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Jean-Paul Martinon “Im-Mundus or Nancy’s Globalizing World-Formation,” in Sanja Dejanovic, ed., *Nancy and the Political* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015). © Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

In an attempt to make sense<sup>1</sup> of the world, Jean-Luc Nancy writes in *The Sense of the World*, one of the most abyssal paragraphs possible:

I would like here to open up an exploration of the space that is common to all of us, that makes up our community: the space of the most extended generality of sense, at once as a distended, *desolate extension*—the desert that grows—and as a broadly open, *available extension*, one that we sense to be an urgency, necessity, or imperative. This common space is infinitely slight. It is nothing but the limit that separates and mixes at once the *in-significance* that arises out of the pulverization of significations and the *archi-significance* encountered by the *need* of being-towards-the-world. This limit separates and mixes the most common, most banal of senses—the evident inconsistency of the justification of our lives—and the most singular, the evident *necessity* of the least fragment of existence as of the world *toward* which it exists.<sup>2</sup>

Let me begin by trying to make sense of this dense paragraph: on the one hand, there is a distended and desolate *extension* of sense *and* non-sense (*in-significance*), created by the pulverization of significations. On the other hand, as it were, there is an open and available *extension* (of) *archi-sense* (*archi-significance*) stemming from the *need* to be towards the world.<sup>3</sup> With this juxtaposition, Nancy is *not* interested in pitching one facet of the world (the *in-significance* of the world) against the other (the *archi-significance* of the need of being-towards-the-world).<sup>4</sup> He is interested in thinking the *common* limit that paradoxically brings together and yet also separates the two apart. This *common* limit is not something that can be

singled out, objectified, analyzed, dissected, and discarded. It is a multi-faceted liminal operation that, as Nancy says, knows no stable referent *and yet* still manages to generate the world.<sup>5</sup>

But what is the point of focusing on such an abyssal and liminal operation that, evidently, takes place every second of time? As is well known, Nancy's aim is not to provide yet another picture of the world, but to actually embody its making, its creation; that is, in one Heideggerian expression: to work out how the world 'worlds.'<sup>6</sup> How is one to make sense of the way the world 'worlds'? Could the 'worlding' of the world be this common limit or double extension (in-significance/archi-significance)? If yes, how is one then to make sense of this liminal operation that is curiously at once ontological and ontical? Finally, but most importantly, once we make sense of this limit, how can we affect it politically so that it escapes its very own annihilation? These are the questions that will be addressed in this essay. The aim is not to present once again an exhaustive overview of Nancy's interpretation of the world or its relationship to the three Abrahamic religions. There is enough scholarship already on that topic.<sup>7</sup> The aim is instead to evaluate the political *potential* of this liminal operation 'made up' of in-significance and archi-significance. This does not mean that what follows will demonstrate how Nancy's work can be seen to have a political *agenda*.<sup>8</sup> This simply means that Nancy's interpretation of the world perhaps gives us a radically new political *potential* for the world: to politically embody, what he overall calls the stance of the world.

In order to address this aim, the following essay will *first* explore the sense of the world, the way it makes sense to us, especially as it is understood when the word 'globalization' is mentioned. This will reveal a slightly different reading of globalization.<sup>9</sup> Globalization is usually understood as a 'uni-totality'<sup>10</sup> ruled by a de-regulated set of markets (commodities, capital, and labor) that has over the years partially phased out all unitary systems, including the nation-state.<sup>11</sup> However, if one focuses on the political dimension of Nancy's thought, a different understanding of

globalization comes about, one which curiously, and contrary to what many believe does not come across as specifically *alter-mondialiste*,<sup>12</sup> as if he were an advocate fighting to go 'beyond' globalization. As the prefatory note to his book, *The Creation of the World*<sup>13</sup> clearly intimates, Nancy's understanding of the world is much more nuanced, taking, both, the world and globalization, its archi-signification and its deepening in-signification, into account. The *second* section will elaborate on this stance or liminal operation (in-significance/archi-significance), by exploring how Nancy pushes the argument further with the crucially split word *im-mundus*. With this split word, Nancy brings together this double extension or liminal operation. *Im-mundus* will be the way we create and produce the world, a gesture that stems paradoxically from out of *no-thing* and yet is *some-thing* that is with *and* without reason. With this approach, this essay will hope to show that Nancy's attempt to expose the liminal stance of the world is an eminently political gesture that helps us to reopen, as he says, 'each possible struggle for a world,'<sup>14</sup> and in the process to fight against this pernicious growth of the wasteland, to recall Nietzsche's famous cry.<sup>15</sup>

## **1. Globalization**

### **A World At and As the End**

Globe, global, globalizing, globalization, globality: all these words have the same Latin root: *globus*: round mass, sphere, ball. The main characteristic of such etymological root is that, however divergent their meanings, all of the derivatives assume a circumscribed *whole*. They all associate the word 'globalization' with the spherical shape of the earth as if the two were necessarily mutually dependent. The shape of anything related to *globus*, and by extension, the shape of globalization is therefore always—in most people's minds, at least—a physically limited round thing. However, if one discards the cliché juxtaposition earth/globe and imagines another shape, the limit of this shape suddenly becomes problematic: what shape does globalization have? How is one to understand a limit to

globalization? Even if one can identify a limit, what would make it remain stable and/or comprehensible not just 'once and for all,' but at least for the time it is articulated? Furthermore, if the solar system, the galaxy, and the universe are not what constitute an outside, then what exterior is really conjured up when thinking the limits of what is global? Is there such a thing as a non-globalized world? The questions about the limits of globalization abound, but the answers are always short in coming.<sup>16</sup> This lack of answers shows that when it comes to the idea of globalization, it is always the very idea of limit that is effectively put in question.

