

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE'S "DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA" A POSTMODERN READING

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Abstract: *Based on the current forms of knowledge we can outline the features of modernity in nuce existing in the American society from the early nineteenth century. Kinetics on the outside, in relation to nature, to which corresponds a defined internal kinetics of social mobility and political democracy, the birth of a subject capable of supporting the kinetic movement, subject who is acting on a project basis, motivated by the need for equality and freedom, in a constant effort of profane and innovation and that is constantly threatened by anomie and despotism; these are the topics of this analysis dedicated to the American modernity and prefigured to be of the Western society as a whole.*

Key words: *subject, truth, anxiety, despotism, kinetics, equality, freedom, democracy.*

1. Justification

Any postmodern reading of an author proposes a rediscovery where we face the "effects of the analogy or isomorphism which, starting from the current forms of the knowledge, outline the figure that has become blurred or ceased to be perceptible" [8, p.50]. It contains a risk called by Sloterdijk, "deformation of the text" which can mean "as if you make a murder... the difficulty is not in the execution of the deed, but in erasing the traces" [15, p.26]. The stake of our exercise is double: using some postmodern concepts, we try to identify the characteristics of modernity as they transpire in the description of American society. Tocqueville identifies in American society a pattern of the future, without

excluding the evil threat coming from the future. However, this evil is now requiring governments to reduce the space of freedom, to maximize the security, including the concept of "right to security" in that of equality of conditions. "Democracy in America" is not just a book about America, but the topics related to freedom, equality, violence, war, after "September 11" are no longer topics solely of history of sociology.

2. Levels of analysis

What is an essential feature of Tocqueville's writing is the pathos, the fact that it confesses the author's personal commitment and responsibility. One can glimpse here a trace of the Greek sophism heritage in the modern culture, namely

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when one thing is said by a person, it remains forever linked to what was said. We cannot speak that Tocqueville makes a minimum effort to temper his emotions: you can not relate to the writing without meeting the author. Tocqueville's speech expresses the spirit of the Enlightenment, the one defined by Kant as being the way out of the state of "juvenile" and acquiring the independence of the individual to use its own will and reason and thus to make their voices heard.

"Democracy in America" falls into the category of "grand narratives" that have the good habit to explain the past, the present and the future. And then, there is no reality which belongs to the world of life or the system's world and that is not addressed. Economy, law, justice, politics, war and military, the state organization on the one hand, mass media, civil society, family, literature, art, morals, subjectivity, on the other hand, plus the interconnections between the two worlds. In the good "Montesquieu" tradition, under which any construction of the "system's world" rests on a dominant sense belonging to the "life's world", Tocqueville pays attention to the human feelings, more precisely to "the soul", developing hypothesis of a sociology of emotions when saying that black slavery makes *"intelligence to come down to his soul"*, when notes that after every revolution there is a closure of the "soul" and when understanding that the body is being hit by the despotic power and is made to get thus to the heart.

The "Grand narratives" have a good predictive power and this is due to the two types of circumstances. One condition comes from the government, the other one from knowledge. The advances in knowledge in the natural sciences occurred while streamlining the governance act and its needs so that the sociological analysis is considered valid only if, managing to

anticipate what will come is useful information for the government. When targeting at very general issues, these anticipations bear the imprint of what Popper called historical prophecies [13]. It is the case of the claim that the U.S. and Russia will be the nations that will require the future hegemony in the world, each activated by a distinct fundamental principle, democracy versus despotism, or judgment that anticipates Marx: *"if you give a man freedom, leaving him to live in misery and shame, doesn't it mean to give a reason for the future riot?"* [16, p.446]. Anticipations such as *"the state ends up by falling into anarchy or servitude"* [16, p.123], where the expansion of the judicial power does not correlate with the expansion of the elective power, are closer to what we might consider to be a *"scientific prediction"*.

The explanatory capacity of the "grand narratives" lays in the claim that it holds the secret of society functioning and should be able to identify the "core" from which things appear, that *"generator fact which would seem to be the source of each particular fact and (that nn) found continually before me, as a central point where all ended up to meeting my observations"* [16, p.41] and that would be equality of conditions and the desire of people being equal.

