## 1AC

### 1AC---Solarity---v1

#### Energy is defined by excess---modern humanity’s channeling of abundant potential into more production in service of endless utility is unstable and inevitably culminates in violent explosions of war and climate devastation. Rather than the “circularity” promised by renewables or the “usefulness” of oil, nuclear power offers a path of abundant energy and waste to expend our excess resources. In the face of the Anthropocene, we must question the purpose of utility.

Zwier & Blok 20 [Jochem Zwier & Vincent Blok, Institute for Science in Society @ Radboud University Nijmegen & Management Studies Chair Group and Philosophy Chair Group @ Wageningen, Energetic Ethics. Georges Bataille in the Anthropocene 2020, Ethics of Science and Technology Assessment, vol. 46, pp. 174 – 179, accessed: 3-11-2025] OA

15.2 Bataille: Energy and Economy ¶ In thinking of energy and economy, Bataille introduces a distinction between what he calls “the restricted economy” and “the general economy” (Bataille 1991). The restricted economy corresponds to how we usually conceive of economy, which is to say as a system of production and consumption of goods that is characterized by scarcity, neediness, and associated useful production. The economic logic is familiar here: scarcity of goods engenders demand, which elicits labour to address needs and overcome scarcity by way of producing useful goods. For example, we need electrical energy to power our homes, and must therefore engage in an economy of production and consumption of the scarce good of electrical energy. Such an engagement may accordingly raise the aforementioned ethical issues, for instance with regards to “green energy”, sustainability, etc. For Bataille, the restricted economy thereby implies a particular understanding of the world, a “consciousness of necessity, of an indigence,” according to which individuals like our colloquial selves come into view as “nothing but eternally needy individuals” (Bataille 1991, 23). ¶ Yet as its name suggests, Bataille considers the restricted economy to concern only a particular, restricted situation within the much larger framework of “the general economy” (Bataille 1991, 20). The latter concerns the flow of energy in general, where energy is not—and this is a cardinal difference compared to the restricted economy—considered as a good existing within a particular economy. Rather, energy is what first constitutes and literally sets in-operation all processes and activities of life on the surface of the globe, including particular economic processes involving the production and consumption of goods. ¶ A second cardinal difference is that from the perspective of general economy, energy is not primarily characterized by scarcity and exigence, but by abundance and excess. This concretely means that the energetic abundance of the sun constitutes natural organisms and propels life on the surface of the Earth. Bataille takes it as “a basic fact” that because the influx of solar energy is unremitting, natural organisms receive more energy than strictly required for maintaining life, resulting in excess energy (Bataille 1991, 21). He articulates this excess in terms of “pressure” (Bataille 1991, 29–36), the first effect of which is expansion, as this reduces pressure via spatial distribution. If otherwise unhindered, growth eventually runs up against spatial limits, and since the sun remains impartial to such limits and continues to relentlessly bestow its energizing gift, surplus energy can eventually no longer be incorporated via growth, but must be dissipated. For Bataille, therefore, “the impossibility of continuing growth makes way for squander” (Bataille 1991, 29) via “the production of increasingly burdensome forms of life” (Bataille 1991, 33). Where, for instance, plants make relatively efficient use of the sun’s gift for growth,1 so called higher organisms eat plants and other animals without growing to the same extent, thus making self-preservation and growth a more burdensome or expensive affair. Additionally, the extravagant, intricate, and painstakingly extensive sexual behaviours of higher organisms imply a relatively inefficient way of procreation. In short, for Bataille: “The mammalian organism is a gulf that swallows vast quantities of energy” (Bataille 1986, 60). To be clear, none of this denies that natural life occasionally faces energetic shortages and accordingly engages in a struggle for survival, but Bataille interprets such a struggle as both constituted by, and partaking in the general movement of energy that is characterized by abundance and ultimately by squander. A hungry lion may face a shortage of food, but its hunting and eating of a zebra (which itself “swallows vast quantities of energy” by inefficiently feeding on grass) partakes in the carnivorous squander of the abundant energy that constitutes the grass, the zebra, and the lion. ¶ Bataille’s general economy thus concerns the abundant energy that constitutes all living beings on Earth, including human beings. At the same time, humans occupy a unique position in this energetic constellation. Like all organisms, humanity is exposed to abundant solar energy, yet by tapping into fossil sources of energy like coal and oil (as well as nuclear energy), humanity exposes itself to energetic abundance even more. As a consequence of unlocking ever greater energy resources and using only a fraction of this resource for self-maintenance, humanity faces an increasing surplus of energy. As with other lifeforms, this engenders demographic expansion and spatial distribution of humans on Earth. ¶ 15.3 Bataille and the Anthropocene ¶ This brief sketch of Bataille’s thought already indicates its relevance to the topic of the Anthropocene. On the one hand, Bataille can be seen as an Anthropocenic thinker avant la lettre. If we recall Hamilton’s abovementioned idea that the Anthropocene places human enterprise and other earthly dynamics into one totalizing framework, it may be clear how Bataille anticipates this idea inasmuch as he positions human beings within the energetic framework of the general economy, in which all life on the planet is implicated. ¶ On the other hand, the Anthropocene can be understood as the concrete outcome of the unique way in which humanity is implicated in the general economy. If, following Bataille, energetic abundance engenders pressure which in turn effects expansion, the Anthropocene can be seen as its result (cf. Zwier and Blok 2019). Whatever its exact starting point (Lorimer 2017) it is clear that the Anthropocene involves an enormous increase of human beings on the planet since that point (recall Fig. 15.1). This increase is itself made possible by the tremendous accumulation, production, and transformation of energetic resources that modern, industrialized humanity accomplishes (recall Fig. 15.3). It is through this energetic accomplishment that now, in the Anthropocene, humanity takes the stage as the dominant earth- shaping force. ¶ Be that as it may, this accomplishment is not simply a matter of abundant energy as such, but first and foremost concerns the way in which it is addressed and understood. In elucidating this point, it is relevant to note how Bataille characterizes modern, industrial human existence by a tendency to forget the general economy and its constitutive, abundant energy.2 Due to this forgetfulness, the modern understanding of the world exclusively follows the logic of the restricted economy and its aforementioned “consciousness of necessity.” This implies turning a blind eye to energetic abundance, only to consider questions of economy and energy in terms of scarcity and the need for efficient, productive labour.3 Our present-day colloquial understanding of economy attests to this hegemony of the restricted economy, given how we unquestioningly take for granted the need to engage in productive labour to “make a living,” i.e. compensate for insufficient economic resources. The same goes for mainstream economic science inasmuch as it is self-evidently oriented towards the complex dynamics