### **Political Philosophy: The Horizon of Posthuman Political Philosophy: Contemporary Radical Thought in the West: Laclau, Mouffe, Zizek, Badiou, Agamben, Negri, Hardt and Bruno Latour**

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**Abstract: A consensus of contemporary European radical thought is that at the root of the community, there is not absolute knowledge or universal value, but a black hole of abyss. The various wisdoms of political philosophy - normative political philosophy in the form of discourse politics - are actually to fill the abyss with different discourse configurations in order to cover up the black hole singularity.**

**However, the question now is, in the face of the singularity, how is "politics" possible? Contemporary European thinkers such as Laclau (with Mouffe), Zizek (with Badiou), Agamben, Negri (with Hardt), and Bruno Latour have all radically stood on the edge of political philosophy, gazing into the abyss and they accept this abyss’ reflection, and some of these thinkers have completely crossed the symbolic boundaries of discourse politics and thus fell into the singularity, opening up posthuman (post-Anthropocene) political philosophy in the form of singularity politics.**

Keywords: discourse politics; singularity politics; posthumanity; Anthropocene

**Chapter I. Abyssal Black Holes: From the Physical Universe to the Symbolic Universe**

Under Hegel’s “eclipse”, post-Hegelian continental philosophy has stepped from absolute knowledge into the absolute abyss. When composing the “overture” to “future philosophy”, Nietzsche once wrote: “He who fights monsters should beware of becoming a monster himself in the process. If you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back to you.” (Nietzsche, p.89)

This transition from absolute knowledge to absolute abyss has profound implications at the political and philosophical level: the foundation of the community is not the absolute foundation of metaphysics and theology, but the ontological abyss. Hegel described it as the "dark night of the world" - "In this night, a bloody head is struck here, and another white and terrifying ghost suddenly appears in front of the head here, and disappears in this way." (quote. in Žižek, 2008, p.58)

When trapped in this abyss, people are no longer citizens in the civilized state, but become terrifying, "post-human" monsters, or "mentally deranged people" in psychoanalysis. Jacques Lacan called the community constructed by people the "symbolic universe". Then, the "dark night of the world" is the "black hole" in this universe.

It is in the sense of the abyssal black hole that we can make a juxtaposition analysis of the physical universe and the symbolic universe - as we all know, black holes also exist in the physical universe we live in. The 2020 Nobel Prize in Physics is awarded for the study of "black holes and the darkest secrets of the Milky Way." The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences wrote in the award speech to Roger Penrose: Einstein himself did not believe that black holes really exist. These super-heavyweight monsters capture everything that enters them, not even light can escape. … Roger Penrose proved that black holes can indeed form and described them in detail; black holes hide a singularity at their heart, where all known natural rules no longer apply. (The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences)

And in the "dark night of the world" of the symbolic universe, there is also such a singularity as the "darkest secret", where all the symbolic rules established by human civilization are invalid, and people's actions are as completely "irrational" as the monster-like "mentally ill". The so-called "mentally ill" is a person who has not been "anchored" in the symbolic chain woven by language, and therefore, all symbolic rules are invalid for them. So why do we rarely come into contact with these singular existences in the community, just as theoretical/experimental physicists have gone through great pains to locate the existence of black hole singularities in the universe?

Regarding singularities in the physical universe, Penrose proposed the "cosmic censorship" hypothesis - there is a blocker specifically targeting singularities, so for Penrose “there are no naked singularities existing in the universe”.

Penrose's collaborator, Stephen Hawking, who died in 2018, directly used theological words to paraphrase the cosmic censorship hypothesis as "God hates naked singularities." (Hawking, p.85)

Interestingly, in the symbolic universe, there are also singularity blockers, which Lacan calls "the big Other." Lacan's descendant Zizek wrote: "The symbolic dimension is what Lacan calls the 'big other', the invisible order that structures our experience of reality, the complex network of rules and meanings that makes us see what we see - according to the way we see it (and makes us not see it - according to the way we do not see it)." (Žižek, 2014, p.119)

It is this "big other" that prevents us from casually encountering monstrous mentally ill people, and more thoroughly, prevents us from acting like mentally ill people. However, even if there is a big other, all kinds of dark and terrifying monsters and singularities will still pierce out and be encountered in a naked way. In fact, the intellectual history of human civilization has witnessed that the big others embodied in "nature", "heavenly law", "God" and "universal history" have become increasingly weak and increasingly lose absolute control, so that Nietzsche, who "stared into the abyss" in the Judeo-Christian tradition, shouted "God is dead" and other "crazy words".

In my opinion, the “radicality” of contemporary European radical thought lies precisely in the fact that there are a group of political thinkers, like physicists such as Penrose, Hawking, Reinhard Genzel, and Andrea Ghez, who are trying to explore the “darkest secrets” in the universe—the “super-heavyweight monsters” in the symbolic universe. This article will focus on this exploration to re-examine contemporary European radical political philosophy. The author aims to propose that these different contemporary political philosophical directions have a common characteristic, that is, staring into the abyssal black hole within the community and accepting the latter’s gaze back.