If we take the Sloterdijk 's idea that modernity is defined by kinetics, then it appears in the work of Tocqueville in four forms. A first form is the conquest of space, the movement westward, a permanent "deterritorialization" speaking in "Deleuze-Guattari" terms.

The second form of kinetics is of social type and is manifested as a social mobility. The two social phenomena which have a close interrelation constitute the birth of American society. Tocqueville manifests the belief that *"people always feel the consequences of their origin"* and that *"the*

circumstances that accompanied the birth and contributed to their development influence the rest of their road" [16, p.70]. The American culture would have originated, and we use the sloterdijkian concept, in an "initial irritation" [15, p.44]. However, the question of the origin influence on the future development (clearly belonging to the paradigm of cultural determinism) will be permanently amended by the French thinker through a functionalist perspective. The third form of kinetics concerns the political, administrative aspects, namely the administrative decentralization and the democracy issue, a form of government. Finally the kinetics is manifested in the form of the war between nations.

The kinetic movement to conquest the space has as a starting point in a certain mental equality, if we can call it so, namely the desire for freedom of the early settlers who put their security needs in brackets - they were torn, when embarking on the ships that took them to America, by the possibility of death - to start a new life. Consequently *"they could not distinguish among immigrants, as in the old European society, neither the winners, nor the losers: one can say, in general, when leaving the country, the migrants felt no superiority to each other"* [16, p.72]. The courage, and the fear, do not have a social distribution, a sign indicating a radical break with the European feudalism, where, *fear was the shameful and commune destiny of the ordinary people and also the reason for their enslavement*" [6, p.12]. The migration to the new continent records the democratization of this type of emotions, as a first basis of equality of individuals, where people of different social conditions discover that they feel the same.

Tocqueville distinguishes two types of settlers. One type contains *"a population of bold adventurers"* who want to get rid of the *"poverty under the parental roof"* [16,

p.385]. The other type covers the Puritan settlers who emigrated from spiritual needs, that of transposing a political idea in practice of the daily life, defined by democracy and republicanism, a "dream participation in history", as Walter Benjamin told. Emigration thus produces, a *"deformation"* not just, *"as changing the appearance of something, but also changing the place, moving it in elsewhere"* [15, p.27] by the rupture of an entire family and public relations and design of another social playwright marked by uncertainty, which teaches "sorting", and takes itself and what is considered a ballast, an exercise of "essentiality" that occurs during the life.

The pragmatism is the common platform of all migrants. They are all heirs of the Renaissance culture, where the question of soul immortality becomes secondary to the daily life, the social spirit prevails in relation to the religious one. Emigration was also a form of adventure, a movement of the self to break the daily routine, which then multiplied into the colonization of the West. The company built simultaneously on the same principle of mobility included the movement of self and its desire for fulfillment, phenomenon then generalized on a global scale and become defining for modernity: *"we move ourselves in a world which, at its turn, moves itself; then, that the world movements include and take hold of our own movements"* [14, p.19], a kinetic paraphrase of the Marxist theory. In the tocquevillian speech can be noted a characteristic of modernity as being the *"possibility of making a world in which things happen as they were designed, because it can be done what is intended, as there is the willingness to learn what cannot be done yet. It is the will power that allows you to do everything alone, the will that dictates the modern world steps"* [14, p.15]. The initial modernity would thus lean on these pillars: pragmatism,

knowledge, will of power and consciousness of death generating commitment to the life of this world in terms of life project.

The American Experience is produced by the continuous birth of the border, the place of freedom, (Deleuze and Guattari), and of the new, as well. The society opens outwards towards new geographies. As a manifestation of an exercise of desire seeking to be fulfilled, nothing looks worse than the loyalty expressed as love, "*to the place of birth*", which could block the "deterritorialization". In short, we are talking, as the first meaning of the concept of subjectivity, about the birth of the subject "*as moral autonomy and self-realization*" (Habermas) and the modern era standing above all "*under the sign of subjective freedom*" [11, p.93].