of scarcity of production (Zwier et al. 2015). Due to the hegemony of the restricted economy, energy solely comes under consideration as a scarce good for which there exists a continuous and increasing demand. In response, energy is produced and mobilized in ever increasing amounts, with ever increasing efficiency, ultimately resulting in what Fig. 15.3 illustrates. ¶ According to this Bataillean interpretation then, the Anthropocene distinctly comes into view as an energetic and economic affair. It appears as the outcome of the way in which human existence forgets the general economy, instead of adhering to the hegemonic logic of the restricted economy. The accompanying emphasis on efficiency and productivity gives rise to an economic growth that now reaches planetary proportions. ¶ 15.4 Energetic Ethics ¶ Bataille’s economic thought has an ethical character inasmuch as it addresses what he calls the “failure of humanity” (Bataille 2007, 15) to take heed of the general economy. In exclusively adhering to the restricted economy and thus solely addressing energy in terms of its efficient production, humanity becomes increasingly exposed to the abundant influx and pressure of the general economy. As with any living system, this causes expansion. But where the logic of the restricted economy celebrates such expansion under the heading of economic growth, Bataille stresses that all growth must eventually run out of space. When this happens, pressure builds up, and like any limited system that is subjected to increasing pressure, it finally explodes. Writing in the aftermath of two world wars which he understands as “the greatest orgies of wealth that history has recorded” (Bataille 1991, 37), Bataille imagines—with Argus’ eyes—the eruption of another war as the explosive and catastrophic outcome of (or rather outlet for) uncontainable pressure. As with other constituents of the general economy, “the impossibility of continuing growth makes way for squander” (Bataille 1991, 29), which in the case of forgetful human existence takes the catastrophic form of war. ¶ For Bataille therefore, the failure of neglecting the general economy “causes us to undergo what we could bring about in our own way” (Bataille 1991, 23). This failure evidently concerns ethics, and Bataille explicitly aims to find better ways of dealing with excess energy, of “exhausting the surplus without war” (Bataille 2007, 428). In exploring cultural history, he famously finds examples of pressure exhausts in the ritual of potlach, where the indigenous people in the American north- west wasted surplus energy by way of the destruction of accumulated and produced resources, for instance by wrecking one’s canoes, up to setting one’s own village on fire (Bataille 1991, 67–68). Other examples include pyramids as an energetically inefficient burial method (119), Lamaist monks who avoided activity in contemplative life, thus dissipating the surplus generated by Tibetan workers (Bataille 1991, 93–110), jewels, works of art (Bataille 1989; Wendlin 2007, 39), and most eminently eroticism (Bataille 1986, 2007). All of these indicate a different approach to energy: rather than considering it a scarce good to be accumulated and put to work, they acknowledge rather than forget its constitutive abundance, accordingly attesting to how “it is not necessity but its contrary, ‘luxury’ that presents living matter and mankind with their fundamental problems” (Bataille 1991, 12). For Bataille, such luxury is a fundamental ethical problem, given how refraining from burning off excess energy eventually causes humanity to undergo its catastrophic dissipation in war. ¶ The Anthropocene, however, complicates this problem. The reason for this is that Bataille does not take the ecological crisis into consideration. His analysis relies on a stable Earth-system upon which the human habitat is subjected to pressure, grows, and eventually either bursts out in war, or finds better ways of dissipating excess energy. However, where Bataille is concerned with burning of excess energy, the Anthropocene forefronts the aftermath of the excessive burning of fossil fuels.4 This is to say that in light of global warming, the already peculiar call for the dissipative burning of excess energy appears even more unacceptable. There are nonetheless at least two reasons why Bataille’s thought remains relevant for an ethics of energy in the Anthropocene. ¶ First, it is worth noting how many responses to the Anthropocene and ecological crisis frame the core energetic problem as one of economic efficiency. In attempting to confront “a world with growing pressures on resources and the environment”, initiatives like the Bio-Based Economy aim for the “transition to a resource-efficient and ultimately regenerative circular economy” (European Commission 2012, 1). Such a bio-based, circular economy is thereby envisioned as an “efficient economic system that produces no waste” (Asveld et al. 2011, 11). Accordingly, the ideals of circularity and “zero-waste” imply that energetic resources (e.g. biomass) are renewable and can always be mobilized for further use. In light of the above, it may come as a surprise that such an ideal quite explicitly adheres to Bataille’s restricted economy, given how (bio)energy is solely addressed as a scarce good that cannot be wasted, but must continuously be put to work. Now, on the one hand, it goes without saying that the Anthropocene compels us to take serious consideration of such initiatives. On the other hand, Bataille’s thought compels the critical question whether ideals like the bio-based economy are not short-sighted, and whether they do not merely offer momentary reprieve. An economic ideal that seeks after absolute efficiency whilst excluding any form of waste or squander cannot but result in an economy that must grow under the pressure of the (forgotten) general economy. It thus repeats Bataille’s “human failure” as it eventually moves towards a cataclysmic dissipation of surplus energy, a bio-based catastrophe.5 Therefore, even in the harrowing light of global warming, Bataille’s fundamental economic problem of luxury and its dissipation cannot simply be discounted. ¶ Secondly, Bataille’s ethical challenge remains relevant for the Anthropocene insofar as it raises the question concerning our character or ethos as Earthlings. Inasmuch as it articulates an approach to energy that calls for its useless expenditure and thus moves beyond the means-end relation according to which energy is primarily useful, Bataille’s contemplation of economy ultimately raises the question whether human existence must be primarily characterized in terms of usefulness and efficiency. For Bataille, the expenditure witnessed in pyramids, religious festivals, eroticism, and artworks involves an ecstatic and rapturous experience that carries consciousness beyond its usual and restricted “consciousness of necessity.” Although the associated squander of energy may serve to fend off catastrophic war, this is never its final use and legitimation. Rather, it indicates the possibility of a domain beyond utility altogether. ¶ Strange and fleeting as this idea may be—and Bataille is well aware that his suggestions “go against the judgments that form the basis of a rational economy” and require a “reversal of thinking” (Bataille 1991, 22–25)—it forms a worthwhile complement to contemporary ethical considerations of the Anthropocene. Whereas many such considerations (quite rightly) concern the way in which energy and economy can be aligned according to a manner that fosters a good and sustainable way of maintaining our collective livelihoods, Bataille’s thought accentuates the horizon of such efforts. It confronts us with the question whether existence is principally characterized by (ethically honourable) self-maintenance and sustainability, or whether the need for self-maintenance is itself to be transgressed. Particularly now, when the survival of humankind can no longer be taken for granted, questioning the horizon— both energetic and ethical—of self-maintenance appears a worthwhile endeavour.