Considering the fact that it is always un-ascribable, this question of limit is perhaps that of an end creating itself. Globalization knows no limit because it spends its time shaping its own end. Although one cannot escape this sense entirely, this ending is not apocalyptic. This ending effectively refers to an always-postponed achievement. It is the process of the creation of the end itself.<sup>17</sup> Nancy talks about this at length when he references our globalized and technologized world. He writes, for example, "the world is always a 'creation': a *tekné* with neither principle nor end nor material *other than itself*."<sup>18</sup> In this way, far from simply revealing the integration of markets, nation-states, cultures, identities, and, technologies, globalization exposes ourselves to the creation of the end of the world, whereby we are exposed to the endpoint at which the globe as a 'comprehensible' achievement (social, cultural, political, economic, and so on) creates itself. The curious consequence of this ever renewed ending is that in the process, globalization allows itself to be perceived as *an* object of analysis.<sup>19</sup> This does not revert back to the idea of globalization as a round object floating in space. Globalization becomes an object because, in the process of creating itself as the end, globalization figures itself as 'an object that ends.' In this process, globalization therefore continuously offers itself as an object that curiously isn't 'one.' It achieves itself as what is effectively incapable of achievement. As Christina Smerick rightly says, 'Globalization is not merely an economic situation regarding trade and popular culture. Globalization is making One of the world, which is not one.'<sup>20</sup> There would

be no worldwide discussion about this controversial term if this were not the case.

This has a further consequence: in order for it to be perceived as ‘an object,’ globalization also, inevitably, projects an *imaginary* outside perspective. The *imaginary* aspect of this projection is here important because what ends cannot extricate itself from this end; it can only *imagine* it can do so. In other words, the process of globalization can only offer itself if it *imagines* an end to the process itself, even though there is no evidence for it. In this way, and this is the crucial aspect of this consequence, globalization is entirely structured in the dependency of metaphysics or, more precisely, in the dependency of onto-theology to make sense. In other words, and however much it is tied to the process of ending, globalization *imagines* that one can stand outside of it and look at it as a comprehensive whole as if a God or an alien. But if one discards gods and aliens, how is one to understand this onto-theological status? What gives globalization its slippery representational power?

### **The Rule of Tautologies**

In his book *Dis-enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, Jean-Luc Nancy provides us with one of the most comprehensive analyses of the link between globalization and its onto-theological context. He says the following:

We know—how could we ignore this—that the threefold monotheism of a threefold religion of the Book (with which one could associate ancient Manichaeism, as well) defines a Mediterraneo-European particularity and, from there, diverse forms of global expansion... Globalization is, as I understand it, in more than one respect a globalization of monotheism in one or another of its forms.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, globalization is the result not only of the global expansion of Abraham's three Religions, but also, and perhaps above all, of the monotheic aspect of these religions. If one accepts Nancy's link, and therefore the intricate relationship between these one-god religions and globalization, then the question that immediately springs to mind is this: what exactly brings together the secular process of globalization that we know today, and the monotheic aspect of these three millennial religions? Nancy answers this question by telling us that what links globalization and monotheism is the tautological nature of its principal value. In the case of religion, the principle value is God and its unique tautological sense: God = God. In other words, nothing can replace God and nothing can compare to Him. He is 'One' and as such He reigns alone and has no rival. With regards to globalization, the principle value is money in its tautological sense: money = money. In other words, no other value can replace the value of money. Money reigns supreme and nothing, not even bartering, can be used in its place.<sup>22</sup> In this way, the relationship between globalization and the monotheism of Abraham's three religions is the value attributed overall to the mono-valence of its absolute values<sup>23</sup>: God and/or money. But how is one to understand this concretely?

### **Tautological Mono-valences**

Karl Marx tells us that a general equivalency is achieved when a relative social mono-valence (in his case, money, but with Nancy, both money and God) is given an abstract value that supersedes all others. There is therefore a general equivalence when one symbol or one commodity is excluded from all others and is subsequently used in order to regulate what is left behind as unelected. Marx argues that: 'a particular kind of commodity acquires the character of general equivalent, because all other commodities make it the material in which they uniformly express their value.'<sup>24</sup> The singled out mono-valence or commodity is the one that functions as the general equivalent regulating all exchanges. This means that nothing can effectively equate, replace, or disturb the worldwide reign

of tautologies known as God or money. They stand for the only language referents able to mediate and regulate all other exchanges within language. They are the general equivalents of all other terms in the system.<sup>25</sup>

Nancy draws three main consequences from the prevalence accorded to these tautological mono-valences: *First consequence*: it inevitably implies *a leveling of all distinctions*. As he says in the context of an analysis of democracy: 'The democratic world developed in the context—to which it is linked from the origin—of general equivalence. This expression—from Marx—designates... the general leveling of all distinctions and the reduction of all forms of excellence through mediocratization.'<sup>26</sup> This should not be understood as a lament for hierarchies or quasi-religious orders. This should be understood simply as the impossibility of seeing beyond the reference to a general equivalence. Everything, from procreation to death and from inorganic events to natural disasters,<sup>27</sup> is regulated by a reference to these incalculable mono-valences. Once regulated by them, there are no more distinctions; everything becomes secondary, mediocre. The *second consequence* is that *globalization can only be a homogeneous traffic* that results in a fundamentalism of values. In other words, in a situation where there are only two mono-valences and nothing distinguishes itself outside of the value attributed by these mono-valences, everything becomes torn apart by secular and/or religious fundamentalisms. As Nancy says:

'Value returns eternally, precisely because it has no price... This is why our homogeneous world presents evaluation now as an equivalence of mercantile value, now as one entailing the sacrifice of existence to a supreme omnipotence. It is always a traffic. It is always one fundamentalism of value against another: one value being valued as a fundamental, a principle measure, God or money, spiritual or stock-market value.'<sup>28</sup>

There is therefore no way to exclude or excuse ourselves from these ever-prevalent mono-valences. This lack of alternative leaves us stranded 'in a



traffic' with the bank or with heaven; a situation that drives, for example, many of us to become wage-slaves and/or fundamentalists (religious and/or secular).