A second meaning of the notion of subjectivity is that Habermas surprises under the term of "homme" as the rational pursuit of its own interests. This is born in larger processes related to equality and, "*when the conditions become equal after a prolonged struggle between the various classes that formed the old society, the envy, the hatred and the contempt for your fellow man, the pride and the overconfidence in self, invades so to say, the human heart and stay there for a long time*" [17, p.13]. This leads to characterize the American society as one of the low power distance where both the leader and the led, both the rich and the poor, see each other closely and control each other. The short distance is synonymous with transparency, producing frustration (and hence the desire for change), a frustration caused by the lack of material goods and consumer limitations. When consuming only the American feels alive. The verb "to be" produced by experience modulates on the verb "to have" as reality of the possession. The voluptuousness of consumption is given by a sense of

equality, that there is someone else to consume something else, qualitatively superior. The man suffering from frustration does not enjoy himself. Life is a process, not a project, focused on a purpose. Starting from Lawrence and how the writer understands love, "*we have transformed the process into a purpose; the end of any process is not its continuance forever, but its fulfillment ... The process must work towards its own fulfillment, not to who knows what horrible intensification, to who knows what dreadful limit where the soul and the body end up in destruction*" [4, p.9], Deleuze and Guattari show how insertion of the "lack" of desire results in the production of ghosts and not reality. It is about the, "*subjected desire, which can only enjoy but its own submission*" [5, p.6]. Handling is based precisely on the ability to produce fantasies and to insert lack in the desire (Deleuze and Guattari), as we will configure below. If migration was the expression of "the desire that is subjected", the Western colonization means entering into a production machine based on "the subjected desire", a desirable machine that is embedded in the machinery of social reproduction.

Equality resulting from the human heart and it is "urging the weak to want to attract the powerful ones to their own level and compels people to prefer equality in servitude to inequality in freedom" [16, p.99]; people always prefer equality to freedom and this may be an explanation of the emergence after a hundred years of various forms of totalitarianism. Equality is achieved with one condition: for the social statuses not to be monopolized by the same persons or the same groups, to become available beyond the social criteria. Thus, equality is expressed as social mobility, where mobility is upward and downward, no one being sure of its own position. Therefore we are speaking

of an "opening" within society. Openness to the outside, through colonization, openness inside through social mobility, both subject to time. If the "closure" is governed by the logic of space, openings are governed by the logic of Time. "Openness" contains the uncertainty related to the territorial kinetics and maintaining the social status.

The "detritorialisation" produced by "openness" generates frailty of the social relations, of the contacts done and undone, frailty associated to insecurity. Since life appears as a series of opportunities for enrichment, the American will not conclude long-term contracts, in order to take advantage of every opportunity, which increases uncertainty. This is why the function of the rules to minimize uncertainty is prevented in its action just by the desire of enrichment and the people *"want to obtain the useful without taking care for what is right, to find the science far from beliefs, and well-being separated from virtue"* [16, p.52] situation that leads to simulation (in the world of "as if") and anomy, (*"in the moral world, everything seems suspicious and insecure"*), to offset the distinction between good and evil and, consequently, to the continuous generation of deviance, i.e. the emergence of a surplus of insecurity.

The utilitarian associated to pragmatism leads to the belief that *"there is no country where the law can cover all law and where institutions can replace the reason and the morals"* [16, p.176]. The utilitarianism produces not only a subject, but also a spirit, the society becoming society precisely because the participants have the same spirit, live in the same type of representation. This explains the American efficiency, a dynamic society, where transaction costs are low, because *"to exist, a society and, moreover, for such society to prosper, all spirits of the citizens should always be collected and merged*

because of some main ideas" [17, p.14]. Thus, the other's behavior becomes predictable, which increases the freedom space and produces the belief in a moral authority derived from a universal reason, which facilitates the trade and facilitates the negotiation. The same impulse that generates anomia and simulation has the power to keep these phenomena into certain limits. On the other hand, to the deterioration of social relations because of the ongoing deterritorialization corresponds the need for social contact in a society where physical distances between people are relatively large. As such, the acceptance of the "alien" is easily done, him not being associated with the "abnormal" as a form of "stigma", hence the consequences: religious pluralism and ethnic pluralism.

