

## Happiness or the Forgotten Aim of Modern Politics

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**Abstract:** Article derived from the concluded research: *The bodies of exception*. The main objective is to examine the conditions of possibility created by the State modern policy so that men and women can lead a good life. The theoretical-methodological perspective is taken from the philosophy of Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben. The methodological procedure is montage (Benjamin, 2013 and 2015). With this, we mean the work of relating perspectives to produce a kind of critical interpretation with respect to the present. The montage is organized in two moments, one destructive and the other constructive. Among the conclusions, we can advance the following: happiness is a forgotten human end, verifying that suffering has become a silent waste for politics; something which it does not respond to.

**Key words:** happiness, politics, State, exception, modernity.

**Resumen:** Este artículo se deriva de la investigación finalizada: *Los cuerpos de la excepción*. El objetivo principal consiste en examinar las condiciones de posibilidad creadas por la política moderna del Estado, para que hombres y mujeres puedan crear una vida buena. La perspectiva teórico-metodológica se retoma de la filosofía de Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault y Giorgio Agamben. El procedimiento metodológico es el *montaje* (Benjamin, 2013 y 2015). Por esto se entiende el trabajo de relacionar perspectivas para producir un tipo de interpretación crítica respecto al presente. El *montaje* se organiza en dos momentos: uno destructivo y otro constructivo. Dentro de las conclusiones se puede adelantar lo siguiente: la felicidad es un fin humano olvidado, confirmando que el sufrimiento se ha convertido en un desecho mudo para la política; algo por lo que no responde.

**Palabras clave:** felicidad, política, Estado, excepción, modernidad.

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In chapter 1 book VII of Politics (2007), Aristotle states there are three sorts of goods: external, of the body and of the soul. External goods and goods of the body are necessary even desirable, however they cannot be pursued above the goods of the soul, since excessively pursued, forcefully, they may be harmful. Meanwhile, abundance of the goods of the soul, i.e., prudence and virtue, do not harm the individual or the city. This way, for Aristotle, happiness (*eudaimonia*) which the individual and the city can aspire to will be according to such goods. Hence, we have to consider the question: what happiness may there be if prudence and virtue are missing?

Temporarily, Aristotle (2007: 392) concludes “that the best life, for both individuals and states, is the life of virtue, when virtue has external goods enough for the performance of good actions”. We acknowledge a link between external goods and those of the body with the goods of the soul, where virtuous actions come from, even though such link is not of determination. External goods and goods of the body, which may assimilate into property and health, have a place besides the goods of the soul which are those inextricably related to virtuous or good actions. Vigo (2007) contends that it is not virtue, as a possession, but the exercise of virtuous or good actions, which as a whole acquires the meaning that constitutes happiness.

In chapter 2 of the same book, Aristotle (2007) wonders about the preferable sort of life: one that implies partaking of the political and communal life of the city, or on the contrary, one in which, as it occurs with foreigners, one is relieved from such participation. In like manner, Aristotle wonders about the best political regime: one in which all should partake of community life or one in which the most participates, even though not everyone in an absolute manner.

The philosopher finds it necessary to recognize that the best political regime will be that in which all people, whoever they are, may live happily. Well now, since ascertaining the content of happiness is not easy, “And the good lawgiver should inquire how states and races of men and communities may participate in a good life, and in the happiness that is attainable by them” (Aristóteles, 2007: 397). An advance of what Aristotle elaborates in chapter 13. The philosopher from Stagira intends to find out the best political

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regime, and this is the one that allows a good government for the city. Which means that exercising a good government makes happiness possible; this is to say, that which makes it possible that human beings can reach accomplished lives. At this point, Aristotle (2007: 426-427) answers the question ‘what is happiness?’ as: “[happiness] is the realization and perfect exercise of virtue, and this is not conditional, but absolute”.

For Vigo (2007), Aristotle offers a distinction between three sorts of ends. The first are instrumental ends, that is, those that serve as means for other ends and are not sought for what they are. This is the case of instruments and tools. The latter are ends with the dual quality of being sought as means to other ends or as ends themselves; for instance, consider health. Finally, we have the ends desired because of what they are, not in function of other things. These ends, as expected, are those that respond to the ultimate end in life: happiness.

Aristotle supposes that in relation to such ends, there is consensus in relating happiness as the ultimate end (Vigo, 2007). Even so, the problem is ascertaining the content of such end. Discrepancies abound, there are some who think that happiness is in material goods or those who imagine that happiness is not attained through immediate goods. It is not surprising that those who suffer poverty, imagine happiness as wealth. The infirm, for their part, idealize happiness as health.