#### Thus, we affirm investment in nuclear energy as a fiery embrace of unproductive expenditure. Rather than the combustion of the world marked by the dawn of the Anthropocene, we imagine the destruction of atoms and the creation of waste without limits.

Clark 20 [Nigel Clark, Professor of social sustainability and human geography @ Lancaster University, August 2020, "Another End of the World Is Possible" Culture Machine, https://culturemachine.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Clark.pdf, pp. 14 – 16, accessed: 3-16-2025] OA

Counterblast ¶ Fire, observes Pyne, ‘appears more profusely during times of rapid and extreme climatic change’ (1994: 890). The fiery irruptions of pent-up energy we are observing today across the planet - roaring wildfires, crop fires, peri-urban blazes – are far from the generous, generative discharges of which Bataille dreamt. Even more shocking are the flaring fires of conflict, for which growing environmental stress – ‘if not exactly and directly’– may often be a contributing factor. Amongst the novel modes of explosive device now proliferating, the car bomb – what urban theorist Mike Davis describes as ‘the nuclear weapon of guerilla warfare’ (2008: 130) - has a cruelly ironic centrality. For just as the modern automobile enfolds the explosive force of the firearm within its cylinders, the vehicleborne improvised explosive device unfolds the force of explosive deflagration back into an act of war: the steal-hard casing of the ubiquitous car reconverted into the full metal jacket of the militant projectile.¶ Still more horrific - if we can imagine a scale to horror - is the suicide bomber, who instantiates the ‘body-explosion complex’ in the rawest, most palpable way, literally saturating every atom of their being with incendiary force. It is worth recalling that Bataille spoke of the profundity of the break with the infernal logic of accumulation in terms of sacrifice (1991:182). And though his hope was to imbue ordinary social life with a spirit of giving without return, he did not shy away from the anguish of actual lives being put on the line (1986: 85-8).¶ For Bataille, the path out of the predicament of the planetary powder keg lay in the pointless expenditure – or ‘squandering’ – of our amassed material-energetic forces. So he called on us ‘to consume, to annihilate, to make a bonfire of our resources’ – linking such exuberance to the experiences that were once referred to as ‘divine, sacred’ (1986: 185). If the idea of nonutilitarian expenditure seems to grate against the conditions of mass deprivation that the current global order engenders, we should keep in mind how, above all, it is the planet’s least privileged who have been most pressured to forgo their customary landscape burning practices, their artisanal fires, their multitudinous ways of becoming with and through fire (Clark, 2015). As we should insist that any thermopolitics or pyropolitics to come – any attempt to cut firebreaks in a blazing modernity – needs to work with and through the historical depth of fiery experimentation and all the multitude of ways that the inhuman force of fire has been enfolded into human collectives.¶ Throughout this paper I have been tempted, am still temped, to draw a distinction between the thermal generativity of the pyrotechnical craftsperson and the fiery nihilism of military explosive engineers: to insist that the wild entropic outburst of the explosion is categorically destructive while the tempered transmutations of the artisanal flame are definitively creative or productive. Until I remember the first use of runaway deflagration, before militarism dressed the explosion in its steel-hard housing. Kelly’s evocation of pyrotechnic display would make Bataille’s heart sing. ‘Many have tried to describe the evanescent beauty of firework’, he writes. ‘The explosions are splendid waste. They are wild-haired comets, silver rain, tinsel-starred bouquets’ (2004: 238).¶ At the other end of our infernal modernity, Alfred Crosby embraces the post-conflict repurposing of the rocket - which now tasks exploding fuel with journeying beyond Earth. After collecting data about the gas giant Jupiter, he recounts, the Pioneer 10 spacecraft is ‘whiplashed around the planet and hurled away from the Sun at a velocity fifty-five times that of a rifle bullet and off toward interstellar space’ (2002: 188). Heading into the void, the rocket in Crosby’s telling seems more like a firework - a ‘wild-haired comet’ - than a ballistic projectile, a great burst of flame on a glorious trajectory that no longer remembers its target.¶ It is possible that our species’ primordial infatuation with fire could have found modern, intensified forms of expression other than escalating military firepower and the proliferation of autonomous internal combustion vehicles. As it might just be conceivable that the high-speed deflagration of the firework could have segued into the explosive propulsion of the spaceventuring rocket along some trajectory other than a thousandyear spree of killing-at-a-distance. What we can be more certain of is that no steel-hard casing, no full metal jacket, is going to protect us from a profusely burning planet. To live in the midst of resurgent flame would seem to summon a perviousness, a transmutability, a raging curiosity whose embers - if we are lucky – still smolder somewhere deep within our being.

#### In the face of our self-annihilation from fossil fuels and nuclear war, we must reframe the destructive power of the atom as an exercise in wholeness and possibility. Only by picturing expansion in positive ways can we imagine a radically new world.

Timofeeva 24 [Oxana Timofeeva, philosopher and author, 2-14-2024, "Another End of the World Is Possible" e-flux, https://www.e-flux.com/notes/589795/another-end-of-the-world-is-possible, accessed: 3-12-2025] OA