Stuck in a perpetual homogeneous traffic, we become (*final consequence*) a multitude in a pluriverse that prevents us from uniting and acting together. Going against authors such as Hardt and Negri,<sup>29</sup> Nancy retorts that a 'multitude' disperses everyone into individual singularities, thus failing to assemble around a common effort. In an article for the communist newspaper *L'Humanité*, Nancy, for example, wonders;

'whether [this] dispersion (and therefore the use of the word "multitude") is not precisely due to the rampant globalization imposed by capitalism, which the anti-globalization movement is trying to denounce... "Multitude"... multiplies individuals and small groups, but not in the sense of an increase, propelled by a force, for example. It multiplies individuals as if all of them were caught in a type of errancy.'<sup>30</sup>

The argument is clear: globalization leaves us stranded in a 'pluri- or 'multi-verse' that has lost all political agency and potential.<sup>31</sup> Stuck in endless traffic, a devout or a slave to one, or both, of these two ever-prevalent mono-valences, we become, as Hannah Arendt remarked a long time ago,<sup>32</sup> isolated and unable to come together, form groups or coalitions. We all err alone with our tablets and androids, solitary social networkers of multi-verses.

### **The Unworld (Non-Sense<sup>33</sup>) and the World (Sense)**

The overall outcome of this view of the process of globalization (as a pluri-verse scattered throughout with errant singularities caught in an endless traffic regulated by two monovalences) is, as Nancy says, in one formidable word: the unworld [*immundus* or *l'immonde*]. The unworld is *not*

*just* what is unclean, it is *also and above all*, what does *not* belong to the world. Globalization leads us to the unworld, that is, to what is *not* a world. Here again, it is crucial to understand that, although contrasted, the unworld and the world are not engaged in a dialectical battle as if opposite forces. As Nancy clearly says, 'one must not oppose the world and the unworld.'<sup>34</sup> For him, the two take place not against each other, but simultaneously in the creation and destruction of the world. If they were understood against each other, then, the unworld would oppose itself to the world, and everyone would wish the world to absorb the unworld (i.e. recycle it). As Nancy says in *Corpus*<sup>35</sup>:

'The world of bodies is shared with and divided by *immundus*. Identically. This isn't a simple dialectical respiration from the "same" to the "other," finally gathering up the trash and sublimating or recycling it. In this world and its creation, something exceeds and twists the cycles. (...Neither our bodies nor the world are circular, and ecotechnical creation's most serious law is *not to come full circle*.)'<sup>36</sup>

However malignant it may be the process of globalization takes place as the world exceeds itself; an excess that can never reabsorb itself. We encounter here something crucial, but rarely highlighted in the many commentaries on Nancy's work. There is indeed a strange parallel between globalization and what Nancy calls 'world-forming' (*mondialisation*). This parallel shows that neither comes full circle, both exceed each other, thus never allowing for sense (world-forming) to make *absolute* sense or for non-sense (globalization) to end in either a *parousia* of (scientific) meaning, or total annihilation. In this way, there is no escaping this impossibility to recycle properly because creation is what goes radically beyond the logic of production (and therefore recycling), and, yet, the possibility of this production never leaves the horizon of creation. The two always go together while always exceeding themselves. This is not a circular thought; it is the facticity of thought itself, that is to say, it is the facticity of the world itself. In this way, there is no pure creation or world-formation as such. There is an

exposure or opening that both creates *and* for good or bad also produces. It creates by emptying itself (the *nihil* creating or, as we have seen, the available extension archi-signification), and it produces not as a positive positioning, but as spacing (the desolate extension of in-significance) and this with no possibility of hypostasis as the moment-point where this spacing or extension can be identified. This is what allows Nancy to write about the 'nothing growing as *something*,'<sup>37</sup> that is, as an object that, in the end, can be analyzed as such. In other words, there is a void emptying itself and, in the process, produces the world as we know it. Through such a liminal operation (i.e. this creation / production-without-positioning or globalizing-world-forming), the world becomes, as Nancy says, in another formidable juxtaposition of words: a subject-reject<sup>38</sup> [*un sujet-de-rejet*] or *im-mundus*, the latter crucially hyphenated in order to distinguish it from the unworld, i.e. *immundus*. As he says:

'A body expels itself: as corpus, as spasmic space, distended, subject-reject [*sujet-de-rejet*], "im-mundus" if we have to keep the word. But that's how this world takes place.'<sup>39</sup>

In other words, the unworld (*immundus* in one word) comes as the world forms itself (*mundus*): *Im-mundus* (hyphenated). The word *im-mundus* is now crucially open: the world is at once a globalizing phenomenon *and* a world forming itself; an odd juxtaposition that can only be allergic to both sublation and deconstruction, precisely because it is the facticity of the self-de-*construction* of the world. The consequence of this crucial juxtaposition of words and therefore of this view of globalization/world-formation, is that Nancy is not asking us, as is so often mistakenly commented upon, to choose between globalization and world-formation (i.e. between *immundus* or *mundus*).<sup>40</sup> He is simply asking us to take both into consideration (*im-mundus*). Again as he says: 'The intrication of world and filth [*du monde et de l'immonde*] cannot be, for us, either disintricated or dissimulated.'<sup>41</sup> Beyond the impossibility of recycling, the reason is simple: neither world-forming nor globalization are 'destinies' as such; they are stances. One

fabricates; the other creates.<sup>42</sup> One can be (just about) represented, the other cannot. The two sustain each other in their own stance. This is the only way the stance of the world can *make* sense, *is* sense. There would be no *authors* such as Jean-Luc Nancy, and there would be no commentators on his work happily engaging in the eco-technology of books, if this were not the case. The sense they impart is our sense.