The legal mechanism that triggers the desire for equality and applies it is the law of succession. The Succession Act *"divide, share, disperse the assets and the power"* says Tocqueville, it *"destroys the intimate connection between the family spirit and keeping the land"* [16, p.94] favoring relocation. The Succession Act puts individuals in close positions and forces them to turn to their own resources, to the personal qualities to achieve social success that translates to enrichment. The desire for enrichment gives rise to energies and motivations, it being associated to the fear of losing wealth, the two experiences being socially segmented. Or in the words of the French thinker *"the desire to achieve welfare appears in the imagination of the poor and the fear of losing it in the imagination of the rich"* [16, p.142]. We reach to, *"to an unlimited field of immanence instead of an infinite transcendence"* it occurs, *"a contiguity of desire, which makes everything that is going on to always be in the office next door"* and there is nothing *"that cannot be judged in desire"* justice being only the

"immanent process of desire" [5, p.89] (Deleuze and Guattari).

Social mobility triggers the motivation - desire system and thus the social kinetics relies on the man - desire. As desires are material, we enter a vicious circle, that of self-reproduction: *"the desire of wealth became a restless and fierce passion that increases as it is met"* [16, p.362]. Dying and having not access to a lot of other goods *"Fills him with anxiety, fears and regrets and maintains an eternally restless soul which makes him constantly change plans and places"* [17, p.142]. Weber explains us why this happens: because civilized human life is integrated in "progress" in infinity, and *"such a life, according to its immanent sense, should not have an end. Because, for those who live in the progress, there is always another breakthrough on the horizon; no man who dies reaches the peak found at infinity"* [18, p.51]. The verb "to have" changes its content: from the reality of possession to possibility, "essentialization" does not occur in relation with the present, but is given by "the new" that comes from the future, the awareness of death is replaced with perpetual life consciousness and the transcendental idea is substituted by the idea of immanence.

The medieval man is living in the fear of death, and the American lives the regret of time that passes. Instability (described as, *"the midst of these perpetual fluctuations of fate"*) makes present to extend and it *"hides the future that disappears, and people only want to think of tomorrow"* [17, p.165] thus canceling just an essential feature of rationality, namely anticipation of what might happen. If people no longer have *"a taste for the future"*, governments are required to restore this taste. This can only be achieved if citizens are taught in practice, without being told this, that *"wealth and power are the reward of labor; that great successes are at the end*

of old and long desires and nothing lasting can be achieved except for what is obtained difficulty" [17, p.166]. The transfer of praxis from public policy to the private sphere means a rationalization aimed at the future by delaying satisfaction. Streamlining and delaying satisfaction go up to where the natural ardor between the sexes *"can be always triggered or appeased by the social status of political institutions"* [17, p.122]. "The world of system" is not just an expression of "life-world", it can, in turn, shape the "life-world" through technologies that will operate "a social orthopedics" as defined by Foucault.

If people get the idea of colonizing the future, they will inevitably reach religious consciousness, namely the much sought after idea of transcendence: *"I have no doubt that, getting citizens used to think about the future in this world, they will gradually get closer and without realizing religious beliefs"* [17, p.166]. Through practical activities, project and provision focused, we get the idea of the sacred and sacredness, to "re-captivation" paraphrase of the Weberian concept. Re-captivation will decrease anxiety, fear, uncertainty, and thus the human creative potential is fulfilled, as *"the human spirit has done very important things during the centuries of faith not because of religion, but because of freedom and tranquility it offered"* [17, p.15]. In addition, the meaning of religion would convince people *"to get rich by honest means only"* thus saving the moral foundations of social order, reducing anxiety. As America is the land of religious pluralism, the absence of monopoly hinders the entry of the religious institution into the logic of kinetics and makes the morals to be cleaner, for any monopoly is generating corruption.

The future may be present in human life and as a phenomenon that we call today "unanticipated effects", the unexpected of

"public good" that occurs as a result of minor decisions that are animated by the "interest well understood". What in our space appears as a saying "when you do well, you do it to yourself", saying that belongs to a consciousness that believes in a divine reward, the concept of "interest well understood" allows Americans to fight "individualism" and to develop a secular trust *"as the wise love they have for themselves makes them help each other relentlessly and makes them to sacrifice without difficulty some of their time and their wealth for the state"* [17, p.135]. The very same utilitarian spirit that produces social de-moralization and regenerates it. Breaking codes is followed by the establishment of other codes. The "well understood interest" expresses something else, that the minor and marginal fact shows its power against the majority and the central fact, foreshadowing Deleuze's and Guattari's idea: *"great and revolutionary is only the minor"*.

