

//FOR A MORE DESTRUCTIVE DECONSTRUCTION SLAYING MONSTER-TRADITIONS//

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ABSTRACT: What if deconstruction were as dangerous as its critics make it out to be? What if we actually advanced a more destructive deconstruction? In a world torn apart by various crises, what is required is a stronger, more ambitious deconstruction that moves beyond softer, descriptive versions (Derrida's, Caputo's, etc.). I propose a more ruthless deconstruction, one that is unashamed to "slay monsters" (Caputo's words), especially the monster-traditions of Church, Capital, and "Democracy." I begin by noting the significance and relevance of deconstruction during the present, a time of "revolutionary stirring." I then focus on Derrida's statement that he is "a very conservative person," a remark unsatisfactorily explored by Caputo. I then show how Caputo's construal of traditions in this text is extremely problematic. However, his later thinking shows signs of a more radical deconstructive bent, one which leads down the roads of revolution and communism ("a radical community of equals").

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I wish deconstruction were as dangerous as its critics have made it out to be. After all, in its existing configurations (Derridean, Caputocean, Häggglundian, etc.), it is not very dangerous. More bark than bite, really. But *why* do I desire a more destructive deconstruction? The answer is surely obvious: amidst the ecological, economic, ethical, and other crises, what we *desperately* require is radical global transformation – i.e. Revolution – and my contention is that deconstruction – a more destructive form/version of deconstruction – would be a powerful resource in our fight against the powerful, which shall entail much destruction, obviously followed by deconstructive construction and re-construction. To destroy – to obliterate *ethically* – is a daunting task, of course, but necessary, given what is at stake. Hence, my desire for a dangerous deconstruction. In other words, an ethico-politically prescriptive deconstruction, a world-transformative deconstruction.

Deconstruction in a Time of Revolutionary Stirring

Deconstruction is certainly an unsettling force, upsetting almost everyone who comes across it, given its uncompromising questioning of our received notions. It has been causing a bit of a stir in academia for a number of decades now: but is academia a true measure of its radicality? That the word ‘deconstruction’ has made its way into popular culture and dinner party conversation does not signal its ethico-political subversiveness but rather its misappropriation. Indeed, perhaps its co-option is just another brilliant example of the way in which capitalist ‘democracy’ subsumes any and all radical forces, real or imaginary. Even deconstruction’s latest guise, brilliantly refigured by Martin Häggglund (2008) as a cold-hearted descriptivism is not really dangerous, precisely because it “returns” deconstruction to the task of description.

Deconstruction’s ethico-political impotence has perhaps become more visible in the past decade or so, in the context of the return (or return to prominence) of radical political thought, primarily advanced by the likes of Antonio Negri, Alain Badiou, and perhaps most influentially, Slavoj Žižek (refer to, e.g., Hardt and Negri, 2000; Badiou, 2010; Žižek, 2008). Of course, world events – from an awareness of the possibility/probability of human-induced climate change to the economic crises in the USA and Europe to the ‘Arab Spring’ to the ‘Occupy’ movement – have perhaps made the rest of us more open to the very ideas of ‘ideology’ and ‘utopianism’ and ‘revolution’ and ‘communism’ – words many of us assumed were dead. In such a time of rising ecological-political consciousness and the serious questioning and rejection of existing systems and structures, should not deconstruction be involved? Could not deconstruction – or at least one version or revision of it – contribute to the task of thinking the Revolution?

My thesis here is that deconstruction could be involved in the Revolution – but perhaps only a deconstruction with a radical core, fortified, strengthened. In other words, it is time that, rather than figuring deconstruction as an incisive but ultimately soft force, one which was content to ‘unpack’ texts or read them ‘against the grain’ in civilized, sophisticated, and nuanced ways – which is vital, up to a point, but can also lead to obscurantism, quietism, apoliticism – I contend that it is time we should now insist on deconstruction’s destructiveness; that we should now unashamedly insist on a more ruthless de-construction, a neo-deconstruction. To promote and advance a more potent deconstruction, one that will help us fight the Good Fight rather than hyper-

problematize or obscure the task in front of us, before us. For deconstruction (or something like it) is such a potent tool, and like all good tools – hammers, crowbars, etc. – a reinforced deconstructive thinking has the potential to be a powerful weapon in our struggle for thinking, implementing, and operating the Revolution we need, *now*.