This impossibility of disintricating one from the other is precisely what makes the world to 'world.' Caught in an endless traffic ruled by a couple of general equivalences, *our* 'growth takes care of itself'<sup>43</sup>; *we* take care of ourselves and the only way we can do this is to *both create and* produce, that is, to participate in the creation of the world *and* of its globalized eco-technological productions. There cannot be an alternative because the un-reflective and un-recyclable stances of the world do not allow it. And this is precisely what leads us *to erase* the world, *that is*, paradoxically *to create* a world that is always already *not* the world, i.e. not yet: *immundus*. With Nancy, the world as we conceive it today does not *just* slowly wither into nonsense (as in Heidegger<sup>44</sup>), and it does not *just* space us apart (as in Arendt); it remains, together, in-significance and archi-significance, subject-reject: *im-mundus*, *open*. As Christina Smerick rightly points out, inflecting the argument perhaps too optimistically: the structure that produces the nightmare—globalization—is also the structure that produces hope.<sup>45</sup> Inevitably, the question that arises as a result is this: Now that we have discarded the possibility of an alternative (globalization as an inevitable socio-economic process that either benefits or harms the world, depending on the perspective *or mondialisation* as a creation *ex-nihilo* that exceeds the transcendental conditions of possibility of representation), how is one to understand the stance of this subject-reject, this *im-mundus* or globalizing-world-forming?

## 2. Im-Mundus

## A New Non Equivalence

Nancy's attempt to think a liminal subject-reject or *im-mundus* consists in fact in trying to find a new non-equivalence<sup>46</sup>: the always renewed affirmation of a unique, incomparable, and un-substitutable 'sense' that would be *proper* to *im-mundus*, that is, *proper* to a world that perhaps for the first time asks itself whether it is worth saving, or more precisely, saluting in a Derridean sense. How is one to understand this 'properness' based on a radical non-equivalence? Nancy writes:

'The challenge is thus to introduce a new non-equivalence that would have nothing to do, of course, with the non-equivalence of feudalisms or aristocracies, or of regimes of divine election or salvation, or of spiritualities, heroisms, or aestheticisms, etc. It would not be a matter of introducing another system of differential values; it would be a matter of finding, of achieving a sense of evaluation, of evaluative affirmation, that gives to each evaluating gesture—a decision of existence, of work, of bearing—the possibility of not being measured in advance by a given system but of being on the contrary, each time the affirmation of a unique, incomparable un-substitutable "value" or "sense." Only this can displace what is called economic domination, which is but the effect of the fundamental decision for equivalence.'<sup>47</sup>

The proposal is clear: the world needs a sense of evaluation that does not foster further traffic and fundamentalism, but gives experience a kind of value that is free of onto-theological constraints. The challenge is to give each human gesture the possibility of not being made into a commodity, or being tied to an absolute. Furthermore, the challenge is to give experience the chance of affirming itself as its own evaluation.<sup>48</sup> This new value is not intended either to create a new realm (in this world or another), or to (re)discover the unity immanent to the world, as if there could be some underlining sense to a fragmented multiplicity.<sup>49</sup> The value to be found should be that of the sense of our own *im-mundus*, subject-reject.

The reason Nancy insists so much on sense (and specifically the sense of *im-mundus*) is because, as he says, ‘there is no longer a back-world [*un arrière-monde*] as Nietzsche would say’<sup>50</sup> that would metaphorically give sense to (or guarantee the meaning of) our existence. In other words, the reason we need to focus on sense is because we need to make sense for ourselves, as subject-rejects of our own *im-mundus*. We can no longer afford to create meaning only to latch it on one or two peerless mono-valences. God and money need to be thought *not otherwise, but for the first time without guarantees, that is, unhinged from their assumed tautological truths*. As such, this new value must be not only allergic to any kind of trafficking, it must also be without measure (absolute or otherwise). As Nancy says, referring to Georges Bataille’s non-productive expenditures:

‘Value must have value without measure. Bataille expressed this by calling value “heterogeneous”: The homogenous is the exchange of values, a general equivalence. In order to have value properly, it is necessary that value be heterogeneous to that equivalence... The heterogeneous is not a matter of usage or of exchange, it is a matter of experience.’<sup>51</sup>

Unique and unrepeatable, untradeable and unpreservable, the sense of *im-mundus* is therefore a general economy—in a Bataillean sense—that must risk itself in all its radical heterogeneity. This risk is incalculable because it is ‘external to all numeration, to any counting’<sup>52</sup> and this is precisely the measure of this in-significance / archi-significance that is *im-mundus*.