The second section of this article will discuss Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's "discourse theory" and the "radical democratic politics" built on it. With the background of Laclau and Mouffe as a reference, the third section of this article will further introduce two political philosophers who are truly "trapped" in the singularity - Žižek and Giorgio Agamben.

They have truly developed "singularity politics" in different ways, and thus have substantially opened up "posthuman political philosophy" or "monstrous political philosophy". The fourth and fifth sections of this article will discuss two "discourse politics" with "singularity politics" colors developed by Antonio Negri (and his collaborator Michael Hardt) and Bruno Latour respectively: Like Laclau and Mouffe, Negri and Latour have not "trapped" in the singularity, but have continuously gazed at the singularity within the boundaries of discourse. Although they have all made important contributions to the horizon of "posthuman political philosophy" in a sense (especially Latour), in my opinion, they have all failed to substantially go beyond "normative political philosophy."

**2. Between Discourse Politics and Singularity Politics**

In contemporary political philosophy, Laclau and Mouffe are famous for their "discourse theory". However, their discourse politics is very different from Habermas's discourse politics based on "public debate". The political subjects of Habermas's discourse politics face each other in an "inter-subjective" way; while the political subjects of Laclau's discourse politics, in addition to facing each other, also face the abyss at the ontological level. It is precisely that black hole-like rift that prevents "consensus" and "agreement" from occupying the center of the stage of Laclau's discourse politics. On the contrary, "hegemony" and "antagonism" have become the core words of discourse politics.

Laclau and Mouffe advocate a return from everyday politics to “the political”—to confront the abyssal rift that no discourse can “sew up”, a rift where we encounter “the impossibility of society”. For Laclau, the human community (“society”) “exists only in the futile attempt to construct that impossible object—society” (Laclau, 1990, p.92). “Society” itself presupposes “the possibility of closure of all social meanings, which [are generated] around a matrix that can reveal all its partial processes” (Laclau, 1999, p.146). This “matrix”, as it is called in Lacanian psychoanalysis, is the big Other. For Laclau and Mouffe, this matrix is ​​destined to be punctured. In other words, it is impossible to completely “sew up” the entire society: all the big Other can do is to “sew up” it partially (that is, partially solidify social meanings). At the root of the totality of society is its impossibility - this black hole abyss that inscribes the ontological limit of the big Other. Laclau and Mouffe write: "Society can never fully become society because everything within it is penetrated by its limits, which prevent society from constituting itself as an objective reality." (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p.127) For them, "to think the limits of something is equivalent to thinking what transcends those limits" (Laclau, 1996, p.37); and the universality of "limits" themselves (penetrating everything) substantially marks the abyssal black hole at the root of the community - the community ("society") is just a symbolic-discursive order full of black holes, and can never become "an objective reality." The "objectivity" and "reality" we experience are themselves just discursive constructions.

Discourse makes all people and things in the community order no longer "naked" existence: "As a member of a community, I will never encounter an object that truly exists in its naked form." (Laclau and Mouffe, 1990, p.110) Just like the "event horizon" in the physical universe, the symbolic-discursive "horizon" in the symbolic universe almost completely obscures all naked things - any "being" is a symbolic-discursive construction; however, every "being" is structurally embedded with boundaries, cracks and incoherence, and "those boundaries cannot be pointed to by symbols themselves, but can only express themselves as interruptions or collapses of the symbol pointing process" (Laclau, 1996, p.37). Therefore, every interruption or even collapse of "being" is the moment when the naked form of things can be briefly touched.

From the perspective of the political ontology proposed by “discourse theory”, the community has two aspects: politics and the political. The politics at the level of everyday reality is based on various discursive formations that are responsible for (partially) solidifying social meanings; while the politics at the ontological level is based on the impossibility of society itself. The former refers to various “sedimented” discursive practices, while the latter is the eventual moment of “reactivation”. The ultimate form of sedimentation is “naturalization”—“tradition” becomes “nature”. The “reactivation” of politics disturbs or even interrupts the everyday politics (that is, the existing discursive formations that have been sedimented) and stimulates alternative discursive formations. Since the discursive formation is produced through “sedimentation”, its “unity” is not based on “the logical coherence of its elements”, nor on “the innateness of a transcendental subject” or “the unity of an experience”. (cf. Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p.105) The “unity” of the discourse configuration is achieved purely through the “suture” operation. Therefore, the “suture point” of the discourse configuration is precisely its most vulnerable point, and also the place where “reactivation” occurs. We see that: the “social impossibility” at the ontological level precisely enables the “sedimentation” and “reactivation” of the discourse configuration to constantly replace each other.

