

Theoretical Conditions for Anti-fascism

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In this text we will try to continue from our previous problematization of relation between nationalism and art with an overall emphasis on the ideological notion of the conjunction of art and politics. Here we especially want to have a look at the so-called extremist manifestations of nationalism, fascism and racism, and to show that they are not momentary anomalies of social cohesion, but constitutive forces of social and cultural constructions, such as nation.

In our previous work about the relation between contemporary art and nationalism, we have insisted on dealing with this relation not only in the sphere of its apparent manifestations, but also we have tried to trace its subtle nature. At first, we tried to outline the conditions of the materialization of nationalist ideologies in the sphere of contemporary art.¹ In our second, following problematization of this issue we reformulated our seemingly crude postulates on the relation between nationalism and art by including more abstract and elaborated conceptions of ideology, which allowed us to retrace nationalist discourses even in the seemingly neutral cultural fields, for example in a randomly chosen review on free jazz music.² In this text our aim is to deal with connection between modes of production, and how these modes effect the social narrations, such as nation, and various artistic positions dealing with these ideological determinants.

It is possible to start with a simple question: How is anti-fascist art possible? This simple question on anti-fascist action, when related to aesthetical production, immediately generates one very 'artistic' problematic, which is: Is there an art form, which is anti-fascist? What we mean with this question on forms is directly related to the issue of representation of politics in arts. Historically this is connected to the heated discussions among the Marxist theoreticians about the issues of art around the 1930s.³ For example the famous statement of Walter Benjamin that aesthetization of politics leads to fascism is the most concise rebuttal of the idea that art by its sole immanency is anti-fascist.⁴ This negation of artistic and aesthetical practices being shelter from extremist politics is also proposing that the possibility of anti-fascist art is not only based on the political agenda, but also implies new forms of expression. It is now interesting to look at one of the most engaged anti-fascist artists, John Heartfield, who was experimenting with the most progressive forms in his practice. Born as Helmut Herzfeld in Germany, Heartfield, as a protest against the raising anti-

¹ Minna Henriksson & Sezgin Boynik, *Contemporary Art and Nationalism - Critical Reader*, Institute of Contemporary Art EXIT, Center for Humanistic Studies Gani Bobi, Pristina 2007.

² Sezgin Boynik & Minna Henriksson, Some Thoughts on the Relation of Ideology and Art (Concerning the Problem of Nationalism in Everyday Life) in *To Think (Film) Politically: Art and Activism Between Representation and Direct Action*, Ed. Jelena Vesic, DeL'Ve, Zagreb 2010. Online: http://www.chtodelat.org/images/Jelena_Art-activism.pdf

³ Interested reader can find valuable information on this issue in Fredric Jameson (ed.) *Aesthetics and Politics*, London, Verso, 1980.

⁴ "This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art" in Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, *Illuminations*. Transl. Harry Zohn. Schocken Books, New York 1969, 242.

Britishness, anglicized his name in the moment of most nationalistic delirium during the 1st World War, when even the socialists (to be more precise, social democrats) turned to patriots. This gesture of radical negation of identity was also intensified with another gesture of Heartfield: he burned all his previous artworks and abandoned his previous artistic media, painting and drawing, and instead decided to work with photography and collage, and joined the Dadaist movement. The example of Heartfield is important because it shows that struggle against fascism is not only based on moralist act of refusal, but also it necessitates complete change of modes of artistic productions. Here we have to be very careful not to generalize this statement to some kind of eternal metaphysical proposal that painting and drawing would be closer to fascism than photography or collage. This might have been true at the time of Heartfield's conversion, but one must avoid eternalizing the specific historical relation between the mode of artistic production and ideology. In the case of Heartfield what is most striking is that this moment of break is conceived as a radical departure from the conjuncture both in the terms of politics and art.

