

For a Critical Reading of the COVID Age. Biopower, Nosopolitic and “War-Like” Logic Supporting the Crisis

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ABSTRACT

The critical sociologic theory, the marxian thought and even the motto of the English Royal Society “nullius in verba” invite us to “not trust anyone’s words”, that is to say that nothing is what it appears and we must not to believe everything that who govern tell us. That means media representations must always be ascertained with skepticism and critical spirit as occulting logics, dynamics, dispositifs functional to the system in term of management of conflicting implosive forces, crises and critical limits that could it to collapse. In a nutshell we now feel more than ever the absolute need for a social critique that demonstrates again how policy and science collaborate to litterally incorporate the consumer values on which the system is founded. In the case, by riding the covid, we see how the current populist ultraliberist policy tries to implement new totalizing nosopolitics focused on wealth, health and body performances fully functional to self-regulation automated mechanisms of reproduction and resilience of an absurd system condemned to grow indefinitely. We can also detect how an ontogenetically unfair profit-centered system makes use of war-like strategies to impose advanced biopower forms, as well as exploiting the collateral side effects of all kinds of crises to derive commercial benefits and promote the recovery. In short, I try to approach the covid from an unconventional sociopolitical perspective, by limiting myself to delineating some relevant themes of a much broader problematic discourse, aimed to stimulate attention on underlying systemic logycs whose collateral damages risk to vaporize di liquid society and to opening dystopian scenarios, including a new era of totalitarianism.

Introduction

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Covid, Nothing Else

Despite the evidence confirm all its limits and paradoxes, the system tries to overcome own crises with elastic strategies of domination of the masses assisted by technical progress. In the case the covid crisis is being coped through politics consisting in a mix of anti-social measures and ultra-precautionary hygienic norms, including virtualization and de-humanization of work, medical assistance and education, affecting deeply the ordinary life, behaviors and relations [4]. But, in my opinion, the debate (indeed rather the total absence of public contradictory) about the appropriateness and legal justification of the current nosopolitics seems somewhat tainted by a passive acceptance of the official narration. In fact, leaving out the various hypotheses about the genesis of a new beta Coronaviridae mutant widespread from Whuan, let's briefly review what we are led to believe about the drama of the covid. In two-year period 2020-2021 the WHO has registered 133.931 deaths out of 5.043.620 of cases. We can roughly deduce that the average lethality rate of the covid is 2.7% and then in Italy the mortality rate in the general population results of 0.02%.

According to the italian ISS, the average age of deceased patients is 82 years; among 67.7% of them suffering from at least three chronic debilitating diseases. Reported letality rate of the covid under the age of 50 is 1.2%; hospitalization rate under the age of 19 is negligible; mortality quite nothing [5]. Although the infection is usually inapparent and the effective contagiousness of the infected asymptomatic people questionable, the silent infection is soon considered as the real crux of the problem and consequently quarantines isolate mostly healthy people and the natural immunization is legally abolished. In parallel unspecified amounts of mass screening tests without scrutiny, false diagnostic tests, "covid per caso"-cases (hospitalized patients discovered accidentally covid-positive), manipulation of Health performance parameters, keep on inflating the daily war bulletins and supporting war-like biopolitics [6].

Biopower and Nosopolitic Logic: Some Example from the Past

We can use the AIDS epidemic due to HIV, a viral agent identified in 1983, as a good model to bring out occulted biopower logics [7]. Initially believed involving only restrict risk groups, the public authorities however adopted massive nosopolitics aimed to protect

the healthcare system, as in parallel a terrorist media campaign invaded public space and the sindemic side effects of the diseases were finally unmasked. While the panic exploded, homosexuals were stigmatized and confined, right-wing, homophobic and racist movements rode a political crisis (while curiously nowadays these groups protest against the liberticide measures) putting a strain on the founding values of democracy [8]. Subsequently, in 2003 - while the scandal of transfusions with infected blood was appropriately covered up, just like in 1976 the iatrogenic epidemic of Guillan-Barre syndrome and the President Gerald Ford had himself photographed in public while undergoing the antifu vaccination- there was a new excess of mortality and a healthcare system collapse due this time to an exceptionally hot summer [9].