There is another way to conceive the future. There are cultures in which people set an ultimate goal of life after life and deal with the other world, making this by abstinence from *"a lot of small fleeting desires"*. These people, says Tocqueville *"came across the great secret of succeeding in this world"* [17, p.164]. In other words, thinking about the future, but currently making something lasting and worthwhile, people leave a *"gift"* to posterity, form of intergenerational solidarity. Hence the metaphysical question which bothers the thinker: how could people find the great secret of succeeding without getting to be enslaved by a consciousness of immortality?

The relationship between work as practice and future, have the root in Protestant thinking and it comes from the interpretation of Luther of the statement of Paul the Apostle that *"each stays into the belief it was called"*. (1, Corinthians; 7,17)

and where the concept of call (in Greek *klēsis*) is translated into German by the term "Beruf", which means whilst vocation and profession, and *"just by using this Lutheran version a term that originally meant only the vocation that God or messiah addresses to a man, actually gets the modern meaning of "profession"* states Agamben [1, p.25]. Or Tocqueville found that in America no one wishes to remain *"in the calling in which each was called"* and the desire to get rich quickly sends people away from the spirit of religion. The Protestant idea is put thus between brackets by the social kinetics. Quality requirements will derive from a secular mechanism (the market), which sets kinetics into motion, not from a religious one, but will enter the composition of everything that means reflexivity.

Who or what could stop this machine of desire that amplifies the social insecurity? The only chance would come from the woman, because it is only through her that religion can stop the desire for enrichment, for the religion *"possesses the woman's soul and the woman determines morals"* [16, p.372]. Just because she determines morals, the woman becomes the subject of political interest, claims Tocqueville. The woman, by its mere presence, would become an inhibitory form of the kinetic movement oriented towards material values. She enters in the relationship with the sacred, the man, the profane. Tocqueville appreciates that Americans *"do not think that men and women have the duty and the right to do the same things"* and are intrigued by the fact that in Europe there is the claim *"to make man and woman beings not only equal, but similar"*. Gender similarity is produced by forcing women to be consistently rational, a strategy arising from the need to control it. Americans believe that there are fewer chances *"to restrain the tyrannical*

passions of the human heart of the woman and that it was safer to teach her the art to fight them alone" [17, p.216], by arming her reason, transforming the conflict with other inner conflict. The text is suitable for both interpretation. Is the woman going to realize that if she does not play the dominant book, of rationale imposed by the man in the social logic, she will lose? From here arises the first interpretation, of Weberian type: "To what part of the self, the woman must give up to be rational? ". The second Foucault interpretation raises the question: "*what we need to know from this self to accept giving up?*" [9, p.113]. This knowledge is associated with a learning technology, as the American seeks to make the woman, "*to have more confidence in her own powers*" [17, p.216]. Thus redefined, the woman becomes man's partner and she holds the right to govern its own domain, that of small truths, of the everyday life. The great truth of the male "space" corresponds to a lot of small truths of the feminine "place". The minor truth, of the "place" has the power to influence the great truth, of men's space, through the reverse transfer, from private to public, and while "*the European is trying to escape domestic troubles agitating the society,*" the American becomes the beneficiary of "taming the woman", *pulling out from his home the love of order that he extends over the state affairs*" [16, p.372].

The seal religion on the whole society is "ripped out" in the American world, and this is not without consequences. Where religion is strong, it prevents the American "*to ideate everything and forbids him to dare everything*" [16, p.373]. The religious fact interferes in the consciousness of every American when making a decision. The absence of authority in general and of religion in particular scares people and therefore, Tocqueville asserts, "*a man could ever bear a total religious independence and a full political freedom.*

And I have every reason to believe that if he does not have faith, it must serve, and if he is free, it must have faith" [17, p.28]. The absence of religion produces disinhibition in the individual and anomie socially, a state that can get unbearable. Recent historical experience have shown that where religion was put between brackets by this reality that is war, in the context in which the war led to the collapse of political systems, people have asked for authoritarian governance.