Therefore, for Laclau and Mouffe, "social impossibility" itself is productive - all discursive configurations of political philosophy are precisely the products of this impossibility. Various political philosophical approaches from classical to modern times are aimed at eliminating the "disturbing social effects" produced by this monstrous-abyssal impossibility (Laclau, 2005, p.244). These political philosophical approaches can actually be properly called "normative political philosophy". In the words of Laclau and Mouffe, the wisdom provided by this political philosophy gave birth to "a collection of practices and institutions through which an order can be created to organize the common existence of mankind in the conflicting context provided by politics (the political)" (Mouffe, p.9). The specific organizational form of human common existence ("political system") is symbolically-discursively constructed precisely in the context of the black hole rift ("politics"). Therefore, although the community order has no foundation, the black hole singularity constitutes the foundation of its negativity. The completely disordered "natural state" described by Hobbes is actually a discursive description of the "presymbolic universe". All discursive efforts of normative political philosophy are aimed at injecting order (symbolic order) into the singularity, and thus generating various political wisdom. In other words, it is precisely in order to deal with the singularity and achieve "blockade" that normative political philosophy is generated and continuously evolved.

Laclau and Mouffe's research reveals that this ontological rift as a state of impossibility also constitutes the state of possibility of "politics" - various discourse configurations compete with each other in the field of "politics" to temporarily gain "hegemony". For Laclau and Mouffe, any discourse is constructed as an attempt to dominate the discursive field (field of discursivity), trying to capture the turbulence of various differences and construct a center. They borrowed Lacan's terminology to propose that all discourses are "sublime" themselves in order to gain hegemony. However, even if a discourse obtains the "central" position of the dominant discursive field, it cannot always occupy this position and will be pushed down from the "center" by the same attempt of other discourses.

This constitutes a "radical democracy" that has no end: the ontological condition of "social impossibility" makes it impossible for human beings to have a "liberation" once and for all. In political philosophy, various political expositions that have achieved hegemony are actually a set of "equivalents" in terms of stitching "social impossibility", and they form a "metonymic" structure with each other. In the past two hundred years, "the democratic principles of freedom and equality" have achieved hegemonic discourse status and "imposed themselves as a new matrix of social imagination." (cf. Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p.112) However, this matrix cannot constitute the "end of history" as claimed by contemporary political philosophers such as Fukuyama. It only temporarily achieved the "center" position of dominating the discursive field. So, how to break through this matrix? For this problem, Laclau and Mouffe proposed: we must reject the temptation of ultimate "liberation". After rejecting the myth of "transparent and homogeneous society", "post-Marxists" have devoted themselves to the struggle to tell the "socialist story" well. For Laclau and Mouffe, “democracy” becomes various struggles to construct “the people”.

It can be seen that Laclau and Mouffe regard the singularity as a political ontological condition, but not the singularity as a political subject. For them, it is necessary to see the singularity and to carry out political practice with the singularity as the background, but they cannot fall into the singularity further. The political subject of radical democracy is someone who makes specific "political articulations" and fights in the discourse field. Therefore, Laclau and Mouffe's "radical democratic politics" is a radical form of discourse politics. Unlike normative political philosophy that aims to "block the singularity", Laclau and Mouffe's political philosophy does not "block the singularity", but leaves it exposed and can be gazed at at all times. Those political subjects who actively adopt the "socialist strategy" do not just face each other, they also gaze into the abyss. They devote all their efforts to making a "political articulation", but will not endorse any discourse configuration ontologically, and constantly update their own articulation in the process of winning. In other words, the Laclauian political subject actively produces discourse, but will not let it become the big Other. Of course, there are only a few people who can truly gaze at the singularity and make political expositions based on it (these people become "post-Marxists"). The vast majority of people who are active in the political field (discourse field) are people with specific "identities" and "positions" who are "interpelled" (Althusser's term) by ideology. But it is precisely these people who constitute the political subject in the discursive field of "agonistic pluralism".

For Laclau and Mouffe, community ("society") is both impossible and necessary. This means that the big Other is both impossible and necessary. A universe without the big Other is a universe of insanity. Their political philosophy is at the edge of normative political philosophy, but they have not developed a kind of "post-human political philosophy". Their political subjects have not really "fallen into" the singularity, but have "filled in" the singularity symbolically and discursively. In the view of Laclau and Mouffe, if one falls into the singularity completely, one will become insane and become a monster - such a person will lose the ability to make political statements. They can be said to be adhering to Nietzsche's teachings - those who fight monsters should be careful not to become a monster themselves in the process.

**3. Two kinds of singularity politics: real singularity and arbitrary singularity**

For Laclau, Zizek’s political philosophy is a typical example of “becoming a monster”. Zizek abandons “any specific historical actor” (Laclau, 2005, p.238) and completely falls into the singularity. In Laclau’s eyes, Zizek’s political subject is a “Martian” - “We can only wonder whether he is expecting an invasion from another planet, or, as he once suggested, an ecological disaster that does not transform the world, but causes it to completely collapse.” (ibid.)

