

Transgression, Subjectivity and the Other in the Digital Age. A humanist critique of Bataille

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George Bataille's philosophy of transgression radically questions the traditional concept of human subjectivity, whether one agrees with Foucault that it leads to the "shattering of the philosophical subject" or holds some reservations like Jean-Luc Nancy who claimed that communication "erects itself as a subject".

Bataille gave priority to communication over subjectivity, but not discursive communication. Instead, he focuses on communication as a relational, sensitive contact between subjectivities, predicated on heterogeneous, affective experiences beyond language, like laughing. This primal, affective communication from "subject to subject" is neither "subjective" nor 'objective' but subjectivity-forming and involves the presence of the Other. However, this involvement of the subject in the psychic life of the other, determines the field of communication as a field of sovereignty, since Bataille identifies the "subject" with the "sovereign", who is "communicated subjectively". In "The Psychological Structure of Fascism," he illustrates the sovereign's 'affective' power over others, who surrender subjectivity. Communication on a primal level is power.

Bataille's ideas take on a new meaning in the era of disembodied digital communication. He wrote that we "live in a world of subjects whose exterior, objective aspect is always inseparable from the interior." New categories of existence, like telepresence, seem restricted within the boundaries of encoded language, but carry an emotional affective power that transgresses the boundaries between public and private and expands the power of sovereignty, while multiplying potential representations of subjectivity. Long distance digital communication is dependent upon instituted sovereign authorities and surveillance capitalist mechanisms that extract data value from digital communication itself. To which degree can this secondary, linguistically bound, form of communication from digital subject to digital subject lead to the transgression of embodied subjectivity? Bataille's transgressive thought may help us

clarify the limits and potentialities of digital communication. On the other side, digital communication can help us see the limits of Bataille's philosophy as regards the immanence and permanence of subjectivity in human society. To present my argument, I will make use of the ontological categories of Cornelius Castoriadis, that is individual radical imagination, social imaginary and time as the emergence of Otherness.

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Perpetual Revolution: A Philosophical Sketch

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Whereas 60 years ago Deleuze and Foucault formulated that every revolutionary attack or defense is linked to the proletarian revolutionary movement and workers' struggle (Deleuze & Foucault, 1972), today any proletarian movement whatsoever virtually cannot be imagined because of the digital ecosystem of the Information Age and the "disappearance" of the laboring class which properly does not exist as a political force and mostly remains as a form of archaism used by various right movements. Therefore,