The settlers acquire the status of subjects thanks to the truth obtained through the events they experiences, the more that this truth is confirmed religiously: "*what we have seen, and what we have been told by our parents must be brought to the attention of our children so that future generations learn to praise the Lord (Psalm LXXVIII, 3, 4) for the kin of his servant Abraham, and the sons of Jacob, keep forever the memory of the wonderful works he has done (Ps.CV., 5, 6)*" [16, p.76] considers Nathaniel Morton, the historian of the first years of existence of New England. Two meanings can be drawn from here. The first meaning is related to the overlap of the sacred over the everyday life profane. The second meaning concerns an issue that Derrida calls it "*noncontemporaneity of the living present with the self*" in double responsibility, to parents and to the unborn, from the future. The quotation shows that the settlers do not impose their descendants no obligation to bring alive their failures, that they decided to bring the dream out of the history, rejecting the idea of the same Walter Benjamin, reproduced by Habermas, according to which "*the present generation is accountant not only for the fate of future generations, but for the fate, innocently suffered, by past generations*" [11, p.31] -, requiring them to become only recorders of these dreams and not the architects that will materialize it. The

political conservatism has its first root in this independence of the dream of each generation, as the patriotism is related to each generation existence and not to a being of the people, out of any exercise.

To understand the significance of the experience as simultaneous production of truth we will take a brief Heidegger step. The American pragmatism is closely linked to the event, i.e. by experiencing the world. To Heidegger the truth is the opposite of concealing; it is the exit from hiding. Experiencing the world means removing it from concealment, gaining truth. It also means freedom because *"freedom was first defined as freedom for what is manifest in an open. Freedom for what is manifest in an open, every time leaves the being to be the being as it is. Now, freedom is revealed to be leaving the being to be"* [12, p.145]. Emigration and colonization of the West is a way out of concealment and the possibility of the being to be allowed to express itself.

The machine of desire does not include only material values, but the desire for power as well. But where is the power? *"The administrative power of the United States in its composition has no central or hierarchical trait, and therefore it is not visible. The power is there, but do not know where to find its representative"* claims Tocqueville [16, p.119]. This anonymous distribution of power throughout society confirms Foucault's perspective of power in modernity, namely that it is about *"accepting that power is exercised rather than possessed"* [7, p.61]. And then, this power has a close relationship to knowledge, and this is linked to the emergence in the Middle Ages of a professional group, that of lawyers, whose role was to legitimize the power. Confirmation of the birth of the dyad power - knowledge is recorded by Tocqueville's remark: *"the spirit then becomes a critical success factor, science*

is a tool of government, intelligence, a social force" [16, p.42]. This relationship between power, law and truth that was looming in the middle ages, shall put its mark on modernity. Or as Foucault says: *"we are compelled to produce the truth just by the power requiring this truth and that needs it in order to function"* [10, p.34].

The desire for power occurs due to generalization of "equality", as Tocqueville states: *"it is impossible not to understand that equality will end up into penetrating the world of politics, as it did in other areas"*. We speak in this case by the status of "citoyen" of subjectivity, according to Habermas's phrase, which is manifested by the fact that *"I have not met in America a simple man who does not stunningly ease discern the obligations arising from the laws of Congress and those having the origin in the laws of the State."* [16, p.224]. The condition of citizenship is closely linked to the way government is conducted, it is about the balance that should exist between the vote and the requirement of competence required by the vote. The equality of conditions, that allows Americans to have about the same knowledge and administrative decentralization, which allows the exercise of decision in the commune, facilitates a permanent connection between knowledge and power, as life practice.

Finally, the kinetics is manifested in the form of balance of power among nations, through war. The international law theory argues that modern states are the product of war. The idea appears at Tocqueville as well, for which, during the war the *"people acts as one individual against foreign nations: it fights for its very existence"* [16, p.229]. The war *"almost always increases thinking of a people and raises its heart"* and there are cases when *"we must deem certain incurable diseases that can attack democratic societies to be*

necessary" [17, p.291]. The war dysfunction chapter covers the fact that it requires increasing government forces, it imposes nations the alternative "by which the defeat leaves them prey to destruction and triumph to despotism" for the war, "if does not immediately lead to despotism by violence, it slowly leads to despotism by habituation" [16, p.18]. Producing a social selection, in which people who have a certain predisposition, "violent and adventurous" take precedence in relation to those "moderate and honest", the war destroys freedom. War is the natural consequence of the fact that "society seems to live from one day to the next, like an army in campaign" [16, p.330], i.e. by stimulating permanent mobilization. On the same ground Foucault would say that politics is the war carried out by other means.