Soft Deconstructions

Jacques Derrida: "I am a very conservative person"

If Jacques Derrida was a conservative person, then how should we understand the relation between his conservatism and his configuration of deconstruction? But first: was Derrida conservative? It appears so: he himself proclaimed his conservatism. The context was a 1994 Roundtable discussion between Derrida and a number of Villanova University academics, of which *Deconstruction in a Nutshell* (1997) was the result (and what makes this text fascinating, apart from the fact that it is an exceptionally accessible work, is that deconstruction's subversive core rears its head in the very same work, a point to which I shall return). During the exchange, whilst speaking of his involvement in the establishment of the International College of Philosophy and the desire to inaugurate something new whilst maintaining elements of older institutions, Derrida declares: "So, you see, I am a very conservative person" (1997: 8).

To be sure, multiple comments and provisos are required here. First of all, Derrida is French, and the French (and not *just* the French) love to shock, so perhaps this comment should not be taken too seriously. After all, Derrida is playful, a provocateur, which is characteristic of the greatest thinkers. (Nietzsche immediately comes to mind.) But let us nevertheless assume that there is a measure of truth in this comment, that we take on his word i.e. that Derrida is indeed a "very conservative person." Derrida is referring to himself, to his personhood in contradistinction to his philosophy or to his explication of a thinking he calls 'deconstruction.' In other words, Derrida may have been a very conservative person (we could also perhaps note that he was married, a parent, an academic, etc. – which of course does not necessarily entail conservatism) whilst deconstruction is not – or at least "not very conservative." (Once again, Nietzsche – radical thinker and rather conservative person – comes to mind.) Derrida may be said to embody the 'both-and' of the deconstructive logic he advances: simultaneously a conservative person and a radical thinker; perhaps more accurately: "one and the same" person may be both conservative *and* radical i.e. that, in certain aspects, one is conservative, and in others, radical. Furthermore, we may propose that Derrida was a thinker who realized that what he was doing was *describing*, not *prescribing*, and certainly not *prescribing* anything radical.

And yet, even when taking all these factors into account (hyperbole, distinguishing between the man and his thought, the multiplicity in subjectivity, deconstruction-as-description), we are indeed "surprised" by such a declaration/confession, as Caputo rightly notes (1997: 37). I propose that we are surprised – even shocked – precisely because the harbinger of such a radical philosophy would be expected to be a radical person or at least unconservative or at least only somewhat/slightly conservative. But to be *very* conservative? – yes, quite/very surprising, even shocking (perhaps something he wanted to achieve, considering he was a very

cheeky thinker). And anyway, Derrida never really came across as a revolutionary, as someone who wanted to tear up the system and start again, as someone deeply driven by the recognition that the world is in desperate need of radical change (even with a publication like 1994's *Specters of Marx*), so we should not be too surprised or shocked. But we – we desirers of a new society – cannot help but be at least a little bit surprised, perhaps even shocked. Most certainly: disappointed.

Apart from my citation of possible explanations for Derrida's declaration of conservatism, Caputo provides a further exposition. But before he does so, he provides the following explication in relation to the context of the Roundtable: "Derrida was trying to persuade us [i.e. those gathered at a Roundtable at Villanova University addressed by Derrida] that deconstruction is on our side, that it means to be good news, and that it *does not leave behind a path of destruction and smoldering embers* [emphasis added]" (1997: 37). Before moving on to a discussion of several elements of this comment, I should first mention something about the form of this remark: I propose that this is a kind of assurance, one that uses particularly evocative language, which is perhaps necessary, given that Caputo is leading up to an explication of Derrida's surprising claim or declaration of conservatism. After all, Caputo insists that deconstruction is *not* "a form of conservatism," something with which, incidentally, "he [Derrida] is *also* accused of" (1997: 38). So we can already perceive that deconstruction is often construed as something that either destroys or conserves. (And my claim, of course, is that it should be something that is *unashamedly* destructive.)