However, Aristotle does not suppose that any representation serves to find out the content of happiness, and in fact, neither does he suppose that such content depends on the individuals’ desires as agents of their lives. Happiness must be understood “by means of a normative conception, which points out at what the actual good of the agent is, which corresponds in virtue of the constitution of their own capacities and which may not agree with what the agent actually wants” (Vigo, 2007: 194).

Aristotle discovers that the ultimate end of man, also understood as a political end, has to do with happiness and with the aspiration to a good life. Even though the issue is still pending to the extent to which there may be confusion in imagining that happiness is momentary pleasure, fugacious instant, the satisfaction of a desire or the experience of pleasure. If such confusion was to be true, we would be supposing that happiness can be supported on the level of the empirical, which the possibility of substantiating happiness in terms of the universal and necessary. For Annas (2004: 67), it must be clear that the happiness referred to is that which can only be recognized in the totality of life: “happiness applies to life as a whole” and manifests in the possibilities for human beings may develop and perceive

their lives as accomplished lives. This is to say, happiness would be a way of life, associated to virtue and the actions that come from it. It is not a particular event or experience which satisfy a momentary and whimsical desire.

Neither is happiness a way of life free from material conditions and the political possibilities that must be built so that human lives can become accomplished lives. In some way, happiness depends on the dialectic movement between human capabilities and the city government. On the one side, individuals must develop the capabilities they have to shape their lives; on the other, however, only with the city government's participation can the lives of humans be good. With this interpretation the possibility of reaching happiness and good life depend, exclusively, on the individual's will closes; also does the possibility of *spiritualizing* it, as challenged by Marcuse (2011), with the purpose of reconciling it with any form of government, even if it is unjust.<sup>2</sup>

This succinct interpretative framework, with which the importance happiness had in the political ends of Classical antiquity is reminded, contrasts with the historic rupture that Modernity implies. To refer to this rupture, Foucault (2002) studies the *threshold of biological modernity*. Owing to this, the conjuncture in which the *species* places itself in the heart of its political interventions is understood. In other words, such conjuncture expresses the game of man with man in the *field* of interventions which give themselves eternal life. As deemed by Foucault (2002: 173), over two millennia man was not something different from that conceived by Aristotle: "a living animal and moreover capable of political existence".

For its part, modern man is an animal that in politics risks its condition of living being. The explanation that may be taken from Foucault himself is that man begins to be defined by history and, in this definition, life is the exterior that, strangely, is inside a historicity profuse in techniques of knowledge and power.

History's definition of the human becomes a bundle of relations between knowledge and power that makes the rational intervention of life possible. It is not a government oriented toward the creation of possibilities for happiness, but politics capable of creating, managing, administering and increasing life. This is the historicity of man: man turns life into the object of his own living. Or, in other words, human being converts life into the object of an incessant anthropological *machine* (Agamben, 2007),

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2 For a comparative study on happiness for the ancient and the modern, see Nosetto (2013). Also, regarding happiness in Modernity, see Cuesta (2013). From a sociological standpoint, different from the one here presented, see Trujano (2013).

which indeed cannot be dissociated from the figure of modern state and its legal institutions. The State is the anthropological *machine* that mixes the classic identities, shaping, coding and decoding life mainly through juridical identities: prisoners, homosexuals, terrorists, the underage, illegal immigrants, among others (Agamben, 2005).

The theoretical-methodological approach of the research links to the philosophy of Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben. Three indispensable philosophical sources to start critically reading Modernity; such approach joins theory and method in a sort of assemblage called montage by Benjamin (2013 and 2015). A procedure that uses philosophical-political materials, in this case as analytical instruments, to shape a sort of interpretation that breaks the condescendence with which the social researcher gives an account of the present. It is about assembling a sort of interpretation contrary to democratic liberalism, which displaces the solution of problems from the present to an uncertain future that never arrives and for which none has an answer.

This theoretical-methodological perspective needs to expose its moments. The first is a destructive one, as Benjamin himself assumed from surrealism. In an explicit sense, destroying means contesting the values of democratic liberalism; showing them as opposed to a real emancipation of human life. Benjamin identifies the second moment as a constructive one. Contrary to what may be imagined, the characteristic of this moment is not optimism but pessimism. If democratic liberalism rants all over the place about the hope of inheriting a better world to “our children”, Benjamin answers with the need for an active pessimism that shows that nothing can be expected, the future is not certain, hence the urgency is to take charge of the present.