Subjectivity as self-realization in the private space, following its own interests, as public action, all three types of subjectivities define the liberal condition of the American society, liberalism in America representing, says Foucault, "a way of being and thinking" and "not an economic and political option of the governance or the government environment" [10, p.190].

Tocqueville identifies in the French Revolution two opposite movements, one favourable to freedom, the other one favourable to despotism, bureaucratization of society, ("despotism within the administrative"), and replacing hatred and democratic envy with the general indifference based on the officials who are the "toy of the sovereign and its masters, something more than kings and less than men". Weber will call these officials "professional politicians" who will be the instrument holding the monopoly "power - knowledge", generator of a new type of control "in the form of justice and law". These movements have two opposing

tendencies, in balance: "one leads the spirit of every human towards new ideas and the other one can easily stop him thinking" [17, p.17]. The first expresses the primacy of the subject's reason: "to look alone and only within yourself the reason of things". And if the American gets detached from the spirit of family, tradition and class consciousness and even "the prejudices of the nation", he ends up not seeing where authority could exist and which are its limits. The absence of authority in knowledge produces anxiety because "a vacuum and unlimited space" opens before people. In this context "we can see that confidence in the general opinion becomes a religion whose prophet will be most of the individuals" [17, p.17], and the result will be no autonomy of thinking. The nations will want despotism because "it appears as a balm for all ills tested, it is the support of justice, a support for the oppressed ones and founder of the order" [16, p.312]. If malfunctions and disorder occur in society, and the sense of injustice is accompanied by the sense of lack of horizon, it may appear a collective ambiguous subject - the general view - behind which we hide all, and an abstract, non-rational phenomenon, which is the trust and another phenomenon, that of an expectation of "balm" type, driven by a deep anxiety; well, then the despotism of a new type, of democratic essence can become into being. Question: not the same claims Reich (quoted by Deleuze and Guattari) that: "the masses were not duped, they wanted fascism at a certain time, under certain circumstances and this is what needs to be explained, precisely this perversion of gregarious desire"? [4, p.40].

The democratic despotism - "when I feel the arm of the power pressed on my forehead, I do not care who oppresses me nor am I willing to put the yoke over my neck just because it is offered by a million

hands " [17, p.18] - no longer approaches the body, as the feudal despotism, but the soul. The new kind of master no longer says: "think like me or die", it says: *you are free not to think as I do, I will not attempt to your life, to your assets, but as of this day you are a stranger to us* " [16, p.330], you have your life, *but it will be worse than death* ". Nobody will raise when the indifference, daughter of "despotism, will dominate public spirit. Tocqueville will recognize the fact that Foucault will later theorize her, namely the change produced by the nineteenth century in the question of the life and death: *"the right of sovereignty is therefore the right to determine death or life. Follows then the other tight that comes to engender: the right to make people live and to let die"* [10, p.190].

3. Meanings

Modernity means kinetics. Modernity means a certain political construct. Modernity means sacrificing, uncharming and sacrificing the transcendence in favor of the immanent. Modernity means contradictory social logics that lead to the idea of discontinuity in history and to the idea of unpredictable. Modernity records a specific profile of the subject: *"each man, taken as an individual becomes more akin to the others, weaker and more insignificant"* [17, p.37]. Before this "weaknesses" of the man, as an attribute of personality, Nietzsche will be revolted over years.

"Democracy in America" contains an implicit lesson: timeliness obsession. In the desire to understand a country born through emigration, Tocqueville proceeded to "make land" by projecting the model of the researcher who theorizes starting from the real point, inaugurating thus the new knowledge in the social sciences, namely, *"to make visible precisely what is visible"*. "Democracy in America" can be read as

Raymond Aron sees it, as a *"simultaneously historical and eternal"* writing. *Historical as the thinker presents it himself as related to the obvious fact of the modern societies' democratization. Eternal as he sends us to the antinomy or reconciliation between equality and freedom. The societies whose ultimate ideal is equality can be free?"* [2, p.629]. But it can be read as a book of truth, in Deleuze's expression as *"production of existence"* [3, p.119], i.e. about living and the human condition in the kinetic mechanism.

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