

# Empire Part 1

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## I. Preface

- A. Definition of Empire: political subject of globalization: a new form of sovereignty
- B. Despite decline of national sovereignty
  - 1. Imperialism not Empire
  - 2. Empire is decentered and deterritorializing: manages hybrid identities, flexible production
- C. Marks passage in capitalist mode of production
  - 1. Factory work no longer primary
  - 2. Biopolitical production now primary:
    - a. production of social life itself:
    - b. overlap of economic, political and cultural
- D. Role of the USA
  - 1. Privileged role, but no longer imperialist
  - 2. Imperial constitution of USA important clue to Empire
    - a. Formal constitution: documents
    - b. Material constitution: continuous formation & reformation of composition of social forces
- E. Concept of Empire
  - 1. Lack of boundaries: rules over entire "civilized" world
  - 2. Suspension of history
  - 3. All registers of social order: biopower
  - 4. Dedication to peace outside history
- F. No nostalgia! Empire offers possibilities to forces of liberation:
  - 1. Creative forces of the multitude: invent new democratic forms and a new constituent power
  - 2. Not limited to any geographical region: resistances, struggles, desires
- G. Methodology of Empire
  - 1. Interdisciplinary: philosophy, history, culture, economy, politics, anthropology
  - 2. Goals: general theoretical framework and a toolbox of concepts

## II. (1.1) World Order [Juridical Formation of Empire: Formal Constitution] (3-21)

- A. Introduction (3)
  - 1. That there is world order: primary fact
  - 2. Expressed as a juridical formation [content = biopolitical production]
  - 3. Task of the book: grasp the constitution of the order being formed
    - a. Formal: expression in juridical formation
    - b. Material: constitution of forces
  - 4. Ruling out two options
    - a. Spontaneous order arising from interaction of global forces
    - b. Imposed order from single rationality transcendent to global forces
- B. United Nations (3-8)
  - 1. Long transition from sovereignty of nation-states to imperial right
  - 2. Genealogy of juridical forms leading to and beyond the UN
    - a. Co-constitution of order and crisis: beyond international to the global
    - b. Notion of right in UN charter: new positive source of juridical production
  - 3. Hans Kelsen: concept of international right [beyond power balance]
    - a. Formal sequence: international juridical system as source of national systems
    - b. Kelsen ignored the real drive of European modernization
  - 4. Gap between formal and real: UN domination of supranational project leading to perversions
  - 5. Inadequacy of previous theoretical frameworks: "domestic analogy"
    - a. Hobbesian model of transfer of title of sovereignty: contracts
    - b. Lockean model of decentralized networks: counterpowers
  - 6. Imperial sovereignty as paradigm shift
- C. The Constitution of Empire (8-13)
  - 1. Objections
    - a. World-systems theory:
      - (1) capitalism has always been global:
      - (2) blind to shift in capitalism project to unite economic and political power
      - (3) globalization as source of juridical definitions tending to single political power
    - b. Globalization as imperialist

2. Response:
  - a. Point of departure should be new notion of right [followed by material analysis]
  - b. Juridical figures are [only] a good index of process of imperial [material] constitution
3. Genealogy of concept of Empire
  - a. Classical: uniting juridical categories [order] & universal ethical values [right]
    - (1) Empire = universal peace and justice
    - (2) universal space [no borders]
    - (3) ahistorical time [permanent, eternal, and necessary]
  - b. Renaissance: separation
    - (1) [liberal] order:
      - (a) international treaty mechanism
      - (b) analogous to contracts guaranteeing order w/in nation-state and civil society
    - (2) [socialist] ethical right:
      - (a) perpetual peace
      - (b) union of right and ethics: ideal of reason
  - c. Postmodern reunification of order and right: rebirth of Empire
    - (1) just war: war as police action [order] conducted by sacralized power [right]
      - (a) legitimization of military apparatus as grounded in right
      - (b) effectiveness of military action to achieve order
      - (c) enemy as banalized [criminals] and absolutized [Axis of Evil]
- D. The Model of Imperial Authority (13-17)
  1. Both system and hierarchy:
    - a. Hybrid of Luhmann [system] and Rawls [consensus]
    - b. Constituted power over and above nation-states:
  2. Ancient model
    - a. Capacity to present force in service of order and right
    - b. Interventions solicited by powers in already existing conflict
  3. Contemporary reality: perpetual crisis:
    - a. The "exception" [Carl Schmitt]:
    - b. Source of imperial right: the right of the police to create and maintain order
- E. Universal Values (17-21)
  1. Why use the term "right"?
  2. Juridical status of Empire: overdetermines administrative law of individual nation-states
    - a. Right of "intervention": legitimated by coalition/consensus
    - b. Permanent state of exception justified by appeal to essential values of justice
  3. Definition of Empire: science of police in practice of just war to address continual emergency
  4. Ontological status of Empire:
    - a. Still virtual, but nonetheless apply actually to us
    - b. Empire as concrete universal
  5. Contradictory functions of Empire [analogous to ancient Rome]
    - a. Center that supports globalized biopolitical production networks
    - b. Peripheral police function against new barbarians
  6. Liberating power nurtured w/in Empire [analogous to Christianity]