Now, in relation to the content of this quoted piece, we could ask the following questions: On *whose* side is deconstruction? Given the particular context of the text, is it on the side of Villanova's academics? One hopes that it is on the side of academics who question and critique our prevailing beliefs, actions, and institutions, particularly those that oppress. But *are not* academics and academia on the side of the establishment, of the status quo? The same may be asked of deconstruction's "good news": is it good news for the powerless or the powerful? Of course, one anticipates that deconstruction might/would feel uneasy responding to this kind of 'either/or' questioning, but this line of enquiry remains pertinent, and certainly informs the present work. The final part of the quotation is italicized because, as you may begin to imagine, it is precisely a deconstruction which leaves behind a path of destruction which I am advancing here, and one to which I shall return in due course.

Caputo on Tradition(/s)

Caputo goes on to explain that Derrida has a nuanced approach to "tradition" – which is, one may fairly say, the very stuff of conservatism, conservatism's home and vehicle – but what Derrida purportedly attempts to do with tradition is to:

unfold what has been folded over by and in the tradition, to show the pliant multiplicity of the innumerable traditions that are sheltered within 'tradition.' A tradition is not a hammer with which to slam dissent and knock dissenters senseless, but a responsibility to read, to interpret, to sift and select responsibly among many competing strands of tradition and interpretations of tradition (Caputo, 1997: 37).

Let us pause once again to analyze some of the sentiments contained in this passage. First of all, the word “sheltered” is revealing: this word implies safety, of keeping safe, of self-insulation: Caputo’s (implicit) contention is that traditions “shelter” innumerable traditions within them. But is that really the case? Do not traditions try their damndest to do the opposite: rather than shelter alternative voices, they seek to drive them out or silence them (‘silence’ in both senses)? Rather than sheltering alternative or heretical traditions, dominant traditions attempt to – and often spectacularly succeed in – destroying them. Furthermore, a ‘tradition’ in the Derridean-deconstructive sense may theoretically not be “a hammer with which to slam dissent and knock dissenters senseless,” but that is certainly how dominant traditions have remained dominant.

With typical nuance and subtlety, Caputo then makes the following remark: “For he [Derrida] sees deconstruction as a way to keep the *event* of tradition going, to keep it on the move, so that it can be continually translated into new events, continually exposed to a certain revolution in a self-perpetuating auto-revolution” (1997: 37). Caputo goes on to state that “That is an aporia that conservatism can never swallow” – and something, perhaps, that we cannot swallow either: is not Caputo being too gracious to tradition/s, giving them too much benefit of the doubt? That traditions “*can be*” continually translated, that they can be auto-revolutionizing? And when a tradition is “auto-revolutionary,” how revolutionary can it be? Can there even be “auto-revolution”? Is not a “tradition” precisely that which resists self-revision? There may be a certain degree of alteration going on in our traditions, but should not such adjustments be deemed merely self-adjusting rather than *auto-revolutionizing*?

If history/histories has taught us anything, it is this: that it is *much more often* the case that traditions hold on for their dear life, that their keepers threaten, injure, or kill those who question them or dare to destroy the traditions that oppress the weak. Is not a tradition, *by definition*, that which seeks to hold onto itself despite the forces of time, rationality, knowledge, openness, progressiveness? Is it not the case that dominant traditions usually only reform in the face of real pressure, real threat? Is not the “event” – or at least the most eventful event – precisely that which flies in the face of tradition? By employing a somewhat-ambiguous phrase like “event of tradition,” Caputo has brought the two terms too close together, whereas I propose that the two are rather antithetical, that existing dominant traditions are *more often than not* the *enemy* of the event; that tradition is hostile to it. In other words, dominant traditions are usually oppressors of the event, of events.