This work's central supposition is that happiness is the forgotten end of modern politics, verifying that suffering is a mute waste for politics. Something against which Foucault (1996) resisted. In addition to the introduction, already exposed, and the conclusions stated at the end, in this work we develop section of results and another for discussion. The first, is called *Politics and exception*; in this section we proposed that after Auschwitz, the *state of emergency*, a key concept in modern politics, as Benjamin warns, it is the rule not only for totalitarian and Fascist governments, but also for the liberal and democratic, owing to a sort of device that insistently relaunches the need for *emergency to make* the future *safe*. The second section is entitled *Modernity: on the impossible happiness*. This directly relates Modernity and capitalism; it points at the terrifying nature of the orientation of the former

to the novelty, and shows the latter as a religion of guilt capable of offering happiness.

## Politics and exception

State institutions have the function of answering on behalf of the State ends, within a legal and lawful framework that produces, manages and regulates social life. Called to face emergencies (war, insurrections or disobedience, to illustrate some cases), they resort to figures such as *State of emergency* to preserve the decreed order. One of the most noticeable characteristics of *emergency* is the *temporary* abolition of the separation between the legislative, executive and judicial powers; because of this, the governor or government have the faculty to *enforce* the laws the *emergency* demands; this is to say, a right that is suppressed by law to retake the *antique* figure of sovereign that holds the place of the *force of law*.

The *state of emergency* links life and right. Foucault (2002) analyzes this link exposing the mechanisms of power, which in Classical times, give the sovereign the right to decide on the death of individuals. Foucault (2002) also points out the transformation of these mechanisms in occidental Modernity, which implies the *change* from the power of the sovereign to regimes more plethoric of power: anato-mo-political and bio-political regimes. The first aims to the *formation* of the body by means of discipline (regulation of time and space); the second to the invasion of life by means of control procedures (censuses, statistics, segmentation, age groups, risk population, among others). It is not decreeing death any longer, but to exercise a government of the body and life that normalizes, grows and multiplies the available forces. For Foucault (2005), this does not mean the demonstration of the progress of mankind, something which he is not necessary concerned to affirm or deny. What this step means has to do with a mutation in both the forms of punishment and the government that organizes, resorting to systematic observation, ceaseless surveillance, permanent examinations and assessments of people; eventually, the Faustian attempt to fully control body and life.

It is paradoxical that the normalization of the body (*anato-mo-politics*) and the governing of life (*bio-politics*) do not annul the possibility of death. On the contrary, thinking of the XX century, the attempt to normalize, make grow and multiply the forces of the body and life superimposes the possibility of large scale sacrifice (the *final solution*, massacres, social *cleansing*, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions and State terrorism are

some examples). Agamben (1998) shares Foucault's analysis on the fact that power refines the way of shaping bodies and make life its own, covering them with insidious governmental techniques is one of the greatest and most momentous events of Modernity. Body and life are considered subjects and objects of a political ordering that acts, governing, by means of meticulous penetration and analysis systems, not free from pedagogical proceedings.

It would seem as if the state of emergency is a political form of the sovereign power that crosses, eventually, the threshold of Modernity, since sovereignty has been displaced by a different sort of power: anotomo-political (body) and bio-political (life), in Foucault's terms (2002). However, before Foucault, Schmitt (2011) elaborates that sovereignty is nothing but power to decree the emergency, and thus manifests its absolute currentness and validity.<sup>3</sup>

In order to support the above, Tobón's (2011) sources may be cited, as they recognize that the expression state of siege is used for the first time in the National Convention (1791), as a formal figure for a military measure. After the French Revolution, the state of siege becomes an attribution of the Executive Power (Tobón 2011). To deepen into the above, with Agamben (1998), it may be referred that bio-politics is the hidden face of the various forms of Occidental Modernity, not the singular one. This means that sovereignty does not disappear with modern bio-politics; on the contrary, it folds imperceptible, even in the thoughts and forms of government that deny it. For example, liberalism and democracy. Aptly, Hernández (2008: 85) states that for Agamben "occidental politics has always been bio-politics". Even here it is noticed that the link between right and life can also be read in the terms *state of emergency* and *bio-politics*.

Agamben (1998) states that Foucault's argument, as stimulating as it is, must undergo an amendment, or at least, broadening. Firstly, because he leaves too soon the analysis of juridical figures and the law; this is to say, Foucault (2002) points out that the law cannot separate from the sword. However, power in Modernity will not depend so much on the *force of law*, but on its capacity to penetrate the most basic spheres of functioning: subjectivity, family, social security systems, the practices of identity production, among others.