According to Ilyenkov, the reversal of the process of entropy cannot occur naturally. Something needs to break the natural course of things. A conscious act. Entropy brings the world to death in cold and darkness. The opposite of this process is fire. And that is why we are here—to light that fire: ¶ At some peak point of their development, thinking beings, executing their cosmological duty and sacrificing themselves, produce a conscious cosmic catastrophe—provoking a process, a reverse “thermal dying” of cosmic matter; that is, provoking a process leading to the rebirth of dying worlds by means of a cosmic cloud of incandescent gas and vapors ... In simple terms, this act materializes in the guise of a colossal cosmic explosion having a chain-like character, and the matter of which (the explosive mass) emerges as the totality of elementary structures, is dispersed by emissions through the whole universal space.3 ¶ Ilyenkov does not consider fusion, but only speaks about fission, which was more extensively researched in his time. In his theory, the smaller the particle, the greater the amount of energy released from its splitting—and he believes that future scientific and technological developments will tend towards breaking up smaller and smaller amounts of matter. If we manage to break up the smallest possible elementary particle, the entire universe will explode. The discovery of nuclear fusion makes this theory rather irrelevant, but this does not affect Ilyenkov’s broader argument about the ends of humanity. Be it fission or fusion—the splitting of the atom into two or the slamming of two atoms into one—this is what thinking beings, according to Ilyenkov, have to do: prevent the natural death of the universe by pressing some ultimate red button, intentionally destroying the world in order to make it reemerge again from the very act of its fiery destruction. And this circular movement of matter, the end of which coincides with its beginning, presents, according to Ilyenkov, a true Hegelian infinity mediated by intelligence: “Thought, as a result, also emerges as the very link in the universal big circle, through which the development of universal matter is contained in this form of the big circle—in an image of a snake biting its tail, as Hegel loved to express the image of true (as opposed to ‘bad’) infinity.”4 ¶ We can say that Ilyenkov’s cosmology presents a very peculiar version of the Big Bang theory, the temporality of which is inverted and inscribed into the old philosophical paradigm of cyclicity. Perhaps he was familiar with the work of George Gamov, who, in 1948, proposed the theory of the hot universe. Drawing on the ideas of Alexander Friedman, Georges Lemaitre, and other physicists who claimed that at the beginning of the universe there was an explosion, Gamow suggested that the primary substance for the explosion was not only very dense, but also very hot. What took place in this substance was a nuclear reaction; that is, the Big Bang was a big nuclear explosion. From Ilyenkov’s perspective, an explosion of this kind must be not a natural process but an intentional act, a violent intervention of thinking substance. This argument does not belong to natural science; it is not physics, but metaphysics; and yet this metaphysics is materialist and grounded in Marxism and dialectics. The dialectical core of his argument is very simple: the end of the universe becomes its beginning. There is no creation ex nihilo, but rather an immanent life of matter that rejuvenates itself by its own means. We are destined to produce a cosmic catastrophe just like the thinking matter of a past universe might have produced what our physicists call the Big Bang. This happened before, and will happen again. It’s a circle, a true infinity. Thinking substance is the connecting link between the end and the beginning. Its self-sacrifice gives birth to the universe an infinite number of times. ¶ The paradigm of cyclicity, with the central place accorded to fire as both destructive and creative primal matter, is very ancient. It comes from Heraclitus, an ancient Greek philosopher from the city of Ephesus. According to Heraclitus, fire is the “ἀρχή,” i.e., the beginning and the first principle of the world. One of the most famous of Heraclitus’s fragments (XXXVII) states: ¶ κόσμον τόνδε τὸν αὐτὸν ἁπάντων οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησε, ἀλλ ̓ ἦν αἰεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ ἀείζωον, ἁπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα ¶ The ordering (cosmos), the same for all, no god nor man has made, but it ever was and is and will be: fire ever living, kindled in measures and in measures going out. ¶ This statement contains several paradoxes, and I would happily spend my life trying to exhaust the totality of its meanings, if it were not inexhaustible. Just think, for instance, about its original materialist premises, which must have sounded quite radical in the intellectual circles of Heraclitus's time. The cosmos is not created by anyone; it is a constant immanent movement of change, fueled by the energy of the ever-living fire, and it repeats, so that the cosmological future of the universe is a mirror of the past. Heraclitus lived in 500 BC and did not know about fission, fusion, or—continuing into more recent speculative regions of physics—supernovas, whose energy release is said to be equivalent to the power of a 1028 megaton bomb. But we can surely say that his philosophical insights resonate with contemporary cosmic science. ¶ Given that the development of nuclear energy—what we call the “peaceful atom”—historically derives from scientific research around nuclear weapons, another idea of Heraclitus—namely, that war is “the father of all things”—also takes on a new aspect. War in this sense corresponds to Heraclitean dialectics: the universe is constantly in flux, always in becoming; everything passes into its opposite; nothing is permanent except change. Fire is the image of this constant movement of change. It is both destructive and creative, but more than that, it is rational. It sets the rhythm of the universe according to the rational principle and law called “λόγος.” This fiery logos is the immanent intelligence of matter, which it fuses together. Its ontological status is controversial: it is and is not at the same time. ¶ Parmenides of Elea (c. 515–c. 450 BC) is the opposite of Heraclitus in many respects. According to Parmenides, this way of thinking—that something both is and is not—is totally wrong. The truth is that what is, is, and what is not, is not. We can think of all that is, but never of what is not. In this sense, thinking and being are the same. Against Heraclitus, Parmenides insisted on the permanence of being and the illusionary nature of becoming. And yet it is in a poem by Parmenides, not one by Heraclitus, that, as Heidegger claimed in an interview, the atomic bomb exploded long before humanity ever came to construct it. What does Parmenides have to do with the atomic bomb? From Heidegger’s perspective, the atomic bomb is a logical consequence of Western metaphysics, which begins from what he calls “the oblivion of Being”: the metaphysical operation of blurring the difference between beings that are present (all kinds of things), and Being itself, which is not present. Heidegger believes that the very fact that a thing is—i.e., its very being—precisely is not, and our blindness towards that which is not but which nevertheless lets everything be prevents us from grasping the deep ontological complexity of the material universe. This is the essence of modern technology, which frames all historical experience as violence against the way things are. Within the paradigm of technology, grounded in post-Parmenidean Western metaphysics, things are simply present and available; the world as a sensual and meaningful coexistence is always already destroyed by a violent and objectifying technological worldview. ¶ It is interesting to see how, in the second half of the twentieth century, both the fear of nuclear weapons and the hope for nuclear energy draw from a common source of technological thinking. Nuclear energy promises never-ending growth and the cosmic expansion of humankind, while nuclear weapons threaten to annihilate humankind entirely. In fact, these two fantasies do not compete but rather supplement each other. What if, in parallel to the “peaceful atom,” the atomic bomb can be subjected to a similar dialectical logic of the “bad” and the “true”—not just bad and true infinity, but bad and true finitude, or the bad and the true end of humanity? Bad finitude would be nuclear war, which now stands as a kind of negative regulative idea behind our current global warfare and seems to serve as a geopolitical deterrent. Nuclear and thermonuclear bombs appear as an element of endless expansion and colonization that aims to outlive the sun, but they also invite us to accelerate its death in a nuclear winter. It is the dead end of the bad infinity of capitalist growth, inherent in its very logic: the more that is produced, the more that is destroyed. ¶ So what about true finitude? Does the Heraclitean communism of Ilyenkov’s circle present a viable alternative to the Parmenidean capitalism of the Dyson sphere? Indeed, Ilyenkov’s conscious self-destruction, which brings together the two sides—peaceful nuclear energy, which will make us able to come to the end of the universe, and nuclear weapons or something similar, which will help us accomplish this end—sounds counterintuitive to say the least. For most of us consumers of late capitalism, this way of thinking sounds utterly incomprehensible, insane, and immoral. But the question remains: Which kind of truth can be brought about by the haunting presence of nuclear bombs? ¶ In his essay “The Apocalypse Is Disappointing,” first published in 1964, another communist thinker, Maurice Blanchot, presents an ironic account of the nuclear alarmism of his day. He points to Karl Jaspers’s assertion that, in view of humanity’s possible self-annihilation, we must change, immediately. But Blanchot contends that such calls for change do not really suggest something radically new. They are even formulated in the same language of morality that has been dominant for two thousand years. Atomic peril, according to Jaspers and other Western liberals, is equivalent to the communist peril. Therefore, what is at stake is not really change, but exactly the opposite—the task of saving the world by preserving existing structures and forms of social being. ¶ Behind the fear of “the bomb,” which is identified with Soviet totalitarianism, there lies another hidden fear: the fear of real change. It is not that such change must come from the atomic bomb or the Soviet Union—not at all. The point is that something is wrong with the very humanity for which such a scientific and technological achievement as the bomb presents a threat. Maybe “wrong” is not exactly the correct word here: rather, in Blanchot’s view, the society that warns itself about its risks and incessantly calls for change instead of really changing is imperfect and weak. Its weakness consists in the fact that it is not yet even humanity; it does not exist as a humanity; and what does not exist, cannot be destroyed. In order to be capable of self-destruction, to master it, to be its subject, and not just an object, we must first create and affirm ourselves as a whole: ¶ And it is not even true that the radical destruction of humanity is possible; for it to be possible, one would need the conditions of possibility to be united: real freedom, the achievement of the human community, reason as principle of unity, in other words, a totality that must be called—in the full sense—communist.5 ¶ Today, in the atmosphere of the worldwide rise of right-wing politics, polarizing national identities, the closing of state borders, the building of walls, and the shutting down of dialogue, when apocalyptic passions are inflamed by (not-so) new nuclear threats, thinking about humanity as a whole has gone out of fashion. Blanchot’s communist ideal appears incredibly far away from us. But even if it is tiny and marginal, the voice of understanding must be heard. As Blanchot puts it: ¶ Understanding is cold and without fear. It does not mistake the importance of the atomic threat, but it analyzes it, subjects it to its measures, and, in examining the new problems that, because of its paradoxes, this threat poses for war strategy, it searches for the conditions in which the atomic threat might be reconciled to a viable existence in our divided world.6 ¶ The point is not to prohibit nuclear weapons, but to learn to experience the freedom of not using them. This would demand a totally different politics based on international collaboration and collective decision-making. In order to let the atom stay really peaceful, instead of blindly following our death drive, fueled by the fantasies of right-wing politicians who keep pushing the world towards the edge of nuclear catastrophe, we have to create ourselves as a true infinity capable of understanding its final ends and freely deciding how to enjoy its highly explosive finitude.