Indeed, whether it is the insane Zizekian subject or the Badiouian subject loyal to the event, they are all complete monsters in the eyes of people in the symbolic order. Zizek directly calls such a monster-like subject a "singularity" to define "impenetrable atomic subjectivity" (Žižek, 2013, pp.336-337). Starting from the "forbidden subject" mentioned in Lacanian psychoanalysis, Zizek proposes that the monster is the real subject. The subject contains "the abyss of infinity": it "is not another human individual with a rich inner life, in which the inner life is full of various personal stories, which are told by the self to obtain a meaningful life experience." (Žižek, 2009b, pp.38-39) On the ontological level, everyone can become a singularity, because everyone has both an "original self" and an "autobiographical self": the former is a pure "self" as a self-consciousness, and the latter is an organization of narrative history about "what I am". When a person completely rejects the story-telling autobiographical self, he actually stands at the abyssal position in the symbolic order and becomes a real singularity. In Žižek's view, "the word 'I' is not a reference to the integrity, coherence and stability of any substantial content of my personality, but a reference to a fleeting, self-referential singularity that is distant from any substantial content" (Žižek, 2012, p.716).

Singularity politics is completely terrifying to the everyday world. People in "reality" and people trapped in the singularity are like people inside and outside the "event horizon" of a black hole in the universe. They cannot see the same picture at all. Starting from the Žižekian singularity politics, discourse no longer constitutes the ontological boundary of the political subject as a real singularity. It can be seen that the Žižekian-Badiouian subject does not just gaze at the abyssal singularity, they fall into it, gaze back from there, re-examine the entire symbolic universe, and then make a radical update to it. The difference between "falling into the singularity" and the discursive "filling in the singularity" is like the difference between "falling in love" and "love stories" - for Žižek and Badiou, love cannot be reached except by "falling in". It is for this reason that the lover has become the Žižekian-Badiouian subject in a typical sense.

Zizek’s core criticism of Laclauian discourse politics is that any political exposition can only oppose other specific expositions within the system, but cannot oppose the system itself, because any discourse configuration cannot go beyond the symbolic universe itself. The real singularity constitutes the negative force of all discourses. Instead of Laclau and Mouffe’s “radical democratic politics”, Zizek and Badiou re-propose the “communist hypothesis”, which is aimed at opposing the entire system (the matrix formed by liberal democracy and global capitalism) - Badiou even calls it “minimal communism” (Badiou and Truong, 2012, p.90).

Žižek clearly states that "communism" is not a name for the ultimate liberation (ultimate society) in Laclau's eyes, but another name for reality: it marks the inherent impossibility of the "totality" and "permanence" of capitalism. For Žižek, the positive content of communism "must be recreated in every new historical situation" (Žižek, 2009a, p.6). As Marx said, real communism is still an inescapable ghost wandering around the European continent - today's entire "global village". Those lovers and revolutionaries who fall into the singularity constitute its abyssal cracks (internal negativity) at various locations in the system. The "communist presupposition" means that systemic and institutional changes in the overall sense are possible.

Agamben, from a completely different path from Zizek and Badiou, has also developed a singularity politics that overflows the boundaries of discourse politics. The core of Zizek-Badiou singularity politics is pure negativity, while the core of Agamben singularity politics is pure potentiality - the potential arbitrary singularity, the Agamben political subject that resists the "reality" of the symbolic order. Aristotle regards reality as the completion of potentiality, but Agamben, in turn, emphasizes the primordial nature of pure potentiality to reality. On the ontological level, man is "a pure potential existence" (Agamben, 2007, p.2). In this sense, the Agamben subject is also not just gazing at the abyssal singularity, but falling into it and gazing back in a pure potential way. Potentiality, structurally, means "negative potentiality - the potentiality of not doing or not being something, or as Aristotle said, potentiality must also be non-potentiality" (Agamben, 1998, p.45). In other words, potentiality (to do something or be something) and non-potentiality (not to do something or not be something) are two-in-one. The arbitrary singularity is the subject that arbitrarily does/is (and does not do/is not) something - it constitutes an abyssal singularity in the symbolic universe that is not "determined".

The arbitrary singularity is a "man without content". This singular subject is directly based on the ontological form of life, rather than any symbolic and politicized form of community life. Therefore, Agamben borrowed the term "biopolitics" from Foucault to describe his political philosophy. As the direct embodiment of the form of life, the arbitrary singularity does not have the "identity" and "properties" in the symbolic order, so it has radical "arbitrariness". Agamben does not simply want to return to the "equality" at the level of natural life, but advocates the abolition of all metaphysical discourses that stipulate "being what it is" (for example, you are a "man", it is a "pig", etc.). The "post-human" aspect of Agamben's thought is manifested in its "openness" - instead of distinguishing between humans and animals in a deterministic, essential, and metaphysical way, Agamben is committed to exploring the indistinguishability between "speaking existence" (humans) and "living existence" (humans, animals). For him, what should really be grasped is the relationship or interaction between speech and life. On the ontological level, the "voice" of humans and animals has the potential to become discourse. In other words, any singularity in the sense of all life forms has the potential to create a life form in the sense of community.