Furthermore and unfortunately, Caputo does not explain what the “certain [kind of] revolution” this self-revolution would be: perhaps/probably only a “partial revolution”, a revolution-without-revolution i.e. not a *real* revolution, not one that radically transfigures the traditions and institutions themselves. What Caputo probably has in mind here is reform. (I return to this point below when I discuss Caputo’s advancement of a reformed capitalism.) We are at least grateful that Caputo has mentioned the blessed word ‘revolution’ – indeed, by employing the phrases “auto-revolution” and “auto-deconstruction” in close proximity, we may perhaps intuit a certain commensurability, compatibility, or symbiosis between the two. But rather than emphasize any connectivity between deconstruction and revolution, Caputo dilutes and downplays revolution. According to his rendering, revolution is a part of tradition, it occurs *within* tradition, *by* tradition. For a more destructive

deconstruction/deconstructive destruction, however, the reverse is true: revolution would annihilate dominant, oppressive traditions; revolution occurs *more or less* from “without,” as an event.

Examples of Monster-Traditions to be Slain

But one could object that what Caputo is describing here is ‘tradition’ as figured by Derrida – at least according to Caputo’s rendering. But Caputo’s overly optimistic rendering is too open, too forgiving. It erroneously expects that dominant traditions will change from within – but the historical truth is that this rarely occurs; *much more often than not*, they require external intervention – oftentimes, they require annihilation. Derrida’s/Caputo’s “bigger, wider, more diffuse and mobile” idea of tradition does not help us when dealing with *actually existing* traditions, with traditions as they actually operate – especially dominant traditions. Let us *briefly* consider examples which Caputo himself has discussed (albeit briefly): the Catholic Christian tradition (of course, there are also other dominant churches), the economic tradition of capitalism, and “democracy” (to come).

1. The Church

When it comes to our biggest and most influential institutions, I contend that there is very little – if any – radical self-revising going on; that there is very little – if any – change that warrants the beautiful name of ‘revolution’ or even of “auto-deconstructing” and “auto-revolution.” For example, let us take the Catholic Church (Caputo’s Church tradition). It may be proposed that it has “evolved” in certain ways, with its dogmas and practices revised, elaborated, etc. But can we say that it has been *truly* auto-deconstructing? One could propose that Vatican II or liberation theology, for example, are exemplary auto-revolutionary moments, but how much have they *fundamentally* changed a Church that is fundamentally fundamentalist? To what extent has the Church abolished the patriarchy and puritanism that plague it? Does this institution not remain dogmatic, sexist, elitist, ritualistic, etc.? If there is a “certain revolution” going on within the Catholic Church (and not *just* the Catholic Church, not *just* Christian denominations), it is *not very revolutionary*.

But one could bring to our attention those moments when those inside the Catholic Church have conflicted with the institution to such an extent that there is a break, the most historically decisive being the Lutheran event. But how revolutionary are the *ekklestes* that arose in the wake of this break? The Lutheran ‘revolution’ has generated the establishment of other traditions – admittedly, some more “auto-deconstructing” than others (such as the Quakers, perhaps) – but these newer traditions maintain many of the dogmatisms and oppressive practices with which religious institutions seem transfixed. Can we point to a religious tradition that is truly auto-deconstructing? Does not history show how stunningly *non*-auto-deconstructing or even *anti*-auto-deconstructing such traditions are? Does not history show their resilience towards any kind of positive change? Indeed, can we not explain the hostile reaction to deconstruction precisely in terms of the fact that such a philosophy and practice threatens the anti-revolutionary drive of our dominant, domineering institutions?