Following the theory of Étienne Balibar that racism is a constitutive of nationalism⁵, we have previously worked on the following two theses: First, fascism is not an anomaly or aberration of nationalism, but omnipresent constitute of its ideological cohesion, and the consequence of this should not be to reduce fascism to a state of exception, but instead to retrace its materiality in everyday life manifestations. The second working thesis is that theoretical and artistic struggle against fascism lies in abstraction, which is a complete reformulation of conditions of ideology. This work, which we initially called abstract materialism, is the method, which we will apply in this essay on two films made in Finland in the early 70s. Here we are aiming at clarification of possibilities for anti-fascist art production. Since this anti-fascism implies a radical break and abstraction, it is possible to claim that this practice has a very clear theoretical and epistemological nature. The immediate consequence of this position is that without production of anti-fascist knowledge there is no anti-fascist action. A careful reader might find a similarity of this statement to description of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's book *Anti-Oedipus* in its introduction text by Michel Foucault, as precondition to 'non-fascist life'. Foucault is claiming that *Anti-Oedipus* is not only strategic adversary of historical fascism (fascism of Mussolini and Hitler) "but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behaviour".⁶ And that real 'ethical' position of the book, according to Foucault, is to fight against fascism in all possible spheres of human conditions; that is why political action, which follows from this premises of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of anti-fascism is also a fight against all kind of unity and totalizations with a emphasized policy of juxtaposition, disjunction, multiplicity, difference, and mobility. Or to put it more in terms with Foucault, it would be 'nomadic' against 'sedentary'. As the first lines of *Anti-Oedipus* go, "It is at work everywhere... it breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks". Consequently, if that omnipresence is accommodating fascism, then the possibility of anti-fascism should be in different (nomadic) uses of

⁵ "The analysis of the place of racism in nationalism is decisive: though racism is not equally manifest in all nationalisms or in all the moments of their history, it none the less always represents a necessary tendency in their constitution." (translation modified from original), Etienne Balibar, *Racism and Nationalism*, in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, Verso, London & New York, 1991, pg. 48.

⁶ Michel Foucault, preface, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1983, xiii

these actions. What we can conclude from this position, and in this sense Foucault is absolutely right, anti-fascism is a matter of ethics, or more precisely it is a matter of “life style” and a way of “thinking and living”. Especially, when considering the alternative, which this philosophical position offers about the different uses of “thinking and living”, and especially keeping in mind the postulates of Deleuze and Guattari on language in their second collaborative book, *A Thousand Plateaus*, it is fair to claim that this position has an emancipatory prospect of anti-fascist action. But by combining ‘thinking’ and ‘living’, this position is risking to narrow down the struggle to one overtly aesthetic concept, which is a life-style. Our insistence is on a possibility, which is rather difficult, to engage more rigorously with within the field of knowledge. One thing we have to clarify here is that in Deleuze-Guattari-Foucault the relation of knowledge to anti-fascism stops at the moment, when anti-fascism is reduced and at the same time omnipresented to the sphere of the lifestyle. The rigour of the politics of the anti-fascist engagement, which we defend, could be described, paraphrasing Lenin, as without anti-fascist theory there is no anti-fascist movement. In the following examples we will try to clarify how this ‘theory’ should look like.

Here again we will repeat the famous dilemma of Jean-Luc Godard on reality and fiction or in our case, on life and theory, which he stated in his film *La Chinoise* in 1967. One of the main characters in the film gives lecture about relation between fiction and document:

“They say Lumère made documentaries, and Méliès fictions. And that Méliès was a dreamer filming fantasies. I think just the opposite. Lumère was painter. He filmed the same things painters were painting at that time, men like Charot, Manet or Renoir. He filmed train stations, public gardens, workers going home, men playing cards and the trams. Méliès at the same time filmed a trip to the moon, the King of Yugoslavia’s visit to president Fallieres. And now, in this perspective we realize those were the current events. They were re-enacted alright. Yet they were real events. I’d even say that Méliès was Brechtian. We mustn’t forget that”.

Here with this quotation we are in very clear terms made familiar with the proposal that ideological struggle does not imply or necessitate the structure of ‘vérité’, which means that theory in its abstraction does not need blindly to follow the rules of the vérité, or real, which might themselves as well be a part of general ideological figurations. The obligatory detour to perform here would be about the muddy conception of ‘real’. In our theoretical postulate real has no necessary relation to concrete, it can show the nature or characteristics of metaphysics, in many cases it does not have a material nature and nevertheless it is not necessarily obliged in any sense to the materialistic conception of the world. In order to make this theoretical postulate more concrete, we will have a look at two films produced in Finland in the beginning of the 70s, *Perkele! Kuvia Suomesta* (1971) and *Laukaus Tehtaalla* (1973).⁷ *Perkele! Kuvia Suomesta* with its direct-cinema style, realistic visualization

⁷ Selection of these two films is not arbitrary. The theoretical conditions for inclusion of these two films in our conceptual elaboration will become clearer in the course of reading the text. But one of the initial reasons is the moment of their realization, which overlaps with the general periodization of transition of international modes of production. This transition led to massive transformation in arts, politics and philosophy known as post-modernism, which is a directly linked to the theme of our text.

and a seemingly broad analysis of various strata of society, apparent contradictions, and inclusion the authors to the film texture is an example of the cinema, which could be described as an artwork against totalization.