The extraordinary consequence of this vision is that the sense of this heterogeneity is effectively worth nothing. The new non-equivalence can have neither an absolute value (God), nor an incomparable value (money). This does not mean that this new non-equivalence is worthless, something that can only be discarded because it cannot be compared to God or

exchanged with or for money. The subject is *not just* a reject; it still retains itself as subject. *Im-mundus* is not just *immundus*; it is also *mundus*. As such, the sense of *im-mundus* is its own worth. As Nancy says:

[A] heterogeneous value is worth nothing, or it is worth what the “valent” [*valoir*] in itself is worth: an exposure to some measure when that measure is but the other of all measure, or its infinity in act.<sup>53</sup>

In this way, the sense of *im-mundus* or subject-reject is effectively a heterogeneity that knows no equivalent and, indisputably, no price-tag. This does not refer to the banal fact that life has no price (while knowing all along that this life can be traded, bartered, or insured, for example). This refers instead to the happenstance of a heterogeneity that is indeed worth nothing or is its own worth.

### **To Desire to Remain in Desire**

But how can anyone make sense of this *im-mundus*, at once the process of globalization and that of world-forming, without automatically re-absorbing it as some ‘thing’ with an onto-theological value? What concrete example can one choose to make sense of this non-sense (of the world, of existence) whose heterogeneity never allows it to have any worth in the conventional sense of the term? In order to make sense of this, it is necessary to go back to the way Nancy re-articulates Heidegger’s understanding of Being. He writes:

‘To the letter of Heidegger’s texts, one could not substitute being with world. However, in spirit, things are different... [For Heidegger,] being is, in one word, a verb. Being is no longer Being or a being, but “to be,” that is, a transitive verb: to be Being. Heidegger formulates this transitive request with the use of a non-grammatical expression. He also formulates it (in *What is philosophy?*) by giving a kind of equivalence: being takes (*legein, logos*) Being. I would prefer to

formulate this transcription or translation differently. I would say that to be desires Being... To be is thus simply this: let it be [*que l'étant est*]. Being is being: tautology in which Being resolves itself in being.<sup>54</sup>

The difference is here clearly exposed: instead of the tautological 'being takes Being' with which the early Heidegger ends his existential analyses, Nancy proposes to focus instead on the way 'to be' *desires* Being. The focus on desire is an attempt to ex-*pose concretely* the sense of existence or *im-mundus*. Desire is a crucial expression, because it is that which is sought after, coveted, called for. It is a movement; the movement of the *conatus*: desire for Being/World. But the question remains: how could one desire without automatically appropriating it as need? In other words, how can one create the world without also effectively letting globalization produce it as yet more meaningful/less surplus atomizing us even more? In the end, we all want something, so how can one desire something other than general equivalence, that is, more money, more God? Nancy answers these questions in this way:

'How does one name the object of a desire that is not a general equivalence? I call it "sense," but I will also name it "desire": we desire to remain in desire, in the tension towards... in the leap. This is the only way there can be something beyond equivalence.'<sup>55</sup>

The world thus desires the world. The subject-reject thus desires itself as subject through its own rejection. Again, this is *not* a theme for thought. *Im-mundus* is a thrust or a throw, but not in the sense whereby we would go from one place to another. It is an unpredictable surge that can only be understood or heard, as Nancy says in Manchev's interview above, with the saying, 'let there be' [*que l'étant est*].<sup>56</sup> This expression does not refer to the biblical *fiat* (as in *fiat lux*: 'let there be light') because no dispelling of ignorance is implied. *Que l'étant est* implies being's surge in being-ness (as Nancy says in French: '*que l'étant en étant cherche et accroît en même temps son étantité*<sup>57</sup>'). However this does not simply take place at a pure



ontological level. It also occurs in being's embodiment, the way the body surges in its bodily or material form. As such, it describes the embodiment of our very own stance or that of the world, as we know it. The expression 'let there be' therefore refers to a fact, the stance of the world or globe, an excess of significance and insignificance sustained [*sous-tendue*], by an archi-significance that desires to remain in desire. This is what concretely takes place here, now, 'in' this globalized world-forming or being/Being, and this without necessarily staining or straining it with metaphysical meaning.

### **A Demand for Reason**

But let's push this further and ask: how does this thrust maintain itself? In other words, how can anything whatsoever sustain itself in this manner? An answer to these questions is precisely what should give us the *general* stance of *im-mundus*; the way *im-mundus* desires to remain in desire, the way globalization and the world ex-pose themselves without referring to any given principle, nor to any assigned end by an outside or inside value.<sup>58</sup> Nancy writes:

'The world is... a fact: it may well be that it is the only fact of this kind (if it is the case that the other facts take place within the world). It is a fact without reason or end, and it is our fact. To think it, is to think this factuality, which implies not referring it to a meaning capable of appropriating it, but to placing in it, in its truth as a fact, all possible meaning.'<sup>59</sup>

This is not a banal forensic thought: 'let's focus on the facts not on interpretations or reactions.' Nancy is a concrete thinker; the factuality of *im-mundus* is its sense, its non-equivalence, what desires sense, including interpretations and reactions. But how do we place *im-mundus* in its truth as a fact?