Even if all this is true, not because of this the juridical or legal ways become anachronistic. On the contrary, they become more efficient as they do not permanently demand coercion and by using mainly the same normalization that people start to give themselves and exercise on others. Secondly, the

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3 For an analysis focused on Schmitt's concept, see Atilés-Osoria (2015).

amendment or extended argument that Agamben proposes comes from recognizing that ultimately *bio-politics* is the par excellence occidental form of government. Despite omissions and ruptures, the absolute and total intervention of body and life is the aspiration of the art of governing.

Decreeing the state of emergency means the preservation of an order that the performative exercise of law assimilates into life itself. Following Benjamin (2010a and 2010b), law creates the sanctity of life in the aporetic gesture of its reduction. It is the law that institutes the *dogma* of sacred life and, at once, reduces it to the fate law itself decides for it (Benjamin, 2010c). The *state of emergency* that warns to *act* in favor of life intensifies its vulnerability, since the gestures that threaten the order sovereignty wants to preserve expose bodies and lives to extreme consequences. Note the image of *Homo Sacer*. Agamben (1998) declares that this is the one that can kill himself, but whose life is un-expendable.

The ambivalence of this image shows that by intending to validate human life as a right before sovereign power, what is attained is to secure its fixing to a power capable of killing. In other words, not only can the *state of emergency* suspend the law from law itself, but also reinforces the power to sacrifice life, despite its growth and multiplication is referred to.<sup>4</sup>

In effect, in the XX century relates the *state of emergency* with the infinite and unpredictable virtues of technique. Previously, Benjamin (2012a) stated that by releasing technique from any sort of moral consideration falling into Fascism is unavoidable. The exemplar case is to be found in the concentration camps of the Third Reich (*Lager*). An entire modern technique at the service of a politics of death and extermination in the name of security, protection and perfecting of a superior race. Be it, then, a *state of emergency* to continue dreaming the dream of producing and perfecting men (Runge and Muñoz, 2010; Galcerà, 2016; Piñeres-Sus, 2016 and 2017).

For Levi (2012), concentration camps are the apex of mankind's bloodied history, as they link the old end that asks for the elimination of the political adversary and the modern one that intends, through various means, to disappear peoples and races (eugenics). For his part, Agamben (1998) displays the camps as the quintessential places of modern *bio-politics*.

Understand that in them, men are stripped of their political condition. Being more accurate, there is no political condition for those sent to a zone of in-differentiation and anthropologic indifference. Here, if needed, a new

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4 For Sucasas (2000), sovereignty is defined as the power that decides on life. Particularly, the power of administering de facto or dosed death, bearing in mind there is no other possible outcome than a non-fateful one.

meaning for the concept of camp. Let us elaborate, Levi (2010) states that concentration camps are, as a whole, the nuclear structure of modern and contemporary history and its dark spinal cord at once. Camps are not a historical anecdote and much less the past overcome. On the contrary, they are the very heart of the present and its historicity (Levi, 2010). Agamben (1998 and 2010), for his part, adds that after Auschwitz, *camp* is the structure, let us say paradigmatic, of *state of emergency*. Similarly, *camp* becomes the unrevealed *nomos* of politics, thereby the political space in which modern man can exist. The paradoxical aspect is that on the one side, camps remove the political condition; and on the other, *camp* is the political space of human existence.

Well now, following Levi and Agamben, it may be said that *camp* is the space of human experimentation where man tries himself and multiplies the capacity of his destruction. This is, camp means the historic and political space of human present, where man ejects man toward a zone of in-differentiation and anthropological indifference. This is to say, after Auschwitz, camp cannot mean anything but *zone of experimentation* and *extermination*. As a confirmation, the historical and political procedures by means of which man is *demoted* to a naked life. Let us insist: we speak of concentration camps as these disclose a logic of destruction that remains active. This *logic* can be understood as sovereign. In fact, Mate (2003a and 2003b) wonders if by turning into the political structure by definition there may be something exterior to the camps.

At this point, a number of things can be summarized. In the first place, as Tobón (2011: 69) points out: “*state of emergency* then is the same as the expiration of a regular order and is the par excellence political moment, because only in that moment, and not during the validity of the regularity of order, it is demonstrated who the actual sovereign is”. This is, the figure of *state of emergency*, as much discussed and polemical as it may be, is the paradigmatic figure of modern and contemporary politics. In fact, Agamben (1998, 2010 and 2014) notices that the resource that relates state of emergency and concentration camps is not the will to remember the Jews, the Roma, the homosexual and the political opponents exterminated there, but the need to seize the relation that binds the present to a machine that ceaselessly gives itself the sacrifice of human life.