Caputo follows his statements on “auto-deconstruction” and “auto-revolution” with a certain clarification: “the most fundamental misunderstanding to beset Derrida and deconstruction is the mistaken impression that is given of a kind of anarchistic relativism in which ‘anything goes.’ On this view, texts mean anything the reader wants them to mean; traditions are just monsters to be slain or escaped from. . . .” (1997: 37-38). First of all, any careful reader of Derrida and his expositors will know that deconstruction is anything but an “anything goes” philosophy. The second sentence, on the other hand, is particularly useful for us here. To begin with, it would be a gross generalization to characterize traditions as “*just* monsters”: returning to our example of the Catholic tradition, one would be irrational in the extreme to describe it as “just a monster.” It has *some* quasi-redeeming qualities, including its transmission of the “Jesus event”: to be sure, such a transmission has been fraught with myriad problems (including the obsession to secure the truth or meaning of such a perplexing possibility), but we must credit such institutions for the transmission, together with the positives such transmission has brought (a desire for the divine, a Christic ethos of love and sharing and caring and forgiving, etc.). Hence, the Catholic Church (and not *just* the Catholic Church, not *just* Christian denominations) is not “just” a monster. It has some quasi-redeeming qualities. But it is a monster nevertheless. For even though it retains some quasi-redeeming qualities, the Catholic Church continues to promote its dogmas, superstitions, and archaic rituals; it continues to hoard its obscene wealth; it continues to exclude females from positions of power; it continues to conceal its sex crimes; and so on.

Towards a Truly Deconstructive Faith

What, then, should we do with such a monster? Since, today, we can transmit the “Jesus event” in non-dogmatic, non-oppressive ways, more and more of us are “escaping from” such traditions (which is the second of Caputo’s two options, the other being slaying such monster-traditions). Such a move may perhaps be considered “revolutionary” to a certain extent, albeit at the level of the individual or local; for instance, Caputo himself discusses and warmly approves of ways in which some Catholics are “churching” differently these days (2006: ch. 6). But such a move should only be considered a preliminary move, for the monster remains: the thoroughly revolutionary thing to do with such traditions *is* to slay them, raze them from the face of the Earth, not even leaving their embers to smolder. After all, why let the Catholic Church live in its present form? If its ‘core’ message can be transmitted in ethico-politically and theologically-spiritually progressive ways, then why let such a tradition continue to oppress us? Should not such a monster be slain? Should not all religions of oppression be slain? In their stead, there shall be new/ish traditions which are *truly* auto-deconstructing and auto-revolutionizing. For they will be open, revisable, minimalist. Consequently, these new/ish spiritual traditions will allow self-revision to occur freely, voluntarily, willingly. Such institutions will not be allowed to grow into monsters; they themselves will not allow it. And if they do, the ever-vigilant Revolution will slay them.

2. Capitalism

Given capitalism's rapacious appetite for earthly "resources" and the Earth itself, whose "logical" conclusion is accelerated ecological devastation and the specter of human-induced climate-change; given the ways in which greedy banks and individuals have exploited the world, bringing the almighty USA to its economic knees, whilst the likes of Greece, Ireland, and other European countries face bankruptcy, one wonders why we continue to allow the tradition of capitalism to continue. For its patent devilishness is plain for anyone to perceive. But Caputo himself would rather witness its "self-revision" than its slaying. He contends:

I would be perfectly happy if the far left politicians in the United States were able to reform the system by providing universal health care, effectively redistributing wealth more equitably with a revised IRS code, effectively restricting campaign financing, enfranchising all voters, treating migrant workers humanely, and effecting a multilateral foreign policy that would integrate American power within the international community, etc., i.e., intervene upon capitalism by means of serious and far-reaching reforms. . . . If after doing all that Badiou and Žižek complained that some Monster called Capital still stalks us, I would be inclined to greet that Monster with a yawn (2007: 124-125).