As an arbitrary singularity that always exists as potentiality (potential), it points to the totality of possibilities - it exists outside of "being". This "outside" is not a certain place, but a boundary, a threshold. The life form has no content frame, it is open to "being", and its only characteristics are beauty and happiness. Just as the "lover" is the paradigmatic subject of the Žižek-Badiou singularity politics, the "infant" is the paradigmatic subject of the Agamben singularity politics: the baby lives in its own potentiality (non-potentiality), and in a playful way, it makes all the laws of the symbolic universe invalidated (deactivated).

Agamben emphasizes that although arbitrary singularities transcend the symbolic order, they have potential communicability like babies. Unlike Habermas, who focuses on potential ("counterfactual") communication, Agamben focuses on potential communicability - instead of striving to achieve communication, he is committed to striving to achieve communicability. For Agamben, through communicating communicability, arbitrary singularities can build their community - Agamben calls the community composed of arbitrary singularities "the coming community". In Agamben's view, this community marks a new kind of communism - the commonality/commonality of this community does not come through the "recognition" of the state or the "belonging" of the community, but directly shows itself as "being-in-common". In the "coming community", everyone belongs to this community, but no one needs to claim that they belong to it. In addition to the existence of each arbitrary singularity itself (ontological directness) and their communicability in language, this communism does not share anything (no shared attributes or identity). This is the “radical new politics” that Agamben calls for: in which arbitrary singularities create the entire world.

We can see that the singularity politics of Zizekism and Agambenism have both made a crucial step forward compared to the discourse politics of Laclauism. This crucial step is: from filling in the singularity to falling into the singularity, from gazing into the abyss at the edge of the "world" to gazing back at the "world" from the abyss. In this sense, singularity politics completely transcends normative political philosophy and opens up posthuman political philosophy.

**4. “Postmodern” Biopolitics: We Are the Multitude**

In the contemporary European thought world, there are two other trends that intersect with the singularity, which are worth discussing here. In recent works, Negri and his collaborator Hardt proposed to build a global "absolute democracy" with "the multitude" as the political subject. By replacing "the people/the people" with "the multitude", the "absolute democracy" theory pushes "people's rule" (democracy) to a radical extreme - all people directly rule all people. In the political philosophy program outlined by Negri and Hardt, people directly regulate social relations with their vital-living production (especially non-material production), thus bypassing the issue of the rootless leader's decision.

At the turn of the century, Negri and Hardt proposed that human production practice is no longer just about producing material goods. As immaterial production, the production of language, communication, and symbols constitutes the main mode of production in the contemporary world connected by the Internet. For Negri and Hardt, anything transcendent (such as God) is a product of discourse production; the community does not need a transcendent ontological foundation. Human immaterial production directly produces social relations and political order. Political order is constantly produced and created in an immaterial production discourse machine - at its core, the "common" is constantly produced and confirmed in immaterial production. "We create language, we establish social practices, and we define social patterns of our relationships." (Hardt and Negri, 2009, p.139) Therefore, although the community has no transcendental foundation, it does not fall into nihilism because the values ​​that fill the foundation of the community are constantly produced: "Values ​​can only be determined in the continuous innovation and creation of human nature itself." (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.356) From this perspective, Negri and Hardt proposed a discourse politics.

But the political philosophy of Negri and Hardt is not just a kind of discourse politics. They borrowed Foucault's concept of "biopolitics" and proposed that the existence, practice and creation of life are the practice of rewriting the social order, so life activities themselves are politics. Biopolitical production directly "produces social life itself" (Hardt and Negri, 2004, p.146). More noteworthy is that in the management of political subjects, Negri and Hardt further give their biopolitics a "singularity politics" color. They proposed that "the multitude" is composed of completely different "singularities", an open relationship system, without general will or unified attributes, but only diversity and heterogeneity. "The multitude" does not compete with each other in discourse in the system, but "exodus" and "desertion" from the existing system in the form of "singularities". "The multitude" is subversive to the existing political system because the "existence of life itself is considered as the possibility of subversion" (Negri, p.99). The deterritorialized “multitude” has the potential to transform autonomous productivity into an absolute democratic power in biopolitical existence.