Its disjunctive style and the juxtaposition of various contradictory elements of society make this film exactly what Foucault alluded with the idea of non-fascism. Indeed the viewer can have associations of the large amorphous disconnected antagonistic subversive world of the Finnish man and the woman. The film is often presented as a kind of a palimpsest of the Finnish people's way of living. What makes its scripture a kind of extraction of the real reality, is its reference to the unmediated conditions of the human existence. But a further look at this film will reveal that the practice involved in the film making process: extraction, non-mediation, real and human conditions are all allegorical and metaphorical conceptions. Extracted 'real' from the apparent reality of the Finnish way of life is nothing more than obviousness of the contradictions in the society. In *Perkele! Kuvia Suomesta* these contradictions are in no way dealt with as the conflicts of the society, which are generated by the elementary antagonisms within the modes of production. To make it clear, *Perkele! Kuvia Suomesta* is not dealing consistently with the idea that the structure of capitalist mode of productions is the cause of the contradictions in society. The contradictions exist as eternal living conditions of every man and woman of that society. Both, the oppressed and the oppressor, and exploited and exploiter are caught in the web of contradictions. Even further, these contradictions are shown as the proof of the real life, as a contrast to the non-real life of the idealist abstractness. We think that *Perkele! Kuvia Suomesta* is a movie, which is possible to film any moment anywhere in the world: just take a camera and walk down the street a hundred or two hundred meters, find some ten people ready to talk in front of your camera, or if you are lucky, even to perform their everyday actions in front of your camera, you will get the same feeling of 'contradiction' as in this movie. It was unnecessary for the director of the movie to travel all the way to Lapland and Sweden to find the contradiction of the Finnish man and the woman. These contradictions were in fact in front of the directors' nose, but their will of adventure was too great for them not to allow to abstract their problematic in a more materialistic and historical level. This ideological approach of the film-makers is also reflected in the very form of the film; throughout the film the directors, who were largely included in the film frame, are the ones, who seem to be less infected by the over-determinating contradictions. They know the right questions, are aware of the situations, and are able to reflect the contradictions in most harmonious way. As a result, they are not transformed during the film making process, they leave the scene of 'contradictions' just the same as they entered it: there is no process of learning and what is even more important, there is not any theory involved in their work. That is why we contrast the film by the director Erkki Kivikoski, *Laukaus Tehtaalla*, with the film *Perkele! Kuvia Suomesta*. The subjects of *Laukaus Tehtaalla* are the workers, who as result of changes in the mode of production in the factory, where they have been employed, lose their jobs. These workers, who do not have previous political inclinations, try every means of resistance at hand to their condition, starting from negotiations with the new management, then a joint strike, appeal to mass media, advice from the workers' unions. All these efforts fail subsequently due to arrogance of the new management, falsification of the documents by the management, ignorance by the mass media, and the corruption of the leftist unions. Apart from the overall structure of the film, which deals with the workers resistance, it is partly focusing on one character, worker called

Henriksson, who after all the failed struggles, in a desperate situation, shoots the new manager of the factory, and tries to kill himself. We can even claim that the problematic of the film *Laukaus Tehtaalla* is how to explain this inhuman act of killing. By making apparent the contradictions determining the modes of production, we will try to elaborate the thesis that what drew the worker Henriksson to violence is the contradictions of the transition to the new mode of capitalist production.⁸

Now is the time to ask what is that thing, which brings all these different institutions, such as mass media, workers' unions, and the management of the factory, together in their deafness to the humanist appeal of the excluded workers. We can say that it is the nation (of Finland), which constitutes this structure as coherent. If there is a change in the mode of production of any coherent system, there must be something, which is reproducible in these transitions, which makes possible the conditions for the eternal coherency of that system. That is the nation. If nothing, at least we can claim that nation has peculiar unifying function, which, using terms of psychoanalysis, we can even claim is suturing of the various strata of the society. This effect of the junction, which in the experience of Henriksson is appearing as a sort of a total conspiracy for which he cannot find any alternative thought, is a situation, which drives him to the destructive solution of total annihilation (i.e. destruction, which includes both the enemy and himself at the same time). Here we have to ask a theoretical question about his action: why Henriksson cannot think of an alternative for struggling against the change of mode of production in the factory where he was working for 10 - 15 years?