We have an instance here in which Caputo clearly demonstrates his preference to keep the tradition-Monster of Capital alive, albeit with major reforms. Rather than entertaining the possibility of slaying this tradition, he prefers to re-create it. He does not raise or ponder the question as to whether capitalism could or would want to incorporate such substantial revisions. In *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce* (2009), Žižek directly addresses Caputo's reformed capitalism and asks whether its "particular malfunctionings" are "structurally necessary" (2009). It is perhaps worth citing the relevant passage here, not only due to its incisive content but its form, for it proceeds rather carefully, somewhat modestly, as a series of questions (which is rather uncharacteristic of the bombastic Žižek):

"The problem here is not Caputo's conclusion that if one can achieve all that within capitalism, why not remain within the system? The problem lies with the 'utopian' premise that it is possible to achieve all that within the coordinates of global capitalism. What if the particular malfunctionings of capitalism enumerated by Caputo are not merely accidental disturbances but are rather structurally necessary? What if Caputo's dream is a dream of universality (of the universal capitalist order) without its symptoms, without any critical points in which its 'repressed truth' articulates itself?" (2009: 77-78).

Given capitalism's greedy, exploitative character, one finds it difficult (though perhaps not impossible) to imagine that such a tradition would generate any "auto-deconstruction" or "auto-revolution" which betters it (unless it pays, perhaps). Such resistance is exemplified by the monumental opposition to President Obama's healthcare reforms – the desire for a free national healthcare system being, to any reasonable person, both rational and just. To be sure, Capital is always "revising" itself, flexing and adapting in astonishing ways – but for the sake of maintaining and extending its greedy grip. Judging by capitalism's track record, we should not expect any immediate or willing "auto-deconstruction" or "auto-revolution" that leads to society's ethico-

political betterment. Given the planet's disfiguration at an alarming rate, can we – not just 'we' humans – afford to wait for positive self-change? Given these objections and doubts, one wonders why Caputo would prefer siding with the slight possibility – or even impossibility – of capitalism's self-overhaul rather than its obliteration, whereby we would be given the opportunity to start again, start afresh.

Towards a Truly Deconstructive Neo-Communism

Straightaway, may I underline that I am not an economist, so I am unable to sketch any details here of a new/ish economic system that will replace capitalism. However, as a thinker, I will contribute whatever I can to its thinking as part of my overall ambition of providing/contributing to a blueprint for Revolution (a task that will consume whatever remains of my life). And so, I will only mention a few points here. To begin with, what would we replace the monster-tradition of capitalism? Is not communism, for example, just another monster? What we know for sure is that the Revolutionary economic system will be driven by a logic and structure of sharing, of the just distribution of wealth, of economic egalitarianism – so, yes, this all sounds like socialism/communism (I use the terms 'socialism' and 'communism' interchangeably here). Of course, we communists are somewhat wary of citing such words and traditions, given their monstrous twentieth-century histories (Stalin, Pol Pot, etc.). Really Existing Socialism has been Really Disappointing. However, communism's gross historical distortions do not necessarily entail that it cannot eventually be realized – especially when enlightening forces like deconstruction may guide us in its implementation. We must therefore consider the possibility of a truer expression of socialism, a 'neo-communism' that finally does justice to the Ideal. (In the same way that the Christic Ideal has been corrupted in the form of Christendom but that this does not necessarily entail the impossibility of a Revolutionary Christic Faith [non-dogmatic, open, minimalist, etc.], so is it possible for there to be a Revolutionary Communism that honors the Communist Ideal.)

Now, just as deconstruction has patiently awaited the likes of Drucilla Cornell in terms of applying deconstruction to the law, or Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's political adaptation of deconstruction (Caputo, 2007: 123), so, too, we await for radical economists to offer their models of a neo-Communist economics. In the meantime, what we noneconomists can do is begin to sketch our philosophical – and for some of us, our theological –figurations of a neo-Marxist society with as much positive content as we can, progressing with the required caution (something deconstruction taught us in an exemplary way) as well as the required ardor and ruthlessness. Žižek himself is cautiously-prudently-powerfully beginning to sketch his notions of "ethical violence" (2004) and *agape* as "political love" (2010: 98-117), maybe he will offer some (more) positive content for our neo-Communism. Ultimately, however, the responsibility falls on all of us: what we thinkers must now do is provide the general framework for the Revolution, inviting and involving economic, political, and other specialists to provide recommendations and details.

