressed” [8].

Berardi, more than twenty years later, stressed that the financial collapse of 2008 and the neoliberal ideology did not lead to changes in the economic policy of the United States, nor did they alter the Greek crisis of 2010: they strengthened, even more, the rigor of monetary policies and potentiated the perspective of reducing wages and social spending. In this way, they strengthened exclusionary and marginalizing policies.

Trends adjust, reinforce themselves, to the point of total collapse. Thus, capitalist power is deterritorialized, anesthetized in a feeling of pseudo -eternity. The question, therefore, point out Guattari and Berardi, will be to cultivate dissent and the singular production of existence, aiming at modes of production of subjectivity. This is because the financialization of the capitalist economy separated the

monetary signifier from the denotative and referential functions linked to concrete products: financial signs led to the parthenogenesis of value, they created money from money without the creative intervention of physical matter and manual labor.

“It seems to me essential that new micropolitical and microsocial practices, new solidarities, a new softness are organized together with new aesthetic practices and new analytical practices of unconscious formations” [9].

#### 4. Final Considerations: Ecosophy, Art and New Practices

The French philosopher emphasizes that this new ecosophical logic is similar to that of the artist who can be led to reorganize his work from the intrusion of an accidental detail, an incident-event that bifurcates his initial project. What revolutionizes, in this sense, is the process, the unpredictable event, which causes ruptures, new strategies, new paths.

Berardi, in a similar sense, emphasizes that voice and poetry are two strategies for reactivation, starting with the desiring force of enunciation: “Poetry is the sensorial excess that is discharged in the circuit of social communication and that reopens the dynamics of the game infinity of interpretation: desire” [10]. Desire is the originator of singularity, it is the establishment of the full subject, according to Lacan. And it is in this field that the three ecologies, in harmony, need to act:

“The principle common to the three ecologies is, therefore, that the existential Territories with which they confront us are not given as an in-itself, closed in on itself, but as a precarious, finite, finitized, singular for-itself., singularized, capable of bifurcating in stratified and deadly reiterations or in procedural opening from praxis that allow making it 'habitable' by a human project” [11].

Mental ecology, therefore, must be constructed with the capacity to circumscribe discursive chains in rupture of meaning, and with the possibility of operating concepts authorizing a theoretical and practical self -constructibility. Thus promoting an ecology of fantasy.

Social ecology, in turn, must have as its principle the promotion of an affective and pragmatic investment in groups. A “Group Eros” is one in which procedural symbolic semiotics take place, such as *autopoiesis*.

“A key programmatic point of social ecology would be to move these capitalist societies from the media era towards a post-media era, understood as a re -appropriation of the media by a multitude of subject-groups, capable of managing it in a of resingularization” [12].

Still in the field of social ecology, a technological evolution of the media must be sought through its miniaturization, with cost reduction, and possible use for non-capitalistic purposes, decoupling information and entertainment from large conglomerates of communication vehicles, attentive to standardization and massification. An ecology that promotes resingularization, with other value

systems (such as social “profitability”, aesthetics, values of desire), not based on profit, on information itself.

“The notion of collective interest should be extended to projects that in the short term do not bring 'benefit' to anyone, but in the long term are carriers of procedural enrichment for the whole of humanity [...] New social practices, new aesthetic practices, new practices of oneself in the relationship with the other, with the foreigner, with the stranger” [13].

The three ecologies, for Guattari, must be conceived as a common, ethical-aesthetic discipline, where individuals, at the same time, are solidary and increasingly different. This perspective is very similar to that pointed out by Lacan, when thinking about the way out of the capitalist discourse.

“The more we are saints, the more we laugh, is my principle, and even the output of the capitalist discourse – which will not constitute progress if it is only for a few [...] A saint, so you can understand me, does not do charity. First of all, he pays for the waste: he performs disgrace. [...] The saint is the rubbish of jouissance” [14].

In other words, like Guattari, who affirmed that revolution is only possible at the molecular level, through reterritorializations, Berardi points out that the plane of desire, voice and poetry (which is singularized) is what inscribes openings against the asphyxia of capital. And Lacan, like both of them, takes up the ethics of psychoanalysis as a way out: the Analyst's Discourse is the way out of capitalist discourse, as it forms a social bond by emptying the imperatives of jouissance. Being a saint is the position to which he invites us: the search for his desire, disalienated, desubjectivated, against the perverse- paranoid imperatives that are nothing more than violence, through denial or foreclosure of the law.

## 5. Conclusion

We recently came across a frightening data: from August 2020 to January 2021, there was a 46% increase in deforestation in the Amazon compared to the same period of the previous year. Retaliation and economic sanctions are determined, proving that sustainability is based on a tripod: people, planet and profit. It is important to remember that deforestation is what most contributes to the release of greenhouse gases, the main responsible for global warming.

Large corporations are belatedly adhering to ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) practices, also because the press has only recently given visibility to sustainability actions. Ecology (from the Greek *oikos*, house) is not just about nature, but about caring for oneself and others, based on the ethics of responsibility, recognition of singularity, otherness, and the appreciation of differences.

The ESG index is already considered outdated, according to trend analysts, and notes at the last World Economic Forum, by *Stakeholder metrics Capitalism*, which analyzes how companies manage to impact and generate value not only for their investors and shareholders, but for all parties involved, directly or indirectly, in their success (or failure). Inclusion and diversity policies, greenhouse gas emissions,

effluent treatment, employee training, data protection, community relations, ethics and transparency are some of the factors analyzed.

In this context, it is also important to think about a Circular Economy, which opposes the production process of the linear economy, and which goes beyond the three R's: reduce, reuse and recycle. In it, the concept of garbage is eliminated, since residues are inputs for the production of new products (there are even those that already transform organic waste into fuel and biogas). Through this cyclical view, resources are no longer just exploited and discarded: everything is reused in a new cycle. These are the principles of sustainability (but not only that, chemistry already gave us this solution when it said, “nothing is created, everything is transformed”) in action, supported by new technological models. An urgency in Brazil, one of the world champions in the production of waste: there are 541 tons per year, according to the UN. According to the World Economic Forum, EC represents a US\$4.5 trillion growth opportunity by 2030.

Perhaps one of the legacies of the pandemic chaos, which led us to rethink behaviors, also serves this purpose: new actions, simpler, more harmonious, more balanced, fair, well thought out.

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