The last scene of the film is showing worker Henriksson in his rowing boat in his daily activity of fishing, but this time without his neighbour, who had to move away because of being laid off. He suddenly leaves his boat, gets his rifle and determinately goes to the factory, kills the new director Pylvänäinen, reloads the rifle and attempts to kill himself, but is prevented from doing that. The film ends here. Many reviewers have criticized this last scene for not showing clearly enough the evolvement of the psyche of worker Henriksson from a humanist peaceful and vigilant worker to aggressive murderer. Our position is that these critiques based on dramaturgical turn of the main character are missing one very important point, which is that the film *Laukaus Tehtaalla* is in fact purposely avoiding the psychologization of the turning into a murderer and instead is emphasizing the structures, which are at play in this transformation. It is possible to make explicit these structures, which are conditioning the transformation of Henriksson by making clear the elements of the world of Henriksson. These elements are workers, mass media, management and union. Of course there are more elements involved in his world, for example family and leisure, but Kivikoski is consciously evading them in order to abstract the problematic. Schematically we can characterize the world of Henriksson as homogenous and conjunct structure of mass media, management and union, which constitute him as the total subject-worker. This totality, which does not require any other participation than the obvious participation of living in it, is with every means based on exclusion of thought. Henriksson, like other workers, does not need to think about this totality, or narration, just he needs to participate in it. This might seem as an abstract description,

⁸ Even if *Laukaus Tehtaalla* is a fiction film, with its emphasis on analysis and structural approach, it is closer to reality than *Perkele! Kuvia Suomesta*, although with a direct and vérité-documentary style, which reproduces the metaphysics of a-historical ideology.

and very cruel reductionism, but following Kivikoski we want to insist on this simplification in order to arrive at ideological effects of this structure, which usually are not visible. With this simplification we want to make the covert processes, of how the structure works, visible. For now we can name this structure or narration, which brings all the fragmented elements of society together, as nation. The coherence of the national field of worker Henriksson gets disturbed with the arrival of the new management to this structure. Suddenly the contradiction between the capital and the labour, as the director's statement about the movie goes, becomes overt.⁹ To speak in the Marxian terms, it is possible to claim that what happened in 1972 in the small city (of Hyvinkää), in one small department of Finn-Metal Ltd is that, due to global tendencies, in order to make possible the reproduction of the capitalist accumulation, a decision was made about the transformation of the means of production of the private enterprise. Transition from one mode of production to another, which causes the dismissals of workers (reduction of production capacities), is manifested at first as a rupture in the structure or narration. This is exactly how Henriksson and other workers feel immediately after they hear the decision of the dismissal. For them it is a shock, it is a radical change and deep anxiety. But the real shock and disturbance starts when they find out that in fact nothing has changed in the structure of the narration, except for that they are excluded from it. What we want to say with this is that the worker Henriksson, as well as the other workers, is apolitical and dedicated believer in the narration, and member in the committee, who tries to resist the new management's decision to dismiss the workers, finds out slowly that the elements, which constitute his world, mass-media, management and union, are also constitutive of the world, which is not his, but the world of his enemies. Precisely to speak, Henriksson finds out that the same elements, which constitute his narration are also constituting the narration of his enemy, even further he finds out that the elements of his world actually are the elements of the world of his enemy. This discovery is by all means a pain-staking realization: mass media does not pay any attention to their struggle, unions are banning their strike, the old management is smoothly handing over the power to the new management. What Henriksson realizes is this: transition of the mode of production also means transition of all the elements of his narration to fit to new formation of production. In short, Henriksson realizes that with the transition

⁹ Contradiction between labour and capital is not only the case in physical work of the Finn-Metal factory, but also it takes place in sophisticated field of cultural work. The case of Kivikoski with this film shows it very clearly: The first producer of the film, Fennada withdrew from the project when they read the film script carefully, and understood it as politically suspicious, after which Jörn Donner started to produce the film. The support for the film, granted by the Finnish Film Foundation, remained with Fennada and was redirected to Matti Kassila's film *Tukikohta*, which was never realized. Donner transferred money for another film project to *Laukaus Tehtaalla* and this enabled the making of the film. The film faced more difficulties when it was to be premiered and screened in cinemas in Helsinki. At that moment became apparent that most of the cinemas in Helsinki were owned by Fennada-Kinosto-group and its close associate Adams-film. They refused to include Kivikoski's film in their programme. The commercial sector had to acknowledge the film and they granted it the Jussi-award, after it was awarded in the San Remo film festival, and after receiving the quality-support by the National Council for Cinema. But the director Kivikoski was unable to make another film in the next eight years. See also director Kivikoski's article in *Helsingin Sanomat* 11.3.1973. Also more information about the difficulties the film faced can be found in *Helsingin Sanomat* 11.2.1973 and 22.2.1973; *Kansan Uutiset* 22.2.1973 and 24.2.1973; *Soihdunkantaja* 2/73; *Demari* 24.2.1973; *Turun Sanomat* 24.2.1973.