#### Specifically, nuclear waste forces us to come to terms with expenditure. Our affirmation of spent fuel and political-economic resources explores the possibilities of excess and avoids calls to utility.

Jonik 07 [Michael Jonik, Professor of American Literature @ University of Sussex, 2021, " The Apocalypse Unarrived: Some Implications of Nuclear Waste for the Humanities and Sciences” in *TechKnowledgies: New Imaginaries in the Humanities, Arts, and TechnoSciences*, edited by Mary Valentis, Tara P. Monastero, and Paula Yablonsky, 300 – 301, accessed: 3-28-2025] OA

History Will Not Come to an End—¶ Nuclear waste complicates standard relationships between economies of production and consumption, management and movement, interiority and exteriority, as well as singularities, intensities, and totalities. As Baudrillard continues: ¶ There is in fact no insoluble waste problem. The problem is resolved by the postmodern invention of recycling and the incinerator. The Great Incinerators of history, from whose ashes the Phoenix of post-modernity is resuscitated! We have to come to terms with the idea that everything that was not degradable or exterminable is today recyclable, and hence that there is no final solution. We shall not be spared the worst—that is, History will not come to an end—since the leftovers, all the leftovers, -- the Church, communism, ethnic groups, conflicts, ideologies —are indefinitely recyclable. What is stupendous is that nothing one thought superseded by history has really disappeared. All the archaic, anachronistic forms are there ready to re-emerge, intact and timeless, like the viruses deep in the body. History has only wrenched itself from cyclical time to fall into the order of the recyclable.18¶ In lieu of a final solution, we are left to both contain and convert, and in both containment (disposal/non-proliferation) and conversion (recycling) we must attempt to “create a rational economy of waste—to create a new system of circulation within the capitalist order that brings waste back into the production process.””'” Following Bataille scholar, Jody Baker, we must “posit waste, as the circulation of intensities and interacting singularities which push these two interacting abstract systems toward threshold, rupture and change.’”° This perhaps can lead us out of the trap of a teleological history—one in which there is a build-up of destructive surpluses that we inherit as hazardous wastes, whether political or radioactive. We must avoid the negation of the future that is at the bottom of every fixed model of techno-scientific progression, or at root in every teleology. We must open our future by dealing with the wastes of our past, wastes generated by both the eventualities that have come about, and those that never came.

#### The role of the ballot is to vote for the team who best performatively and methodologically affirms the general economy---understanding solar energy as limitless rather than restricted and scarce embraces new ways of experiencing, rejects bourgeois ethics, and disrupts traditional ways of comparing value and knowledge---that takes out their weighing and theory claims.

Salminen and Vadén 15 [Antti Salminen and Tere Vadén, Finnish philosophy professors at the University of Tampare, xx-xx-2015, “Energy and Experience: An Essay in Nafthology,” MCM Publishing, https://www.mcmprime.com/files/Energy-and-Experience.pdf, DOA 3-17-2025] JH