Secondly, camps are the empirical demonstration of the dissolved border between life and law. A dissolution in which the latter is temporarily suppressed to go on to sacrifice the former. In the face of this atrocious consummation of politics, it is essential to revalue Benjamin’s (2012b: 309)

*thesis VIII on the concept of history*: “the tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is indubitably the rule”. The *thesis* becomes acuter as it allows underscoring that derogate the rule that makes *exceptionality* legal is not really an effective way to correct what is normalized in a state of *emergency*. On the contrary, what is verified is the violence that founds and institutes law and its forms (Benjamin, 2010c).

Finally, Orejuela-Botero (2011: 98) proposes “a set of constitutional and legal measures and reforms that increase the capacity of parliamentary controls for states of emergency”. Albeit, Ruíz-Gutiérrez (2013) seems to respond stating that independent from political regimes, the present of man is produced in a minute and complex and biopolitical *camp* that produces human life as nude life. Beyond all this, Ruíz-Gutiérrez herself demonstrates the paradoxical nature of politics: liberties, rights and spaces men fight for against any sovereign manifestation of the powers smooth the opportunity for an “*increasing inscription of their lives into the state order, thus offering the sovereign power, from which they want to be free, a new and more fearsome seat*” (Ruíz-Gutiérrez, 2013: 82).

Thus far, what has been said may be further clarified stating that more than the inscription of life into the state order, the capturing of life by the law is witnessed. Every new social struggle that sits in the juridical order reaffirms, in passing, the infinite possibilities of law to appropriate life and men. Maybe because of this, Marx (2012) warned that in the unfolding of social and political forces, what had to have way is the free association of men; this is to say, a not-yet-invented politics and that will not be possible under the conditions imposed by modernity (Hincapié, 2014 and 2016).

## Modernity: on the impossible happiness

At this stage, the pointed premises must draw near Capitalist modernity. Here the problems of the relation of man with nature and his relationship with himself become relevant. Here is where we have to emphasize the condition of the living on such relations. Let us notice, Modernity defines as the time in which man produces from himself of as the kingdom of man on earth. The reference point, the image of its *production* is no longer tradition, experience or memory, but a new time, that of progress. Rereading Mancera (2005), it may be said that the apocalyptic perception of Judeo-Christianism, always expecting an outcome that ends the bitter cycle of history, is replaced by a perception of time, in terms of progress, that cannot lead to another place but the future: time becomes infinite. Consequently, Modernity is understood as the fatal vertigo of repetitive attraction to novelty.

In his work *Arcades Project*, Benjamin (2015: 868) states that this is the epoch of the new “in the context of the already-always-there-been”. Then he adds that it is the epoch of hell, in which his sorrow is “the newest that occurs every time in such space” (Benjamin, 2015: 869). With this, he neither calls on the idea of *the eternal return* nor points that Modernity is the epoch of *the always the same*. He does warn that the world remains unaltered by the repetitive cycle of the new and by a linear and homogeneous orientation of time.

This is the eternal of hell. All this takes place without something actually occurring. This is to say, it is not in the neurotic persecution of novelty where the dynamite of revolution is to be found, but in the interruption of the linear and homogeneous time of progress and in the acute comprehension of the epoch’s singularity, or in words by Benjamin himself (2012b: 309), in the effort to “plane history against the grain”. With this expression concludes the draft of *Thesis VII*. For Löwy (2012), this has a dual meaning: historic and political.

The historic sense refers to the obligation of historic materialism to contest the victors’ history contrasting it with that of the defeated. With this Benjamin (2012b) shows that the reality of history is not the fact that the ex-officio historicist describes. Quite the contrary, the reality is not complete without the memory of the defeated and the project of a happy life that was sunk with the men that fought for it.

The political sense displays that humanity’s redemption will not be made with the natural unfolding of things. This is, it will not take place without interrupting all the forms of domination that confabulate to naturalize the current state of affairs. Benjamin (2012b) points that if the hand brake is not applied to that unbridled machine called progress, history cannot be but damage, destruction and death.