of the mode of production also the form of the nation transits accordingly with the forms of this transformation. What Henriksson in fact understands, and this understanding comes to him as a devastation, is actually that a nation, which he thought belonged to him and he is a part of, belongs only to the class of the society, which holds the means of production. He understands very well that the story of the nation, or the big narration, or to be more specific, ideology of nation, belongs to the management. But since his reality, including family and leisure, is filtered through that narration of nation, he actually finds out that everything, all his world, his very human definition (his manhood, his life) belongs to the class, which holds the means of the production. This painstaking realization shifts the solid ground beneath his feet, or as Marx and Engels said, he starts to realize that 'everything that is solid melts into air'. But since he still wants to insist on the eternal metaphysical nature of the nation (as narration) he is not able to solve this dilemma. For example, after realization that the nation does not belong to him, but instead to his enemy, he could have taken the steps to decolonize himself from that structure of the nation. But exactly these metaphysical residual ideas are preventing him to think this way. As the final step he decides on total annihilation. Lack of ability to abstract the problem leads one, non-fascist or in this case, to put it more euphemistically, non-nationalist, worker to realize a fascist action, that of a murder.¹⁰

We can try to generalize our case study by looking at article by Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', where he clearly shows that transition in the mode of production largely changes also the discourse or cultural logic.¹¹ Accordingly, the cultural logic of the late capitalism, or multi-national and post-industrial capitalism, is postmodernism. In this article Jameson's task is to trace the occurrence of the logic of postmodernism. He is aiming at totalizing, or as he calls, cognitive mapping of this situation. Postmodernist shift, which can be characterized with its fragmented, multilayered, contradictory and hybrid nature, is result of the multinational and expanded antagonistic forces of new capitalist development. What is most important in this analysis of postmodernism as historical phenomenon is that it is giving possibility for fully grasping the conditions, which make this logic manifest. Translating to our problematic we could say that the contradictory situation, which occurred after the changes in the mode of production in the Finn-Metal factory, is also due to the multinational, or late capitalist transformation. Also at the same time we can claim that cultural logic of this transformation, manifested as a fragmentation, has been glued together with the idea of nation. If the change in capitalism is result of the global change of conjuncture, which Ernest Mandel calls post-industrial, or which Jameson better formulates as multinational capitalism, which the workers of the Finn-Metal factory rumour as "global", we have to ask what is to be done after the discovery of this shift. There are two options: one is to insist on homogenizing substance of narration or logic (in this

¹⁰ With this detour we are in the position to reaffirm Balibar's thesis (developed in 'Racism and Nationalism', *op.cit.* p.58-59) that the concept of human is the key notion of all racist and nationalist discourses, which have been and is daily constituted. And even further to intensify this claim, we can also reaffirm the famous hypothesis of Althusser that the only Marxist position to be defended against the capitalist mode of production and the ideological struggle is that of theoretical anti-humanism (Althusser, 'Marxism and Humanism' [1965], in *For Marx*, Trans. Ben Brewster, Verso London, New York 2005).

¹¹ Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, *New Left Review* I/146, July-August 1984.

case a nation), which is the residual element of the capitalist conditions before the transformation of, lets say, industrial to post-industrial or national to multinational capitalism. In order to simplify this we can say that before 1972 the capitalist mode of production in Finn-Metal factory, which was 'national' changed to 'multinational', and this transformation left many workers puzzled about their role in it. But just like all simplifications, this one also harms the conceptual tools, which we elaborated previously. Since we used the concept of nation as a unifying and homogenizing entity, it is completely superfluous to talk about the national and multinational nation. They will both end up, as we showed earlier, in the rule of the narration orchestrated by the class, which holds the control over the means of production. This anachronistic option of holding onto the national capitalism (as resistance to multinational capitalism) is what the good-hearted worker Henriksson hopes to maintain. But immediately he finds out that resisting to the transformation with old-fashioned methods and conceptions is not effective struggle against the contradictions.

Discourses of the fascist ideologies are usually based on this step-back position. Their critique of contradictions is generally based on the loss of the essential, which happened due to the multinational capitalist transformation (which they interpret as a conspiracy). Accordingly, fascists with their full blast politically non-correct vocabulary, including populism and traditionalism at the same time, are very captive for the minds puzzled with contradictory fragmentations resulting from the transitions happening in the society. Here we could say that, if approached by fascist ideology, Henriksson and many other workers would not hesitate in joining their ranks (today's Perussuomalaiset's genuine conversion of the confused masses to fascism lies precisely in this kind of operation). The quality of *Laukaus Tehtaalla* is that in it the fascists don't come to advice the workers, but the communists. Historically, even if fascists are against certain mode of capitalist production, fascist discourse is never explicitly opposing to the capitalist exploitation per se. This is an elementary contradiction of all fascist discourses. Even if they strengthen their ideology with overemphasizing the apparent contradictions, which are induced by capitalist conditions, they have never been, and they will never be against capitalism itself. That is why their only appeal to these contradictions has to be based on the notion of nation, religion, race, or some other similar cultural construction. Fascist workerism is always a nationalist workerism.