The sun **pours energy** heedlessly into **all directions**. So much of this energy hits the earth that matter begins to squirm and vibrate, becoming more complex and eventually alive. Plants receive so much energy that they grow and spread. There is so much plant matter that it can be eaten by animals. There are so many animals that they can eat each other. There is so much plant and animal matter that tons of hydrocarbons and other products of decay are created. Humans **feel their existence** as **overflowing**, **superfluous**, and so on. Having bubbled for a while as life and experience, all of this energy plunges into emptiness. ¶ The waste of surplus energy is Bataille’s starting point in La Part Maudite dealing with the general economy.1 Inside a **general economy**, **restricted economies** appear as attempts at **limit**ing, **dam**ming, and **reserving energy flows**. This purifying and damming economy Bataille sees as a **bourgeois** and capitalist — and also as a technological — way of trying to persist, to guarantee, and to be secure. The **general** and **restricted economies** are not ontologically different — that is, they are not entities or groups of entities existing on their own right. Rather, they are **different ways of acting and experiencing**. They are incommensurable: what is important in one is not so in the other. Furthermore, what exists in one does not necessarily exist in the other, precisely in the way in which Newtonian gravity does not exist in the world of relativity, which accounts for the same phenomena through a curvature of space. ¶ Bataille speaks of the experiential in energy and general economy. However, he does not notice the uniqueness, non- renewability, and possible exhaustion of fossil fuels.2 While the blind spot of most philosophers in general is that they do not recognize energy as a condition of modernity at all, Bataille’s blind spot is particular, the omission of the fatefulness of fossil fuels. For him, fossil fuels are just another form of solar energy, and in the 1950s he supposes that nuclear power stations will soon produce more energy than humans can rationally spend.3 ¶ Instead of **utilitarian** bourgeois values, Bataille insists that communities always need useless and **irreversible waste**. Historically, surpluses have been squandered by groups and classes of extravagant lifestyles, such as the clergy, aristocracy, and the military. Bataille’s analysis of the indigenous potlatch cultures of the Pacific coast is famous. According to Bataille, a specific problem for the bourgeois world is that it tries to **increase production** and productive forces without providing a **good outlet for the waste of surpluses**. Bataille praises one exception to the rule: the Marshall aid provided by the U.S. after the Second World War. To be sure, there were calculated and utilitarian purposes behind the aid, but still it provided a global outlet for the surpluses massing in the U.S. and thus created an exceptionally peaceful and prosperous time in both the U.S. and the rest of the so-called Western world.4 ¶ General economy is a materialist theory from which both narrow, reductionist physicalism and all idealist humanism have been banished. The nature that general economy talks about is internally heterogeneous and incommensurable with all things human. The narrative of solar economy is a philosophical metaphor for general economy, and general economy itself is a philosophical metaphor for the cosmos; it is not a theory that could be fully and rationally conceptualized because natural forces are **not in human scales** and **not homogeneously expressible**. Consequently, the general economy is outside **classical natural science**.5 Both the **idea that nature is governed by laws** and the idea that nature is random **are human prejudices** that can help in organizing experiential fields. Nature, whatever it is, does not have to pay any attention to them.¶ Bataille presents an ironic picture of human knowledge by reminding that whenever humans **celebrate** their **expertise**, what we have is the **self-appraisal** of a **group of grinning apes**. For instance, in Nick Land’s account of Bataille’s thought, knowledge of the **general economy** is non-knowledge since it necessitates the dismantling of the structures of the subject, and unrepeatable and unique experience, which as such **cannot be brought into the language of homogeneous utilitarian knowledge**.6 In Land’s account, this a-theological and a-teleological impossibility is symbolized by the concept of zero. Zero is indivisible and does not take part in dividing. As a nothingness it provides a groundless ground, the heat death of energy, which is outside homogeneous experience and therefore incommensurable and destructive.

#### We don’t need to “solve” anything. This debate is a question of competing modes of transgressing and undermining of the restricted thought that dominates Public Forum. Reject efforts to constrain the topic and our thought with calculable and “useful” boundaries. That denies the interiority of scientific inquiry, precluding the forms of creativity that can produce different experiences.

Pawlett 15 [William, Senior Lecturer in the School of Law, Social Sciences and Communication at the University of Wolverhampton, “Georges Bataille: Sacred and Society”, General Economy and Sovereignty, pp. 89 – 90, January 30, 2015) MD + OA

Restricted economies and the knowledge they generate are absolutely vital and indispensable for society and for thought. Yet, restricted economies cannot function without erecting limits and boundaries, and there will always be excesses and indeterminacies permeating these boundaries in any particular system. Indeed, the erection of a boundary or limit itself generates an ‘excess’ beyond that limit. Restricted economies ‘work’ only by drawing, selectively and discretely upon their ‘outside’ – the realm of general economy – and by simultaneously denying that they border an irreducible ‘outside’. The restricted economies of academic disciplines are generally happy to admit that they have limits, of a fuzzy sort, but assume that beyond ‘their’ limit another academic discipline picks up the baton. For example, sociology may defer to psychology and to biology where the functioning of the individual psyche or of the body are concerned. In concert, academic disciplines purport to offer a seamless and limitless coverage of human experience. ¶ Bataille’s contention is that there are inherent and irreducible excesses, excesses which must be expelled as a precondition for the scientific enterprise to begin. Science is, for Bataille, restricted by its underlying foundation in utility – ultimately in the profane realm – so that all sciences must accumulate knowledge that is of use to society. The accursed share, that which cannot be reduced to the utilitarian project of scientific thought, is manifest in paradox, anomaly and in the failure to erect meaningful rather than simply useful foundations for knowledge. Further, for Bataille, the subjective or inner experiences of the thinker – his or her experiences of wonder, inspiration, mystery, despair and ecstasy – are experiences that can never be formalized as scientific knowledge, yet they are the source from which all scientific knowledge is generated: the pre- or non-foundations of the scientific enterprise. At the level of thought or enquiry, general economic thinking affirms and confronts the accursed share, where restricted economies deny it or avoid confronting its manifestations. ¶ The implications of the accursed share become increasingly complex and problematic when we consider human groups and societies. In support of his law of general economy, Bataille outlines a social anthropology of archaic societies which, he argues, made the expenditure of excess energy and wealth their fundamental dynamic through festivals, feasts and sacrificial rites (Bataille, 1988a, pp. 45–77). Bataille’s argument is that by expending excess in collective, ritual practices which suspend everyday, productive existence, excess energy can bind beings and communities: the accursed share is devoted to glory and sumptuary activities and so social life is enriched. In contrast, modern societies have, by and large, lost the capacity for glorious, communal expenditures because wealth is expropriated and ‘owned’ by elites for their individual and private pleasure

## 2AC

### 2AC---AT: Extra T

#### 3] Their interpretation forces arguments into political conformity which remove the creative potential of our strategy. Narrow conceptions of policymaking are incapable of radical transformations of society, instead culminating in fascistic acceptance of violence.