For Negri and Hardt, the crisis of modernity is the confrontation between immanence and transcendence: on the one hand, there are the various internal forces of desire and cooperation of the "multitude", and on the other hand, there is the attempt of transcendent authority to impose a total order on these forces. (cf. Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.201) Entering the 21st century, "empire" as a result of "postmodern conditions" and "globalization process" is replacing the sovereign form of the nation-state. For "empire", not only does "the outside no longer exist", but it also has no center and boundaries in the sense of territory, only various internal productions and formations, various different and constantly nomadic "singularities". The "Empire" constitutes a "plane of immanence" in which all "singularities" engage in productive interaction and produce "events" in the sense of Deleuze - "The 'solution' of the Empire is not to deny or dilute differences, but to affirm them and arrange them in an effective command machine." (ibid., p.xii, 186-190, 198-201) In other words, the vast "Empire" no longer has "identities" such as women, blacks, Americans, and British. All lives are "singularities." There will be no conflicts based on "identity" between singularities, but only confrontation with the supreme power of the Empire.

In the spectrum of Western political philosophy, compared with modern republicanism, which has been trapped in the general will of popular sovereignty since Rousseau, and political existentialism, which has been trapped in the arbitrary decision of the sovereign since Nietzsche, Negri and Hardt have taken a different approach: by introducing the "multitude", they have eliminated the general will of modern popular sovereignty and the issues of its fate and responsibility; and the "empire" pattern that has been formed under the wave of globalization has no boundaries and no center. This new form of "postmodern sovereignty" has also eliminated the issue of the sovereign in modern society. Since the "multitude" is a non-deterministic combination of many different "singularities", imperial sovereignty no longer has a core conflict like the sovereignty of a nation-state, but is manifested as a changing network composed of many small conflicts. In imperial society, "contradictions are everywhere." Therefore, the crisis of modernity has developed into an "omni-crisis", which is what Negri and Hardt call the "corruption" of the empire. (cf. Hardt and Negri, 2000, pp.201-202) The general crisis is good for the cause of liberation because it forms the unity of the "multitude" in the struggle at the level of the whole. The two authors quoted Spinoza: "If we simply cut off the head of the tyrant from the social body, then we are left with an unformed social corpse. What we need is to create a new social body." (qtd. in Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.204) The "multitude" that is always nomadic and has no unified will directly confronts the centerless empire ("unformed social corpse") in the form of biopolitical production ("absolute democracy").

However, can the "singularity" that constitutes the "multitude" constitute a political subject of "absolute democracy"? The "singularity" is an abyssal black hole in the community order. In the juxtaposition comparison, we can see that Zizek, Badiou, and Agamben all take the "singularity" as a political subject; while Negri and Hardt take the collective form of the "multitude" as a political subject. For Zizek and Badiou, although the singularity has the possibility of piercing out at any time, it is event-like, miraculous, and indescribable in language, so it is impossible to form a political connection with each other (it can only be established on a certain symbolic relationship). For Agamben, the singularity also has the possibility of piercing out at any time (the Messiah event), but its daily form is potential. To form a political connection, we must first communicate "communicability". For Negri and Hardt, the singularity is a direct and ready-made life. Through their "biopolitical production" that bypasses various capitalist organizational forms, a collective political subject of "multitude" is formed.

"Singularity" refers to the life that is directly present, and "multitude" refers to the disorderly collection of life (unorganized). This kind of politics has an old name in the tradition of political philosophy: anarchism. From the perspective of classical political philosophy represented by Leo Strauss, "multitude" is undoubtedly just a return to Nietzsche's "herd". It is built on the disorderly collection of "last man" and is the victory of slave morality over master morality. It cannot become the subject of politics, or as Weber said, it cannot bear the mission of politics. In the end, the one who can really come out to take responsibility is bound to be a strong man who emerges from the "multitude" to integrate the scattered and weak collection. Nietzsche once said: The future world is likely to coexist with superman and last man. Only when superman comes out can a new situation be opened up and a new horizon be created. But in this way, the new "absolute democracy" will structurally turn back into elitist representative democracy (liberalism) or even leader democracy (Schmittism). Žižek’s observation that “there is no democracy that does not presuppose a hidden elitism” is insightful (Žižek, 2004, pp.196-197).

The further theoretical dilemma of “absolute democracy” is: why, when there is the behemoth “empire”, the singularities do not form a natural state of conflict in the Hobbesian sense, but instead all aim at the “empire” to start a struggle? In Hobbes’s view, the existence of the behemoth “Leviathan” is precisely to deal with the natural state between singularities. Why do completely heterogeneous singularities spontaneously unite when facing the empire, and no longer conflict with each other? In other words, why do the pre-linguistic confrontation between singularities and the discursive struggle between symbolized individuals disappear when facing the “empire”? Laclau raises the following question: How can the dispersed masses gain unity (form a “political subject”) without relying on representation or discourse? In Laclau’s view, “[the masses’] unity is merely an expression of a spontaneous tendency to converge, like a gift from heaven.” (Laclau, 2005, p.240)

How, then, can completely heterogeneous singularities form a political union in the face of empire? There is only one possibility for singularities to avoid collisions: a discursive connection between them; and in this way, the singularities lose their singularity. Therefore, Negri and Hardt’s political philosophy, at the entrance of singularity politics, retreats back to discursive politics.