But there is a second possibility in dealing with fragmentation, one which is proposed in the article of Jameson as "construction of a genuine political culture" which could be summarized as handling the contradictions without retroactive retreat to the idealized past or some transcendental erosion of differences. This option we can name as a contemporary option, and it implies that the only way of dealing with these contradictions is resistance (both in theory and practice) that has a contradictory and fragmented character in itself. In the case of worker Henriksson this could happen idealistically with his mapping of the new situation, which has occurred after the new management has introduced the logic of the new mode of production, new capitalism. Consequently he could see in his map clearly that constitutes of his narration (nation) are all fragmented due to the change in capitalist mode of production. And he could understand that since narration and the concept of nation, which he was holding on to all his life through the mediation of mass media, workers' union, family values, leisure etc. are all orchestrated by the management, which recently changed to the new one, and rendered these constellations more apparent. So, according to the contemporary option, Henriksson could now realize the stupidity of supporting any

kind of idea of nation, which is in the last instance a narration of capitalism. He would instead struggle to organize a new genuine narration, which would have also a new form: cognitive and pedagogical (since it necessarily includes the process of heurism), historical materialist (since this cognition is based on one historical process and it is made apparent due to historical process of transition), and international (because transformation which occurred in his working place is induced by multinational changes so he cannot avoid the international character or the new mode of production).

There is a very tricky situation with the theory and practice of the contemporary non-fascist option, which following to Jameson's arguments could be described as postmodernist. Considering the general tendency of positioning the postmodernist discourse in the sphere of populism, consumer culture, American kind-of global intellectual heritage, pastiche, irony etc, it is very difficult to claim any criticality with postmodernism today. Remembering that postmodernism was an emancipatory theory and practice of the 70s and 80s, which primarily aimed at discarding the modernist tendency that was heavily influenced by certain ontological essentialist and traditional conceptions, such as historicism, belonging, genesis etc., this claim might make sense. But postmodernism, which gradually turned to be absolute relativism, transformed to a celebration of non-theory of kitsch and paradoxically to an ultimate appraisal of the issues of identity. It is sad and disappointing to see that today postmodernism, which started as a radical negation of any identitarian politics, primarily such as national, race or gender based politics, ended up as reaffirmation of these identities even in more problematic way than its adversary, modernism was performing. A proper theoretical detour would be needed in order to make clear this recuperation. Initially we can claim that deconstruction of identity in postmodernist theory and practice, which was based on fragmenting the constitutes of narration, was not able to deal with the asymmetric relations between the various constitutive elements of the whole. What we want to say here is that the postmodernist option, which was aiming at emptying the ideological construction of the subject, could not differentiate between class, nation, race and gender in this process of de-narration. Accordingly, the class, which has been labelled, together with the nation, as narration, turned to the issue of identity. The problem with this approach is minimizing of the class struggle, and posing of the class exploitation as an issue of position of the subject. Disappearance of class from the scene of the theory happened long before postmodernism, it was already present in the tools of many post-industrialist, post-capitalist and post-utopian thinkers. But postmodernism gave these approaches a certain idea of aesthetics or a style, which easily identified the strategy of de-narration with the policy of improvisation. What once was a heavy burden and anxiety of big narration, such as class, suddenly became provisional or ad hoc position of the subjects in society. The postmodernist view, accordingly, would see the case of worker Henriksson as an anachronic problematization. Since according to this discourse all the narratives of the society are imaginary and invented there is not any need on insistency of the problematization, which is based primarily on the class, since it is assumed that class is also a case of narration. So would postmodernists claim: if Henriksson understood that the nation, which he was holding on for his entire life is a narration, then he would have to make one more step and to realize that the

class which he was thinking he is part of (as worker) is also a narration. That would in the last instance mean that Henriksson would have to give up all his struggle and to accept a fragmentation as some kind of essential or ontological contradiction, and further, to realize that contradictions are above history. As the conclusion he would have to understand ultimately that history has stopped, that there is nothing to struggle for anymore, that he is fragmented, contradictory, disjunct and a schizophrenic subject. This is how *Perkele! Kuvia Suomesta* portrays the contradictions, where the farmers, prostitutes, capitalists, right wing politicians, left wing politicians, workers, musicians, models, alcoholics and students are all 'suffering' and are all designated by these fragmentations. The story is this: the loss of unity created irreversible pandemonium, which left nothing else than aesthetics as a tool for struggle.