Svirsky, Marcelo. Dr Svirsky teaches critical theory in Australia. “Introduction: Beyond the Royal Science of Politics.” Deleuze Studies 4 (2010): 1–6. http://www.jstor.org/stable/45331431. //MD + OA

Anxieties over democracy in the post-war era, reinvigorated by philosophical nostalgia for the modern icons of civic engagement - including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill and James Madison - resulted in a flourishing industry of academic writing on political participation, especially in the English-speaking world and particularly in the field of political science. Almond and Verba's legendary The Civic Culture (1963) and Carole Pateman's Participation and Democratic Theory (1970), together with Robert Dahl's and Seymor Martin Lipseťs works on democratic theory, are just a few of the most prominent names and different works that have become the pillars of a very influential clergy, which has helped circumscribe contemporary understandings of politics. The paradigm introduced by such thinkers (and supported more effervescently by republicans than by liberals) did not seek to replace or challenge the privileged political form that is 'representative democracy'; rather, it assumed that 'mass participation is the lifeblood of representative democracy' (Norris 2002: 5), and identified elitism as that which impedes the reinvigoration of democratic regimes (see Schumpeter 1950). As a sequel to this colossal effort, researchers on political activism have anchored the concept firmly within official politics through the invention of a statistical science of voting fluctuations, participation in party politics and other formal indicators; only lately has this school of thought devoted any critical attention to the evident limits and barriers of formal political participation (see Norris 2002). Other trends in political theory have derided the efficacy of activism by forcing the concept into a reductive alignment with merely habitual social habits, thereby making the future of political life dependent on banalities such as 'bowling together' (cf. Putnam 2000). By default, such developments in political theory tend to categorise the informal protests of the citizenry as the most radical of activist practices. Ultimately, the tides and modes of civic engagement (or disengagement) are seen as symptomatic of either the flourishing or the declining state of an existent 'democratic spirit', which is invariably celebrated per se , leaving no room for significant criticism of the nature of the 'democracy' supposedly animating that 'spirit'. As Deleuze and Guattari have explained, this characteristic 'royal' science of politics 'continually appropriates the contents of vague or nomad science' - those forms of political investigation looking 'to understand both the repression it encounters and the interaction ' "containing" it' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 367-8). One major task of new activist war machines is, then, to escape entrapment within the black hole of the majoritarian discourse on civil society, captured and defined by pervasive notions of 'representative participation'. Although the 'NGOisation' of the public sphere since the 1980s (see Yacobi 2007), together with other forms of political proliferation, have broadened the visible political field, the potential of non-institutional forms of action has been weakened ideologically by a whole state apparatus comprised of research centres and budgets, instrumental teaching, and a parliamentary politics that has incorporated the discourse of civil society -all of which have effected a sectorisation of society and political life. The epistemological aspirations of the three 'ideal circles' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 367) of the state, economy and civil society are commonly used to categorise political eruptions as forms of participation in the official, representative state politics. It is in this light that we must interpret the failure of academia to come to terms with the division of labour lately being imposed by the transversal relations between intellectual investigation and political situatedness embodied in militant research . As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, 'we know of the problems States have always had with journey-men's associations or compagnonnages , the nomadic or itinerant bodies . . . ' (368). It is clear that a Jamesonian 'strategy of containment' is at work in the narrative tradition of royal political science. It is in the notion of 'representative participation' that a function of formal unity or a strategy of containment has been founded, which, as Jameson puts it, 'allows what can be thought to seem internally coherent in its own terms, while repressing the unthinkable . . . which lies beyond its boundaries' (Jameson 1981: 38). By tying official politics together with every form of political participation it can ensnare, what royal political science does is 'radically impoverish . . . the data of one narrative line' - namely, that of the new activisms-'by their rewriting according to the paradigm of another narrative . . . ' - namely, that of representative participatory politics (Jameson 1981: 22). The subversive power of political potentia is thus contained by this reductive strategy; civil society becomes the main territory of this imprisonment, assisted by a false equation of official participation with challenging politics. Rather than problematising the political, this royal understanding of activism uses its 'metric power' to axiomatise politics, while simultaneously repressing activist experiences that refuse simply to align with 'the given' of formal politics. An example of this can be seen in the hostility of western states towards organisations such as 'Wikileaks' or the 'Animal rights movement', each of which are immersed in creative acts of citizenship that actualise ruptures . Such new scenes and acts are constantly at risk of being appropriated by this royal science of politics, which imposes upon them a model that channels civic participation according to established rules and concepts. Activisms that seek only to guarantee the workings of representative democracy are essentially slave activisms ; they dwell in safety and their impact and potential is expected to be absorbed without drawing the system into new structures of resonance. The assumption that 'mass participation is the lifeblood of representative democracy' not only imposes a particular model of the political, it also reinforces a pejorative way to conceive activism. By positing representative democracy (or any other regime) as the reified model of political process, theory necessarily idealises certain forms of involvement over others. For example, classical participatory theory is often blind to the creative significance of the activist energies being unfolded in such events as critical teaching in schools, revolutionary philosophical writing, the deconstructive effect of a critical assemblage that confronts patriarchal power, or of civic homosexuality which disrupts heterosexism. In fact, the assumptions underlying 'representative' participation are troublesome for at least two reasons. Firstly, participation in the formal political process of 'representative democracy' does not in itself necessarily implicate a critical attitude or action, seeking a less repressive and more creative life. To evidence this, it is enough to keep in mind some fearful recent examples of mass political support for 'representative' state violence, as occurred last May when thousands of Israelis marched in Tel Aviv and the streets of Jerusalem to back the killing by the Israeli Defence Forces of nine activists from the Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief, as they boarded the Mavi Marmara ship sailing to Gaza as part of a humanitarian flotilla. Similarly, we might remain mindful of other, no less electrifying, cases of popular support for wars and genocides in South America, Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa, or of events such as the Holocaust. In these instances, mass participation more accurately falls within the Reichian analysis of a popular 'desire for fascism' -which lies worlds away from a participatory liberalism that idealises the commitment of the public to activist citizenship (see Isin 2009) and to the tolerant 'good life' that western democracy claims to represent. Secondly, passivity is not necessarily a sign of political anaemia, but may be a cultural expression that requires local explanation. Here, research at times confuses the visible with the political: absence of visible mass participation might be a sign of unconscious and pre-conscious compliance with ongoing forms of oppression, and can impact more energetically on the perpetuation of a regime than can tangible acts of the body -these modes of active abandonment produce the reign of daily microfascisms. After Deleuze and Guattari, political activism may be approached in a fundamentally different way: without an image, without a form. As Deleuze and Guattari make clear, the interaction between royal and nomad science produces a 'constantly shifting borderline', meaning that there is always some element that escapes containment by the 'iron collars' of representation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 367; see also Deleuze 1994). This occurs when the plane of consistency is passionately thrown against the plane of organisation, when a nomad element inserts itself in political struggles in which, for instance, the boundaries of citizenship are challenged and reopened (as occurred in the struggle associated with the sans-papiers movement, see Isin 2009), or barriers of ethnic segregation are challenged by new forms of interculturalism (as occurs with bilingual forms of education). It is through these 'smallest deviations' that smooth types of political activity dwell within the striated forms of state politics (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 371). Deleuze's and Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophies have created some of the conceptual tools which may be put to innovative use in activism that seeks to break with repressive traditions. Their alien relation to the standards set by the royal science of politics (see Patton 2000) -an alienation laid out in the philosophical resources they draw on, in the issues and concepts that characterise their work and, principally, in the incessant movement of their thought -points towards a richer philosophical weaponry with which to confront and possibly overcome political inhibitions, in both knowledge and practice. In truth, Deleuze and Guattari do not provide ready-made blueprints for revolution -neither recipes nor rules -but they do certainly describe a minor art of thinking/doing, one which allows activists to target stable forms of life wherever they impede creation, wherever they are mystified by representation. Activists couldn't hope for more powerful tools to assist their diverse struggles to overcome oppression, where this is a phenomenon understood comprehensively as a reactive style of power manifested in techniques of conceptual and material capture. Indeed, the two volumes of Capitalism and Schizophrenia are slowly but surely beginning to share some of the glory that volume one of Karl Marx's Capital occupied for more than a century; henceforth, we are faced with the urgency of thinking anew the nature of social struggles, and how to engage them successfully. Exchanging conservative for 'radical' ideologies, proving the guilt of the majoritarian group, celebrating recognition of identity, seeking political representation, instigating litigation and arousing strikes, marches and protests -all these conventionally privileged resources for transformative action are now seen as conforming to a certain model of activism. As Buchanan warns, 'from conformity it is but a short step to complicity' (Buchanan 2000: 75), because activism that treads established paths of dissent is always in danger of being besieged and contained by the organism of the State. A new horizon stretches out: by engaging more forcefully with the celerity of the 'itinerant' activist, a coextensive plane between the conceptual apparatus of politics and the more radical activist practices of rupture and creation may be constructed beyond the royal science of politics, while remaining prudent with respect to the 'gravitational field' of representative participation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 372). This is where a new science of activism is to be found: Whenever ambulant procedure and process are returned to their own model, the points regain their position as singularities that exclude all biunivocal relations, the flow regains its curvilinear and vertical motion that excludes any parallelism between vectors, and smooth space reconquers the properties of contact that prevent it from remaining homogeneous and striated. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 373) The task undertaken by the contributors to this special issue is to launch a preliminary experimentation with the conceptual tools appropriate for a new science of activism, each exploring different dimensions of the 'Deleuzian horizon' outlined here. The issue is the result of a conference held at the Centre for Critical and Cultural Theory, Cardiff University in November 2009. Here the participants gathered to discuss the idea that Deleuze offers activism a new kind of freedom from capture by the state-forms of representative politics; indeed, the speakers described how Deleuzian frameworks often engage with the smooth spaces that radical activism simultaneously practice and seek to create.