**5. The politics of nature in the post-Anthropocene: We are “trapped in the earth”**

Negri and Hardt’s “biopolitics” can be compared with Latour’s “politics of nature”: for the former, it is precisely in the face of the behemoth “empire” in the “postmodern” situation that the political subject (“the multitude”) is formed; while for the latter, it is in the face of the behemoth “Gaia/Earth” in the “Anthropocene” situation that the political subject (the collective of “those trapped in the earth”) is formed. In a sense, Latour’s “politics of nature” is also a kind of “biopolitics”, because the “earth” itself is regarded as a “superorganism” (i.e. “Gaia”).

"Gaia" is the mother of the earth in ancient Greek mythology. Atmospheric chemist James Lovelock proposed the famous "Gaia hypothesis" in the 1970s, arguing that the earth itself is a "living planet" and its ecosystem can be seen as a self-regulating "superorganism" (cf. Lovelock, p.173, 208): "Our planet is entirely different from its dead brothers Mars and Venus; like one of us, it controls its temperature and composition to always remain comfortable." (Lovelock, p.2) The reason why "Gaia" is "alive" and "Mars" is "dead" is that the atmosphere of the latter is in a state of chemical equilibrium (meaning that the entropy is very high), while the atmosphere of the former is in a state of chemical non-equilibrium. (cf. Latour, p.78) This relatively low-entropy non-equilibrium state on the earth can be maintained all the time, which means that there is an active force to maintain it. However, in the Anthropocene, the "health" of "Gaia" is declining rapidly. Lovelock claims that humans in the Anthropocene will face “Gaia’s revenge” (Lovelock, p.2). And this revengeful “Gaia” is the singular political actor in Latour’s “politics of nature”.

We can see that Strauss’s “nature” is the ultimate authority of classical metaphysics, while Latour’s “nature” is the ultimate avenger of contemporary scientific hypotheses. If Strauss, who restarted “nature”, returned to the starting point of normative political philosophy (or “political philosophy of the Anthropocene”), then Latour, who proposed “politics of nature”, is precisely moving towards “post-human (world) political philosophy”. For Latour, “nature” is completely impossible to have a normative dimension. In the Anthropocene, “nature” has long disappeared. “Neither nature nor society can enter the Anthropocene intact, waiting to be ‘reconciled’ peacefully”; the “artificialization” of the entire earth has made the concept of “nature” abandoned like “wilderness”, “for better or worse, we have entered a post-natural era” (cf. Latour, p.3, 22, 112, 120-121, 142). We cannot study the “natural world without people”, nor can we study the “social world without objects”. What we researchers need to focus on in the Anthropocene is the “politics of nature” – not to locate the real order with the metaphysical “natural order”, but to locate the mutual impact of all actors (human and non-human) in the post-natural middle kingdom with the actor-network theory as the analytical framework. “Gaia” is a politically located vengeful actor with great initiative. (See Wu Guanjun, 2020) In short, the “political philosophy of the Anthropocene” has changed the face of the planet, turning it into a “world”; however, the human “world” is making the planet no longer suitable for the survival of most life on Earth, including humans themselves. And “Gaia” is taking revenge on the “Anthropocene” opened by humans.

Aristotle's statement that "man is a political animal by nature" opened up the "political philosophy of the Anthropocene". However, at another threshold (i.e., the end point) of the Anthropocene, people no longer act politically "according to nature", but act politically "in the face of Gaia". In Latour's view, "in the face of Gaia" means that "the political order now includes everything that was previously attributed to nature" (Latour, p.3). Moreover, "Gaia" is extremely sensitive like all organisms (cf. ibid., p.141). "Gaia does not promise peace, nor does it guarantee a stable background" (Latour, p.280). As a superorganism, "Gaia" is not only a behemoth, but also a terrifying monster: it completely overflows the symbolic coordinates of the Anthropocene. "Gaia's revenge" does not unfold within the "world", but points to the singularity of the entire "world" returning to zero - the entire "civilization" of the Anthropocene is reset to zero. This "revenge" action, if expressed in Lacanian terms, is the penetration of the Real. In a sense, Lovelock's "Gaia hypothesis" gives this penetration of the Real a concrete symbolic expression - the hypothesis understands the Earth as a superorganism, which can itself be seen as a symbol of the singular force that interrupts the operation of current things. Through this symbolization, the pre-linguistic Real is transformed into a "monster" that can be described in language. Although this monster itself does not communicate in language, its actions (revenge) are no longer incomprehensible and traceable. As Latour said, the "Gaia hypothesis" helps people "to understand in what aspects the Earth is acting, but not giving it a soul; and to understand what are the direct consequences of the Earth's actions - in what aspects we can say that it acts retroactively on various collective actions of people" (ibid., p.86).