This counter-argumentation against postmodernism was very successfully elaborated by Warren Montag already in the late 80s when he criticized this position as a pure systematicity, where the historical present becomes an undifferentiated totality of contemporaneous moments in which instances lose their relative autonomy¹². By the pure systematicity, Montag, who was primarily referring to Jameson's problematization of the concept of postmodernism, is mostly criticizing the political consequences of this problematization. Systematization of various components of society (such as class, nation and gender), in a symmetrical narration would "foreclose the progress in thought by denying the possibility that the fissures, disjunctions, breaks in contemporary social reality are symptoms of impending crisis" (p. 102). This would paradoxically lead to the totalization and transcending the actual and everyday reality. Postmodern politics will close all the possibilities of intervention and end up in the firework of the multiple enduring contradictions. Even if we agree with the critique of Montag we are not sure with his equitation of this systematicity of Jameson with the Baudrillard's simulacrum. We think that Jameson with his theory of 'cognitive mapping' managed to show that postmodernism is a historical phenomenon, which can be understood and resisted only with dialectical terms.

We will now make more visible this recuperation of the postmodernist ideas, which is inherent to its theoretical conceptions by discussing the work of Homi K. Bhabha. He as the successful supporter of the contemporary option as contrast to the regressive and traditional (modern) option, is also known with his deconstruction of nation as narration. Bhabha's well-known edited work is a book *Nation and Narration*, and it starts with the proposal that nation is inherently ambivalent term. He arrives at this postulate from the various intellectual fields, from Hannah Arendt to Karl Marx, but primarily he is basing his theory on the assumption that the nation, which is constructed as a language, has a character of "incomplete signification"¹³. Even if there is a certain possibility for theoretical emancipation from the nationalist a-historical

¹² Warren Montag, 'What is at Stake in the Debate on Postmodernism?' in *Postmodernism and Its Discontents: Theories, Practices*. Ed. E. A. Kaplan. Verso, London and New York 1998, p. 94-94.

¹³ Homi K. Bhabha, 'Introduction: narrating the nation', in *Nation and Narration*, Routledge, London and New York 1990 p.4.

tendencies in this assumption of incompleteness or performativity, Bhabha is immediately in the following page closing all possible progressive anti-nationalist politics by proposing that “these constitutive contradictions of the national text are discontinuous and interruptive” (p.5). It is hard to understand what are the elements, which are discontinuous in the historical development of the national narration. By having a closer examination of Bhabha’s article ‘DissemiNation: time, narrative and the margins of the modern nation’, which is also published in *Nation and Narration*, we can see that in the last instance, what constructs nation as ambivalent concept is an articulation of a concept of ‘people’. This concept, which is multitude of the contradictions and heterogeneity of disjunctions, is a guarantor of a materiality of the pluralism of the nation (p. 300 – 302). In order not to end up in some kind of obvious biological tautology of people=nation, Bhabha is proposing a new concept of history. Being against, as he claims, of totalizing and unitary ideas of narration, he refuses the historicist conception of dialectic and instead proposes the term supplementation (p. 306). This supplementary history, in order to explain the continuity in history, because there is a thing called change, is introducing a new conception of time, which is “iterative time of reinscription” (p.310). This means that what constitutes the nation or true material of the nation, is a thing, which is always repeating itself in its appearances, and Bhabha is not naïve not to realize that this thing has to have a character of incommensurability. This character, which makes nation an ambivalent phenomenon of a pluralistic nature, is completely ahistorical and by itself automatically subversive. This self-appearing subversion is due to this incommensurable ambivalent and contradictory thing, which in the policy of Homi Bhabha is named as cultural difference. Accordingly, this difference is named hybridity. Political consequence of this approach is a serious dematerialization of the national problem by turning it to some kind of unexplainable agnostic thing, which by its own nature is critical. Following to this theoretical conclusion, Bhabha is proposing that the politics of nation as narration should base on tracing the ‘cultural differences’, which are automatically resisting to all kinds of totalizations. The ultimate policy of this kind of ahistorical non-materialist transcendental position is multiculturalism. There are many critiques, which clearly show that Homi Bhabha’s transhistorical subversive substrat of nation is a mystification, which ultimately aims at depolitization, blurring and hiding the economical conditions of capitalism, which is crucial in supporting the multiculturalism in the current state of capitalist production. Both Arif Dirlik and Masao Miyoshi clearly show that concepts such as hybridity, cultural difference and multiculturalism are theoretical conceptions, which are hand-in-hand with the global or transnational capitalism.¹⁴