### III. (1.2) Biopolitical Production [Material Constitution of Empire] (22-41)

- A. Introduction (22): juridical forms only expressions of material conditions
- B. Biopower in the Society of Control [basic concept of material Empire] (22-27)
  1. Foucault as the resource
    - a. Historical shift from discipline to control society
    - b. Biopolitics: only consummated in control society [whole social body: corporeal, affective]
  2. Marx: real subsumption of labor / Frankfurt School: culture industry [unidimensional analyses]
  3. Unification of society in biopower reveals new pluralized singularities
    - a. We're all important thinkers, doers, feelers
      - (1) our consumption patterns are monitored
      - (2) and are fed back to modify production
    - b. So new social movements can sweep along this plane of immanence
  4. Limits of juridical analysis
    - a. Old theoretical frameworks cannot reach the new biopolitical reality
    - b. Hence imperial right cannot grasp the real motor of history [the multitude]
- C. The Production of Life [critique of predecessors] (27-30)
  1. Foucault: saw plane of immanence but limited by "structuralist epistemology"

2. Deleuze and Guattari: focus on ontology of social production but ... [very weak stuff here]
3. Italian immaterial labor theorists:
  - a. Supercession of industrial labor by immediately social and communicative living labor
  - b. But they present this labor as linguistic rather than material and corporeal [affect]
4. Hardt and Negri:
  - a. Three aspects of immaterial labor [cf. Ch 3.4: 280-304]
    - (1) Communicative labor: information networks
    - (2) Interactive labor of symbolic analysis
    - (3) Affective labor of corporeal production
  - b. Collective biopolitical body as unfolding of life itself, as motor of history, as [re]production
- D. Corporations and Communication [multinational corporations as fundamental] (31-34)
  1. Functions of multinationals:
    - a. Direct articulation of territories and populations
    - b. Making nation-states mere recording instruments
  2. Monetary perspective: [but cf. Wallerstein and subsistence]
    - a. complete commodification
    - b. subjectification: production of producers: needs, social relations, minds ...
  3. Language and communication:
    - a. Production of the imaginary
    - b. Legitimation of new world order: producing its own image of authority
    - c. Critique of Habermas:
      - (1) internality of communication to biopolitical production
      - (2) eviscerates critique by communicative reason
    - d. Production of master narratives [we're all one global village / Olympic movement]
- E. Intervention [exercise of legitimate force] (34-38)
  1. New characteristics: unbounded terrain, symbolic localization, biopolitical saturation
  2. "Intervention" is a misnomer, as it implies independence and sovereignty
  3. Instruments of Imperial force:
    - a. Moral: NGOs as leading edge of globalization [discounts resistance in Afghanistan?]
    - b. Military: US leading role: enemies as terrorists [police mentality]
      - (1) ethnic conflicts
      - (2) international mafias [drug trade]: Colombia
    - c. Juridical: international courts
- F. Royal Prerogatives [flux of center and margins] (38-41)
  1. Sovereignty of Empire realized at the margins: center and margins constantly shifting
  2. Discontinuous sovereignty: virtual power that intervenes at margins and fixes breakdowns
  3. Limits of juridical model
    - a. Imperial normativity born from globalized biopolitical machine
    - b. Rationality from industrial management and political use of technology
  4. Neo-Weberian model: functional, rhizomatic, undulatory: management of language
    - a. Traditional forms
    - b. Biopolitical bureaucracy
    - c. Rationality of the event and of charisma
  5. New world order:
    - a. virtual, dynamic, functionally inclusive
    - b. mixing political constitution and economic production
- IV. (1.3) Alternatives within Empire (42-66)
  - A. Introduction (42-46)
    1. Flirting w/ Hegel: Empire good in itself, but not for itself
      - a. Struggle against modernity always pointed beyond nationalism, colonialism, imperialism
      - b. Construction of Empire as response to multitude
    2. Refusal of nostalgia: against the current left
      - a. Localized identities
      - b. Nation as last bulwark against global capital
    3. Critique of local identity politics
      - a. Devolution into romantic primordiality and authenticity
      - b. Some local identities feed back into globalized production
    4. Localism hides the real alternatives that appear via concrete analysis of de-re-territorialization
  - B. The Ontological Drama of the Res Gestae (46-49)
    1. How to conceive history of modernity
      - a. Not as history of what has happened [slavery, colonialism ...]