3. “Democracy”

It is clearly apparent that Really Existing Democracy is neither truly democratic nor really working. To be sure, it is far better than the tyrannical regimes that inhabit various regions of the Earth. And perhaps when the multitude is truly educated (for today they remain uneducated and miseducated, and certainly unenlightened), it could perhaps be effective, maybe – but then if the world’s citizens become schooled in the art of thinking during the Revolution, then democracy would be obsolete, for questions of law and other social matters would be addressed via the one truly universal force: Reason. A Reason/ing that would, of course, be informed by forces such as deconstruction.

And of course, our construal of Reason is not *exactly* a hyper-inflated figuration, an over-inflated rationalism *purportedly* advanced by Kant and the Enlightenment (which is Caputo’s framing [1997: 66-67]): this situational-contextual Reason is certainly an open one, one which learns from deconstruction and other modes of thinking the art of considering its “others” (faith, literature, art, etc.), of being more passionate and compassionate and forgiving, of being more expansive and imaginative and inventive – perhaps more akin to “thinking” or “wisdom” which are more open and expansive than any allegedly “narrow” “Reason.” A thinking that is “bigger, wider, more diffuse and mobile.” *However*, this Revolutionary Reason is *also* “Kantian” and “Enlightenmental” in its ambition, in its self-assurance that it should be the principal driver when it comes to the compositions and movements of our traditions and institutions. (When glossing Kant and the Enlightenment, Caputo remarks: “Kant gives the philosopher a symbolic mastery of the world, before which everything must pass in review . . .” [1997: 66-67]. But is not at least one reason the world is in a mess precisely because we have irrational leaders, irrational forms of government and economics and religions? My contention is that the world would certainly not be in any worse shape under the rulership of a council of wise people, and with full military might behind them, such a form of governance would most likely make the world a better place. In this respect, Plato was right [refer below].)

A more destructive deconstruction would align itself with such a brave rationality, given that its existing modes are overly cautious, endlessly qualifying and nuancing (good things, to be sure), waiting for “democracies to come” that may/will never come. Meanwhile, the poor and brainwashed continue to suffer in silence; meanwhile, our dominant and domineering traditions *leave behind paths of destruction and smoldering embers*, of genocides and holocausts and a disfigured Creation.

Given this brave and ambitious rationality, what would be the most effective Revolutionary government? Plato was close to the mark: philosopher-rulers – or something like it: a group of the world’s wisest people drawing on the most rigorous philosophical resources (deconstructive, feminist, ecological, etc.’ refer to, e.g., Manolopoulos, 2011: 43-44, n. 5) would form an oligarchical government – what I am presently calling a ‘Democratic Oligarchy of the Wise.’ Decisions would usually/almost always be reached unanimously, given that a broader, gracious rationality would most likely produce unanimous decisions, though a democratic voting process would be available on those rarer occasions when unanimous decisions cannot be obtained due to the incredible complexity of certain issues.