Homi Bhabha, who is openly overlooking the conditions of capitalism in his work, is also with his theory generating a discourse of multiculturalism. With his proposal that a nation is a non-classifiable hybridity, he is in the last instance

¹⁴ Masao Miyoshi, ‘A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation State’, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 19, No. 4 Summer 1993, pp.726-751. Arif Dirlik, ‘The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism’, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol 20, No 2, pp.328-356.

elevating the difference, as Benita Parry describes, to the ideology-free and natural zone.¹⁵ This conception of hybridity then resists to any kind of positioning. In this politics oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and exploited are in the mutual contradictory relation. The thing, which brings these antagonistic fields together is a decentered, disseminated and dispersed, but at the same time atavistic and transhistorical element of the nation. Un-decidedness is the main style of this politics. What is most common in all this politics uniting Bhabha and Jean Baudrillard is the elimination of the concept of class in theoretical analyses of society. Since the element, which guarantees subversion in Homi Bhabha's politics is not based on pedagogical form (it cannot be learned) and it has an a-historical character, the only practice to be used in this critical operation would be the sole affirmation of the cultural difference. Apart from being a cultural politics in its purest, culturologist sense, the position of Bhabha inevitably ends up as the politics of negotiation. Parry clearly shows that the resisting of totalization and non-ideological position is leading to a "politics of rainbow alliance or a democratic coalition". In this politics the struggle simply means a negotiation. Translating to our hero worker Henriksson's politics, Bhabha could propose him to try to understand that the difference between him and new manager is enriching his subject and multiplying the forms of the living in the ambiguous state of the submission. Bhabha would probably further suggest that in the flux of the differences his current transformed situation of not being a worker any longer could be a development for his subject. The ultimate policy for the worker Henriksson would then be a negotiation with the unpleasant but 'different' state of things and happy submission in the affirmative transition. But still the question, which Bhabha is not equipped to answer would be about the empty stomach of the worker.¹⁶

Epilogue

The Finnish political party with an overtly fascist discourse, Perussuomalaiset, which in the elections of the 17th of April 2011 gained 19.1% of the votes, have very clear agenda on culture and arts: Perussuomalaiset think that preserving the Finnish cultural tradition is priority compared to supporting postmodern contemporary art

¹⁵ Benita Parry, 'Signs of Our Times: Discussion of Homi Bhabha's The Location of Culture', in *The Third Text Reader: On Art, Culture and Theory*. Continuum, London and New York, 2002 p.250.

¹⁶ Mike Wayne in his excellent book on political film of Third World cinema, wittily criticizes the postcolonialist argument that the meaning is generated by difference. By referring to Homi Bhabha and his use of Hortense Spillers' theses that 'slavery' was never homogenous in its practices and conceptions, nor unitary in the faces it yielded is proposing the Bhabhaesque reading of the film of Tomas Gutierrez Alea, *The Last Supper* (1976): "Now we can imagine the Priest rushing to intervene [the revolt of the slaves], carrying his well thumbbed eassays by Bhabha and Spillers and declaring that their iniquitous treatment is only one 'face' of slavery or, better still, using his fingers to sign in quotation marks 'slavery'. Their revolt, the priest would point out is premised on imposing a mythic unity (hence the quotation marks) on the seething diversity and differences that constitute life." Mike Wayne, *Political Film: The Dialectics of Third Cinema*, Pluto Press, London 2001 p. 115.

(Perussuomalaiset kokevat suomalaisen kulttuuriperinnön säilyttämisen olevan ensisijaista postmodernin nykytaiteen tukemiseen verrattuna).¹⁷

This statement caused many left wing progressive and antifascist cultural organizations and individuals, as a reaction, to unconditionally adopt the description of themselves as postmodernists. Considering the theoretical postulates, which we worked on in this essay relating to fascism and postmodernism, we would like to conclude this text with the slogan on the cultural politics of anti-fascism as: neither with Perussuomalaiset, nor with postmodernism.

¹⁷ From the Perussuomalaiset Parliamentary Election Programme 2011: “Edelfeltin ja Gallen-Kallelan upeat maalausteokset sekä Sibeliuksen maailmankuuluisat sinfoniat ovat kansainvälisesti arvostettuja, mutta niiden merkitys osana jokaisen suomalaisen yleissivistystä on vähentynyt”. Readers, who are interested in understanding the precious values of Perussuomalaiset cultural policy can visit the Gallen-Kallela’s major retrospective in the Helsinki City Art Museum Tennispalatsi, until 15. January 2012.