- b. But as history of process [resistance and flight re-territorialized]
  - 2. Preventing turning ontological drama of the multitude as constituent power into mere dialectics
    - a. Critical and deconstructive subversion
      - (1) of hegemonic narratives of necessity of Empire
      - (2) revealing possible alternate social orders w/in events [counter -actualization]
    - b. Constructive and ethico-political focus
      - (1) on subjectivity of multitude leading to new constituent power
      - (2) real ontological referent of philosophy of liberation:
        - (a) historical event as potentiality
        - (b) philosophy as desire and praxis applied to the event
- C. Refrains of the "Internationale" (49-52)
  - 1. Internationalism as anti-nationalist: will of active mass subject of labor movement
  - 2. Such proletarian internationalism is over
    - a. Used to be cycles of struggles: international echoes of struggles
      - (1) 1848 to 1905
      - (2) 1917 to 1945
      - (3) 1948 [Chinese Revolution] to 1968
    - b. These struggles were real motor driving development of institutions of capital
  - 3. Empire thus as response to proletarian internationalist struggles:
    - a. Force of living labor as deterritorializing and capital as reterritorializing:
    - b. Here Hardt and Negri are DG romantics
      - (1) at least in this instance, although it might simply be a lapse of terminological rigor.
      - (2) it should be that the struggle is for process of de-re-territorialization:
        - (a) there must be territory / channels / organs / body as ordered set of organs
        - (b) all desire is machined: "the enemy is the organism, not the organs"
- D. The Mole and the Snake [the old and the new left] (52-59)
  - 1. New proletariat no longer industrial, but "all those whose labor is directly or indirectly exploited by and subjected to capitalist norms of production and reproduction"
  - 2. Hetero-proletariat where immaterial labor is most important, but other forms co-exist
  - 3. Survey of post 1989 events: no horizontal communication, but immediate leap to globalization
    - a. trace of multitude's struggle:
    - b. paradox of incommunicability in age of communication
  - 4. New quality of social movements
    - a. Although firmly rooted in local each leaps to global level and attacks Empire
    - b. Destroy distinction between economic, political, and cultural: they are biopolitical
  - 5. Obstacles to communication of struggles
    - a. Absence of recognition of common enemy
    - b. No common language of struggles
  - 6. Mole versus snake image:
    - a. contemporary immediate rhizomatic subversion
    - b. thus no more search for the weakest link [point of contact w/ outside]: bcs no more outside
- E. Two-Headed Eagle (59-63)
  - 1. Contemporary form of Empire: struggle of constituted and constituent power
  - 2. But this is not an equal struggle on same plane
    - a. Empire stands above the multitude and subjects it to new rule
    - b. But from the "ontological perspective"
      - (1) multitude is the living force of world history:
      - (2) Empire is vampire, apparatus of capture
- F. Political Manifesto (63-66)
  - 1. Althusser reads Machiavelli against Marx and Engels
    - a. Similarities: "materialist teleology"
      - (1) politics as the movement of the multitude w/ goal of self-production of subject
      - (2) theory as praxis
    - b. Differences
      - (1) for Marx and Engels, co-presence of
        - (a) subject [proletariat]
        - (b) and object [communism]
      - (2) for Machiavelli, there is ineluctable distance between
        - (a) subject [multitude]
        - (b) and object [Prince and free state]
  - 2. What is a postmodern manifesto then?
    - a. Marx-Engels co-presence unthinkable

- b. Machiavellian dispersal seems more likely, but eviscerated by utopianism
- c. Spinozist material teleology: prophet [desire of multitude] produces own people
  - (1) immanent production: we have our own "money" and "arms"
  - (2) radical counterpower ontologically grounded in actual activity of multitude