Through Lovelock's "Gaia hypothesis", the "nature" that can be relied upon or conquered in "political philosophy of the Anthropocene" is replaced by the terrifying monster "Gaia" with strong initiative in Latour's "politics of nature". Through this key transformation, political philosophy ("political philosophy of the post-Anthropocene") is to study "the various retroactive action relationships between the earth and human actions" (Latour, p.131). In Negri and Hardt, facing the vast "empire", individuals can form a political collective ("multitude") based on their life's "biopolitical production". In Latour, facing the equally vast "Gaia" (although there are other earth-like planets in the universe that may be suitable for life, humans cannot reach them), individuals can form collective actions based on the survival of life. In other words, this monster "Gaia" helps us break out of the dilemma of normative political philosophy: by "facing Gaia" to build a community, the members of this community are no longer "people", but "the Earthbound" (ibid., p.248) (ibid., p.248). It is "trapped on Earth" because most life on Earth, including humans, cannot leave the Earth.

Latour proposed that "living in the Anthropocene era forces one to redefine the supreme political task: what kind of people are you forming through what kind of cosmology, on what kind of land?" (ibid., pp.143-144) If the task of "Anthropocene political philosophy" is to deal with the rootlessness of the community, then for Latour, "post-Anthropocene political philosophy" precisely establishes the foundational action of the community, which is to "reterrestrialize our existence" and form a "people" as a political collective in the face of "Gaia". (cf. ibid., p.88, 223, 253, 284)

The “trapped on the earth” do not belong to a sovereign nation-state, but to the earth (trapped on the earth). They “share every form of sovereignty with Gaia” and work for the low-entropy order of the entire earth. The actions of the trapped on the earth have no national boundaries, not because they are “universal”, but because they must rely on other actors to participate and act together. In this sense, Latour’s political philosophy program—“Facing Gaia” and “Falling on the Earth” (the titles of his two recent books)—actually proposes a singularity politics: the singularity (monster singularity) becomes the foundation of politics. If Negri and Hardt directly take individual human life as the singularity, Latour takes a huge monster-like life as the singularity (although he himself does not use this term). Furthermore, “Anthropocene political philosophy” always faces the situation of the lack of foundation for the community order, while Latour takes the singularity of “Gaia” (living earth) as the foundation of the community, thus opening up “post-Anthropocene political philosophy” (ibid., p.141, 245-246).

Latour’s singularity politics is to stand on the singularity and fight against its enemies. Latour writes in a combative tone: “Instead of imagining that you have no enemies because you live under the protection of nature (which is assumed to be depoliticized), can you point out your enemies and describe the territory you are prepared to defend?” (Latour, p.245) In Latour’s eyes, those “negativists” who refuse to recognize the sensitivity of “Gaia” (and the sensitivity of human beings themselves) will be our enemies in any case, if not criminals.

The ecological changes caused by the "Anthropocene" have added an end sign to the "human destiny" that may fall at any time. We must use the people who are "trapped on the earth" to build a "community of human destiny". "Anthropocene political philosophy" has always been looking for the "superhuman" foundation for the community (from nature, God, universal history to superhuman will and determination); while "post-Anthropocene political philosophy" is looking for the "posthuman" foundation for the community. The former fundamentally relies on discourse politics, while the latter fundamentally takes the form of singularity politics. Latour's "trapped on the earth" is a posthuman political subject, but in fact it is at the threshold of discourse politics and singularity politics: on the one hand, it carries out political actions in the face of "Gaia" (a symbolic-discursive filling of the singularity); on the other hand, as actors, "trapped on the earth" stand on the side of "Gaia", but they themselves are not singularity subjects: they still carry out political practices in the form of discourse, thus forming a political union with each other. In other words, Latour's natural politics, like Negri's biopolitics, is not a singularity politics in the full sense.

After the discussion in the first five sections of this article, we see a homogeneity between the physical universe and the symbolic universe: at the foundation of the community, we also encounter the abyssal black hole. The various wisdoms of Anthropocene political philosophy, that is, normative political philosophy in the form of discourse politics, are actually to fill the abyss with discourse configuration (the big other) in order to cover up the black hole singularity. However, the question now is, in the face of the singularity, how is "politics" possible? Contemporary European thinkers such as Laclau (and Mouffe), Zizek (and Badiou), Agamben, Negri (and Hardt), and Latour discussed in this article have all radically stood on the edge of Anthropocene political philosophy, staring at the abyss and accepting the latter's return gaze; and some of them have completely crossed the symbolic boundary of discourse politics, and thus fell into the singularity, opening up posthuman (post-Anthropocene) political philosophy in the form of singularity politics. Different forms of singularity politics and quasi-singularity politics are radically rewriting the map of political philosophy and becoming a new torrent on its horizon.

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