Once again, when it comes to the factuality of *im-mundus*, Heidegger's influence on Nancy's thought is unmistakable.<sup>60</sup> This is particularly acute when reference is made to Heidegger's *Principle of Reason*. In order to demonstrate that there is something without reason or entirely its own reason, Nancy, like Heidegger, quotes from the spiritual poem of Angelus Silesius, *The Cherubic Wanderer: Sensual Description of the Four Final Things*; the famous line taken from that text being, 'the rose grows without reason.'<sup>61</sup> The crux of Nancy's argument is that as soon as there is world, there is a demand for reason; there is a *demand* to frame or limit the world as vision, as globe, as a globalizing phenomenon. But before this demand, the appearance of the world itself, like that of the rose, is without reason. Heidegger argues the same thing when he says that, 'the character of the demand to render, the *reddendum*, belongs to reason,'<sup>62</sup> while the rose and the world pay no attention to itself, asks not whether it needs a reason. Accordingly, humans are the *animal rationale*, the creatures that require accounts (and in the process globalize their world-formation); they 'are the reckoning creature,'<sup>63</sup> reckoning understood in the broad sense of the word *ratio*. In this way, world-forming comes to be experienced not as something rendered (by God or a Leibnizian principle of reason, for example), but as a demand that always gives accounts of the world as globe. *Im-mundus* is thus at once without reason (like the rose) *and* (unlike the rose) a demand for reason that can never be properly rendered (again). This does not easily justify or equate globalization with nature (the unworld, like a weed, spreads and nothing can be done to prevent it), and it does not reabsorb everything under human agency (humans are the only reckoning creatures on earth). Neither reason nor ground sustains *mundus*, and, yet, *mundus* demands, even commands its global account, its *immundus*,<sup>64</sup> for example with this demanding question: what is one to do with this globalized world? This explains why the world, as world, as the whole of what appears (always multiple, open, un-totalisable) is concrete, which means that it never explains itself as it deploys itself, never presents itself as a factual intelligible necessity. As Nancy says in a recent collaborative book with Arelien Barrau, 'the world never matches its "being-thought."<sup>65</sup>

## Without Grasp

There is no doubt that Nancy's understanding of the world and of globalization is unique inasmuch as it never allows itself to veer into a fixed interpretation of the topic. The world and the globe never cease to defy themselves, both as representation and as creation. Once again, this does not make of *im-mundus* a quasi-representational vitalist movement that knows no rest. Part of Nancy's efforts is precisely to counteract this idea, and to propose instead the participation in the making of this subject-reject. This necessarily includes our participation in the making of this world and a non-messianic openness to what is radically unexpected or incommensurable.<sup>66</sup> The former does not sublimate the latter, and the latter is not a mystical prayer. The stance of the world is our stance, how we choose to conduct the world, for good or bad, not as multiplicity or individual singularities, but as people, not in an empty populist sense, but as a grouping<sup>67</sup> 'able' to express anarchically an 'us' (*im-mundus*) with or against nature or earth, space or the universe, these empty totalities that momentarily and artificially demarcate our horizon.

Obviously, the main problem with this vision is that, however much it flirts with communism in its attempt to derail the stubborn logic of equivalence itself (and therefore of the logic of both religion and capital), it does not put forward a conventional political plan of action. It is true that if one challenges Nancy's thought on this topic, the result is obviously problematic. Indeed, the question that really needs to be addressed and that Nancy always eschews from answering, is this<sup>68</sup>: How can this *im-mundus* be affected politically so as to prioritize *mundus* over *immundus*? In other words, how is one to respond to this demand for reason that 'we' (that is, *im-mundus*) impose on ourselves in a way that encourages the growth of the subject-world *over and above* its reject, and therefore, potentially, its very real annihilation? These questions are crucial because they do not simply ask for a political statement with a delusory potential achievement;<sup>69</sup>

they ask for the manner in which, according to Nancy, the liminal operation of *im-mundus should* really take place. After all, as Nancy himself recognizes, 'one needs at least a modicum of representation: what or who do we want to be?'<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps the problem with *im-mundus* is that it does not address the problematic of its embodiment and therefore of its enunciation seriously enough. This is not a criticism, but a way of finishing this reflection on Nancy's *im-mundus* by taking it elsewhere. I am thinking here of Heidegger's words about the fact that humankind is always already transposed into its own possibility and, as such, can never hold itself long enough in order to be able to understand how its own possibility actually 'transposes' itself. In other words, and to use Nancy's own vocabulary, the world can never properly hold its own stance; it is always prey to the incommensurable and therefore to a certain indeterminacy of form and content. Never matching our own 'being thought,' 'we'—this heterogeneity—can only therefore fail to capture, captivate, or control our own stance. Here is Heidegger's memorable passage:

'Man is that inability to remain and is yet unable to leave his place. In projecting, the Da-sein in him constantly *throws* him into possibilities and thereby keeps him *subjected* to what is actual. Thus thrown in this throw, man is a *transition*, transition as the fundamental essence of occurrence... Transposed into the possible, he must *constantly be mistaken* concerning what is actual. And only because he is thus mistaken and transposed can he become *seized by terror*. And only where there is the perilousness of being seized by terror do we find the bliss of astonishment...'<sup>71</sup>

If one transposes this passage and rethink all of the above, then one can only conclude that any attempt to make sense of *im-mundus*, is an attempt to absent ourselves from one's own transposition into the possible. In other words, *im-mundus* cannot *actually* be understood because if we did, we

would absent ourselves *not* from 'it' as such, but from having been and from any futural projection. This does not imply the absence of yet another onto-theological perspective, but the impossibility of extracting ourselves from what led us to the decision of understanding and the consequence of such a decision. Furthermore, the impossibility of eschewing the path that *leads us* to understand *im-mundus* and the task that *stems from* it effectively *also* prevents us from *affecting it*. Again, this does not relegate Nancy's *im-mundus* to the dustbin of philosophical ideas; this only highlights the difficulty of what he is asking us to achieve.