On the contrary in 1918 american authorities decided to channel collective emotions about the world war, so that the public crisis dued, this time, to a new flu virus was minimized. A decade before the war a draconian quarantine (a measure adopted in 1300 in Italy to cope the "black death" consistent in 40 days long forced confinement of ships, crews, passengers and goods in the harbors) was performed to persecute the Chinese community of San Francisco [10]. In times of covid, biopower again attacks migrants and coloured people, again targeted by unprecedented police violence. The biological and healthy motivations that justified the nazi-fascist racial hate towards jews, omosexuals, gypsies, slavs and even communists are sadly known [11]. In the 1968, against the unconventional deideologized pacifism of the beat generation, in Italy the police was used to spray disinfectant, in order to prevent the spread of a moral infection, after clearing the fields occupied by the hippies.

But let's remember also the crucial role played by the epidemics in the rise of capitalism, as the germs introduced by the Columbus's landings allowed the conquistadores to quickly annihilate the Aztec (1521) and Inca (1526) empires.

Later, joined with the african slaves intended to replace the indigenous exterminated by the European germs, also yellow fever and malaria invaded the Americas [12]. Summarizing, in comparison with previous pandemic (AIDS, H1N1, SARS, MERS, Ebola, Spanish flu, Black Death), based on what is reported by Lhetinen and Brunila, the covid seems to be managed "as a direct function of nationalism", while never have been registered such a war-like massive authoritarian measures, "state sponsored and state-controlled mitigation" [13].

Towards a Political Economy of the Bare Being

In simple terms, following the foucauldian theoretic framework, we can consider biopower as a political strategy of social control practiced by mean of a strict regulation of the bodily functioning and medicalization of all the dimensions of the human life. From

this perspective the strict control of Health and Welfare through demographic, epidemiologic, life expectancy, longevity, differential vulnerability and other vital statistics about population combined with wealth markers, plays a crucial role for the current ultraliberals policy. In the covid age, new nosopolitics powered by advancements in the fields of sensors and computational, data and web sciences, allow the system to survive through the pervasive sanitization of bodies, institutions and organizations. Rather, we can safely say that medicalization of the system and mcdonaldization of the Health form now a whole confused reality.

On the other side, although the State sows panic to make fearful people docile and obedient, paradoxically the masses willingly support a regime making them feel more protected, as in the liquid world the body is experienced as the last resource to be exploited to affirm own existence. In addition a “manage of affects through the political ontology of war” is perfectly compatible with the ongoing Political Economy of the life strategies based on nosopolitics that promise the masses biosecurity in exchange for obedience, surveillance, omologation, national identification [14]. But these two years of a “war” apparently still far from being won - despite armies of heroes, discriminating green immunity passports, suspension of the basic rights, state-of-war unitary governments headed by war-time president (unelected, in Italy), bombing terrorist and patriotic propaganda, strategic overestimation of casualties and deaths, censorship of counterinformation, suspension of salary, impossibility to work, monetary sanctions for those sparse fringers of deserters, traitors, rebels, heretics who refuse to be vaccinated - it seems to me that the “invisible” enemy is become even more and more changeable and invincible.

Conclusion

Unsuccessfull national and distrectual quarantines, business shutdowns, closure of borders, smartphone-assisted epidemic monitoring make us confirmng that the “white flag principle” gives much more benefits than the victory on the virus [15], even because a broader conceptualization of health comprising a fluctuating condition between well-being and virtual disease to be tested perpetually opens precious big data markets just in the healthcare sector [16]. Ultimately even the benefits of a lost war serve to recover economy, while letting society quickly shrink to swarms of anhesthetized videoaddicted bodies all differently similar [17]. In addition from unpredictable reactions between nosopolitic and technical advances (including sensory assemblage, embedded chips, autonomous self-learning drones and robots, idrugs, artificial intelligence, wearables biometric devices, cryptology, 5G powered web applications), we can expect nothing more than a de-humanized automated condition within somewhat

dystopian environmental scenarios [18,19]. But since every form of domination involves also specific modes of resistance, History even entrusts to minorities who, armed with torches, bravely dig into the facts, “reject the horror of unlike and the prospect of a bare vitality, after being humiliated”, the opportunity to promote radical changes [20].

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