#### 6] Their efforts to define and make debate recognizable are fascist and can only end in a cyclical obsession with identity that clouds the ability to make meaningful decisions.

Franco Berardi Bifo, social critic, translated by Steve Wright, 8-26, 2007, "The obsession with identity fascism by Bifo," Generation Online, https://www.generation-online.org/p/fp\_bifo3.htm, accessed: 10-14-2023 //OA

A very tight dialectic between capitalist progress and working class revolution was the horizon of Potere Operaio's thought. Communism was simply a weapon of this struggle: 'communism is the real movement that abolishes the present state of things'. That dialectic bore its own fruit: the development of labour's autonomy from the factory, intellectualisation, enormous productive potentiality, the reduction of the labour necessary for global reproduction. But at this point the world presents itself in another light. No longer the light of a dialectic in which particular subjectivities produce a universal perspective, but the disquieting light of devolution, of a regression that society inflicts upon itself in order to withstand capital's mutagenic impact upon its anthropological and psychochemical composition. One recognisable form of devolution is fascism. Fascism, that strange word, that shapeless word. For a long time I strove to find a concept able to define the different (and contradictory) forms of authoritarianism, of nationalistic or ethnic aggression and so on, but without success. In his article 'Il fascismo eterno', Umberto Eco recognises that 'the characteristics cannot be marshalled into a system, many are mutually contradictory and are typical of other forms of despotism and fanaticism. But it is sufficient for one to be present for a fascist nebula to coagulate'. There follows a list of Ur-fascism's characteristics: the cult of tradition, the refusal of modernism, action for action's sake, the fear of difference, and so on. But, as interesting and pertinent as these characteristics are, Eco himself recognises that the effort of definition seems ultimately to end in frustration because the object continues to get away. For example, after having said that fascism is contrary to modernism, it must be recognised that historic fascism played a role in the modernisation of society in both Italy and Germany. In the absence, then, of a satisfactory and comprehensive definition, we run the risk of defining fascism as everything that disgusts us, and of identifying fascism, simply, as the party of imbecility and violence: as the party of evil. And this, naturally, doesn't work, it doesn't define anything. The problem is that that to which we are referring, using this word—fascism—which is imprecise and historically far too dated, is an extremely vast field of forms of life, behaviours, ideologies, prejudices that have, in the last analysis, a single element in common: the obsession with definition. The obsession to define is, in the last analysis, the characteristic common to the field of phenomena that we define as 'fascism'; it is simultaneously comprehensible and difficult to define. 'Fascism', in its maximum conceptual extension (encompassing nationalism and religious fundamentalism, political authoritarianism, sexual aggression and so on . . .) can be brought back to a fundamental obsession: the obsession with identity, the obsession with belonging, with origin, with recognisability. This obsession has grown, extended itself, exploded over the course of our century, precisely because our century is a century of deterritorialisation, of cultural contamination and de-identification. The pressure (pulsione) that seems to guide fundamentally those behaviours which fall within the ambit of 'fascism' is the pressure to recognise ourselves as identical, identifiable, and therefore belonging to a community (of language, faith, race . . .). based upon origin. Only origin bears witness to belonging, and as we know, origin is an illusion, a legend, an attribute that is more or less shared, but unfounded. Ethnic identity does not exist, any more than linguistic identity. While each of us comes from a history of crossbreedings and contaminations that can neither be attested nor authenticated, there are illusions of ethnic belonging; while each of us speaks our own dialect that can never be fundamentally translatable by another speaker, there are illusions of linguistic comprehension. Living together is premised on these. The more the field of ethnic identifiability, of comprehensibility, of origin are perturbed, the more acute becomes the need to identify, to the point of obsession