## **Mistaking**

The other thing that Heidegger's crucial passage highlights is, of course, the fact that, even if one could, any attempt to think *im-mundus* can *only be* mistaken. Why mistaken? It is mistaken because our inability to absent ourselves from *im-mundus* prevents us from being right about it. We are always already immersed in its creation/production. It is true that Nancy himself acknowledges the importance of the mistake when he writes, for example:

'Praxis is not measured by a given, predetermined Idea. Yet, it is not measured against nothing. Let's try saying that it measures itself based on the Idea of what will be unable to saturate the Idea itself... At each possible point of [measurement], a mistake is not out of the question... To accept the risk is also part of the chance. Those, curiously, that take the risk of being mistaken leave open the greatest chance for the real chance.'<sup>72</sup>

But how does one become one of those who take such a risk? Nancy remains silent. What is therefore lacking in Nancy's work on *im-mundus* is perhaps the fact that its very writing is never enough an openly mistaken subject-reject. Again, this does not mean that Nancy is wrong. This simply means that *im-mundus* is effectively always already a mistake, because its

absencing never allows it to be rightly understood in its factuality. This is the only way one can think of our *im-mundus*, that is, seized by terror and astonishment, just as *im-mundus* (we) seize ourselves in our terrifying and astonishing absencing.

The question we are left is then this: *Once the error of our ways is held up each time as what partially makes us*, could the political as a task to be accomplished finally begin? If the answer is yes, then a much more difficult task opens up ahead of us because it implies that 'mistaking' is also part of this *im-mundus* that we create/fabricate; part of this subject-reject that we are, and thus part of this very writing *and reading*. At the level of exegesis, we can probably say that it is precisely the error of Nancy's statements about *im-mundus* or about this subject-reject that allows us to embody them and therefore risk yet more future mistakes. Indeed, with his mistaking comes a resistance against his thought; a resistance that gives thought another chance or opens up a new heterogeneity of contents that, properly speaking, knows no limit. Similarly, as a commentator, I'm no doubt mistaken here, but my mistakes allows for a resistance and a new indeterminate linking of phrase (by me or others), and thus to a new Nancy 'on' the world.

If we therefore hold the error of our ways as what makes *im-mundus*, then we also *begin*, more broadly, to resist against the world's worst threats (pollution, unbridled greed, fundamentalisms, terrorism, overpopulation, genocide, and the list goes on). Our mistakes shape our resistance; it is what precisely breaks sense and renders it possible *both* as inevitable fabrication (or repetition) and as creation: the stances of our world. Nancy's political thought lies precisely in this world forming, that is, *this (for now) major global mistake* that defies belief and yet forces us to resist, thus giving us a new *im-mundus*, one yet again allergic to any definition, delimitation, or end. And this is what we have/are: a world enhanced and polluted, heavy with a burdensome history of extreme violence, and dizzy by its inability to come up with a global strategy that would secure a better

future for all. We carry these stances without any form of support or firm basis. These stances are our transient 'systasis,'<sup>73</sup> this political-standing-together that makes us quiver between sur-vival (world-forming) and destruction (globalization). It is high time we assume our subject-reject, the errors of our way that make and shape our future.

*'This world, whose world is it? It's no longer God's, it's no longer Man's, it's no longer Science's. So? It's ours. What does that mean? Ours... if you'll allow me to make a joke using free-association: Le Nôtre was the name of Louis XIV's gardener, who designed the park at Versailles... Could our [notre] world be a royal park? Must it be a wasteland? Or will we be able to create a waste-park?'*<sup>74</sup>

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Sense is not just the way in which meaning goes, it is also—and this is what shows the richness of this word—a sensation, sensuality, sentiment, common sense, critical sense. In this way, sense is not something to be owned or to be felt, it is the relation to the other and as such always already remains to be invented.’ Jean-Luc Nancy, ‘Nous avons accès à la parole, il n'y a qu'à parler!’ in *Libération*, 2 Juin 2009, my translation. See also, Ian James, *The Fragmentary Demand: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, trans. J. S. Librett (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1997), p. 9, my emphases, translation modified.

<sup>3</sup> Ignaas Devisch describes this second extension clearly when he says that ‘it’ is ‘the spacing between us, from being placed together in and through (a) space.’ Ignaas Devisch, *Jean-Luc Nancy and the Question of Community* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy’s work often refers to this two-fold issue. There is no space to survey it properly. I only give here another example: ‘How are we to re-pose the question of the proper? ... I’m especially interested in two ways of tackling this question... on the one hand the ordinary common, the anonymous, the everyday, the indeterminate, the substitutable, and on the other hand, the common-with, being next to and sometimes face to face with, being among, in the middle of, or mixed up with... Both aspects are linked: everyday and go together.’ Jean-Luc Nancy, ‘Our World,’ an interview with Peter Hallward, *Angelaki*, 8, no. 2, August 2003, p. 52.

<sup>5</sup> There is no space here to unpack the context in which Nancy comes up with this idea. Suffice to say that it obviously has its origin in his reading of Marx’s *Capital*, especially in ‘The Compearance from the existence of communism to the community of existence,’ *Political Theory*, 20, no. 3, 1992, pp. 371-98. See also Jean-Luc Nancy, ‘Rien que le monde,’ interview with Stany Grelet and Mathieu Potte-Bonneville, in *Vacarme*, 11, 2000, pp. 4-12.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art,’ in *Off the Beaten Tracks [Holzwege]*, trans. J. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> For such an overview, see, for example: Ignaas Devisch, ‘A trembling voice in the desert. Jean-Luc Nancy’s rethinking of the political space,’ in *Cultural Values*, 4, no. 2, 2000, pp. 239-55; Ignaas Devisch, ‘Being mondaine: Jean-Luc Nancy’s Enumerations of the World,’ *Cultural Values*, 6, no. 4, 2002, pp. 385-394; Ignaas Devisch, ‘The Sense of Being(-)With Jean-Luc Nancy,’ in *Culture Machine*, 8, 2006; François Raffoul and David Pettigrew, ‘Introduction,’ in Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World or Globalisation*, trans. F. Raffoul and D. Pettigrew (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007); François Raffoul, ‘Le rien du monde: Une lecture de La création du monde ou la mondialisation,’ *Mondes Francophones: Revue Mondiale des Francophonies*, March 2007; Véronique Bergen, ‘Struction,’ in *Jean Clet Martin’s Blog*, 20 March 2011; Pierre-Philippe Jandin, *Jean-Luc Nancy: Retracer le politique* (Paris: Michalon, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> The distinction made here between a political potential and a political agenda faithfully follows Nancy’s own distinction between the French masculine word for the political [*le politique*] and the feminine word for politics [*la politique*]. For Nancy’s distinction between *le politique* and *la politique*, see: Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Retreating the Political*, ed. Simon Sparks (New York: Routledge, 1997), especially pp. 109-10 and, very recently, Jean-Luc Nancy, *Interroger la politique, interroger le commun*