Years before writing *Theses...*, Benjamin states that capitalism is a religion. If for Marx, religion does not refer any actual content, because that it preaches is inexistent life, Benjamin (1985) perceives something singular in capitalist Modernity: its religiosity. Capitalism serves the same concerns as ancient religions. It is not a form conditioned by religion as exposed by Weber (2003), but it is a religion itself. There are three essential characteristics that allow such comprehension. The first, capitalism is a cult religion taken to extremes: everything revolves around it. There is nothing external to it, and if money is the determinant form of interchange, then not even so called intimate or personal relationships escape from its determination.

The second characteristic indicates that, without containing any theology or dogma whatsoever, capitalism does not recognize sacred or special days, which introduces a demonic dimension into temporality. There is no interruption in time: everything belongs to it. Because of this, all the days are its and so reclaims them for its cult. Let us notice, for example, the permanent and ceaseless impulse to consume. Finally, capitalism is a guilt-burdening religion. It is likely the only religion that does not expiate at all, but imposes the permanent guilty/debt. With capitalism then the lacerating effect of a plexus of guilt, always increasing, dominating the existence. But, beyond this, what is historically disquieting is that it is not a religion of transformation but destruction (*zerstörung*).

In the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, Marx (2007) demonstrates that capitalism is the physical and moral destruction of the worker. However, Benjamin (2007) goes beyond as he points out that such destruction, which not only is the workers', transfigures to become a religious function. In fact, Benjamin risks *correcting* Nietzsche. He deems, God has not died, he has followed the fate of man, this is, God shares his *falling* into a religion of hopelessness, without a trace of transcendence. Benjamin interprets that capitalism's religiosity is not understood in terms of an inclination toward superior moral goods.

On the contrary, this religiosity has practical inclination as a motivation, similar to the pagan religious forms, inside which irreligious men are seen as disabled, as capitalism considers unproductive men. Once again, Agamben's (1998) stances allow broadening the presented description to the extent that he asseverates that without *biopolitics*, capitalism would not have had the opportunity to bloom, and as expressed, *biopolitics* is the reduction of life of men to nude life and so, the impossibility of their happiness.

## Conclusions

The events produced by Modernity cannot separate from a detrimental domination of nature by technique, the subjugation of man by man in terms of class, colonial projects, (even if it is said that modernity is the denial of such projects) or rejection, even the possibility for a non-occidental civilization. These events serve for a modernity that produces rationalities capable of justifying spoliation and violence, as the necessary price to realize itself. This is to say, Modernity brings along progress and so it has the order to take

place around the world, stepping on a lot of *innocent flowers* as described by Hegel (2014). Because of this for Rosenzweig (2006 and 2015) occidental modernity is an ontology of war.<sup>5</sup>

Pinpointing contradictions, one of the starkest is that which serves as a pillar for Modernity: universalism. It is fair to mention that *real* universalism would have to claim for the cancelation of a univocal project based on the idea of progress and on the unavoidability of capitalism. As regards progress, Benjamin insists that this is indissoluble from catastrophe.

This way, hell does not wait for men, hell is the season (Benjamin, 2013). Capitalism is not a correction, but a realizing force; this is to say, a *real* universalism would have to ask for the cancelation of the modern project and revert it toward sunk projects.

In this context, we understand Benjamin's audacity to revert the temporal orientation of modernity, to revert the cult to the future and start to make amends with the past, an uncomfortable intellectual task to think the possibility of restructuring the historic time from which a dialectical and theological combination exposed in the idea of messianic commitment (Mancera, 2005: 146).

What here is cleared is that forgetting happiness as a political end, a forgetting that has produced the naturalization of suffering, makes every future purpose *anachronistic*. Benjamin (2010d) does not resort to Aristotle to define happiness. Aware of the limits of his times, he states that happiness is being able to live a life without fear and horror. Because of this the urgency of thought that directly heads toward the present and this is not complete without the correction of suffering caused to all the defeated by Modernity.

Following Werner Hamacher, Taub (2015) states that Modernity implies collapse and so, implies a door always open for other possibilities, in this case, messianic, in the way Benjamin expresses: every man has a little messianic force with which they may enable the arrival of the Messiah. We are not saying anything other than the present is unconceivable without the past. Messianic is not the problem of religious doctrines. On the contrary, it can be stated that it is the conflictive threshold in which religion and history meet. It is man hurried by the present the one in charge of modifying the linear and homogeneous time of progress. If this is so unchallengeable and unstoppable, it is not for something different to what occurs in the fantasy of attaining humanity without fractures, which displaces to an ontologically inexistent time: future.

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5 In order to deepen into this topic, we suggest Taub (2013 and 2017), Navarrete (2017) and Piñero-Iñíguez (2017).

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