Of course, there are a number of other, often-interconnected monster-traditions to be slain (scientism, anthropocentrism, etc.). As for the three I have singled-out here: the first is very close to my heart, an area of specialization for a number of years: faith; the second and third, which produced my initial interest in political economy via the 'Paulitical' turn (Žižek, Badiou, etc.), signals a recognition of each term's fundamental entanglement with the other – and with us. (Perhaps I should end this section parenthetically: on the need for the obliteration of traditions with a citation and modification from Nietzsche: "What characterizes the free spirit is not that one's opinions are the more correct but that one has liberated oneself from tradition . . ." [Human, All Too Human I, section 225 (non-gender-exclusive version)]. Of course, even the great Nietzsche requires revision: *(Only) By liberating ourselves from enslaving traditions and establishing enlightened traditions will our opinions and actions become more correct – and even perhaps true/truth.*)

Of Severity and Good Will

It is my contention, therefore, that the various dominant traditions must be destroyed, leaving behind a path of destruction, without even smoldering embers (for they may re-ignite), and replacing these existing oppressive traditions and institutions with emancipatory and progressive ones, with structures of justice and equality, egalitarian systems that enable the flourishing of the Earth and all its creatures. Since deconstruction is a progressive, enlightening force, we should harness it and any other rational, liberating forces. Only amongst the ruins of our monster-traditions shall humanity then be able to to experience the healing and transfiguration of a wounded planet.

If I have been severe here with Derrida and Caputo, it is because I perceive some weaknesses in their arguments – fissures that are urgently in need of addressing and redressing, given our worsening global situation. Indeed, Derrida and Caputo *themselves* intuit and sometimes make explicit the dangerousness of deconstruction. For example, the word 'revolution' is uttered twice in the same sentence by Derrida during the Villanova Roundtable (1997: 25). So even though he is "a very conservative person," he nevertheless speaks of revolution. Furthermore, Caputo himself does not shy away from recurring references to a radical ethico-politics. In Caputo's first full-blown theological work, *The Weakness of God*, there is a number of allusions to radical transformation: he explicitly mentions the word 'revolution' several times, and at other times he uses biblical motifs that allude to the revolutionary, such as deconstruction bringing a "sword" (2006: 31, 32, 34, 52). Furthermore, in *After the Death of God* (the very text where he promotes his Caputolism) and in reference to the "Kingdom of God" [*sic*: a less monarchical-patriarchal phrase would be something like "divine topos"], he speaks of an alternate economic dream, one which radically surpasses his uninspiring reformed capitalism:

We can dream of the Kingdom of God on earth, which means including those who are out – out of power and out of luck – so that the real economic order would begin to reflect the sort of systematic reversals that define the Kingdom. Who belongs to the Kingdom? Precisely the ones who aren't invited to the banquet or to the wedding feast. The Kingdom is marked throughout by these radical reversals and privileging of the deprived (2007: 159).

I, too, dream this dream – but why *only* dream? Why not act? – or at least begin to act by thinking the Act? Why not destroy what needs to be destroyed? And Caputo himself offers a hint of at least one aspect of “the real economic order” whose construction would replace what we have destroyed, leaving behind non-smoldering embers: “what would finally be envisaged is a radical community of equals, where no one is privileged” (Caputo 2002: par. 33). Now, is not the dream of the divine topos on Earth akin to – or even *the same as* – the Communist Ideal? Is not Communism *precisely* this “radical community of equals”?

One must therefore ask why Caputo alternates between his Caputolism (a reformed capitalism) and straight-out revolution. Whilst deconstruction enjoys maintaining tensions, whilst it enjoys emphasizing the undecidability that precedes and permeates decision, a more destructive deconstruction does not hesitate in deciding that what is urgently required is radical transformation. Such a destructive-constructive decision is informed by a variety of forces: that it is right and good and true; that tradition and hierarchy and exploitation have held sway for far too long; that if we do not act now, the various crises will only deepen and expand, with the accelerated disfiguration of the Earth. (And one could perhaps list several other good reasons.)

I have perhaps been severe here, but with Nietzsche I affirm that “to attack is with me a proof of good will, and sometimes of gratitude” (1976: 660) – certainly of good will and gratitude in this particular instance. And so, I – and perhaps others – are for a more destructive deconstruction, which is also and obviously constantly constructive and reconstructive. And if this is an invented or imagined deconstruction – a constructed deconstruction, one that is stronger, braver, more ruthless – so be it. So be it, for the sake of a weakening planet.

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