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(Université de Toulouse le Mirail – France Culture, 2013). For a definition of the political in contrast to politics, see Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Experience of Freedom*, trans. B. McDonald (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), especially p. 75. For a commentary, see Oliver Marchart, *Post-foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), especially, pp. 61-84.

<sup>9</sup> In this essay, the word globalization will not be conflated with capitalism or, more precisely, capitalist globalism. As this essay will strive to demonstrate, the singular plural extension of the world constitutes a global phenomenon that cannot simply be reduced to the circulation of commodities with profit as the only goal, however much such phenomenon is currently dependent on it. The hope with this focus is not to ignore or diminish the real geopolitical and ecological cataclysm that capitalist globalism leads to, but to better understand the potential of Nancy's political thought in its worldly *or* global dimension. See also endnote 10.

<sup>10</sup> In doing so, this chapter will *also* not focus on the usual reading of globalization as a Western monotheistic glorification of its supposed rational universality. Aware of the world-wide injustice that ensues from such glorification, this chapter will focus more precisely on this liminal operation that Nancy encapsulates with the conjunction 'or' in the title of his book *The Creation of the World or Globalization*. See also endnote 13.

<sup>11</sup> There is no space here to explore and analyse the scholarship on globalization as a uni-totally. I give here, as an example, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's formulation:

'Globalization is an attempt to impose a unification on the world by and through the market.' Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 357.

<sup>12</sup> Following B.C. Hutchens, Jane Hiddleston, for example, writes that Nancy's world-forming is 'an alternative ethics' to the contemporary reign of capitalism. Jane Hiddleston, 'Nancy, Globalization, and Postcolonial Humanity,' in B.C. Hutchens (ed), *Jean-Luc Nancy: Justice Legality, and World* (London: Continuum, 2012), p. 150.

<sup>13</sup> "'The creation of the world *or* globalization": the conjunction must be understood simultaneously and alternatively in its disjunctive, substitutive, or conjunctive sense.' Nancy, *The Creation of the World*, p. 29. For a commentary on this note, see Séan Hand, 'Being-in-Common, or the Meaning of Globalization,' in Hutchens, *Jean-Luc Nancy: Justice Legality, and World*, pp. 131-45.

<sup>14</sup> Nancy, *The Creation of the World*, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. T. Common (Minneapolis: Penn State Electronic Classic, 1999), pp. 268-71

<sup>16</sup> On the impossibility of ascribing a limit to globalization, see also, for example, Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), especially, p. 53.

<sup>17</sup> On the fact that globalization is a limit continually forming itself, see also, for example, Philip Cerny, *Rethinking World Politics: A Theory of Transnational Neopluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), especially, p. 98.

<sup>18</sup> Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, p. 41, my emphasis.

<sup>19</sup> As François Raffoul and David Pettigrew rightly say: '[Globalization] supposes ... the representation of ... an end of the world, the world ending in such a view; it devotes itself, in the end, to the reduction of the world to the status of an object, a world regarded as 'objective.'" Raffoul and Pettigrew, 'Introduction,' in Nancy, *The Creation of the World*, p. 4.

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- <sup>20</sup> Christina M. Smerick, 'No Other Place,' in Peter Gratton and Marie-Eve Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy and Plural Thinking: Expositions of World, Ontology, Politics, and Sense* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2012), p. 28.
- <sup>21</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, trans. B. Bergo, G. Malenfant, and M. B. Smith (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 31.
- <sup>22</sup> See, Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, p. 31.
- <sup>23</sup> And as such they become the value of all values. On this theme, see Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'équivalence des catastrophes (Après Fukushima)* (Paris; Galilée, 2012), especially, pp. 16-7.
- <sup>24</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: Vol I*, ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. S. Moore and E. Aveling (New York: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, 2003), p. 79.
- <sup>25</sup> For the way this relates to language, see Paul J Thibault, *Re-Reading Saussure: The Dynamics of Signs in Social Life* (London: Routledge, 1996), especially, p. 205.
- <sup>26</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy*, trans. P-A. Brault and M. Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), p. 23.
- <sup>27</sup> On the way natural disasters are recuperated by the principle of general equivalence, see Nancy, *L'équivalence des catastrophes*.
- <sup>28</sup> Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, p. 80, translation modified.
- <sup>29</sup> See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004).
- <sup>30</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Nouveau Millénaire, Défis Libertaire: Interview with Jérôme-Alexandre Nielsberg,' *L'Hummanité*, 26 December 2006, p. 16, my translation.
- <sup>31</sup> On this topic, see Nancy's remarks in Jean-Luc Nancy and Aurélien Barrau, *Dans quels mondes vivons-nous?* (Paris: Galilée, 2011), especially, p. 13.
- <sup>32</sup> 'The modern growth of worldlessness, the withering away of everything *between us*, can also be described as the spread of the desert.' Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics* (London: Schocken Books, 2005), p. 201.
- <sup>33</sup> As can be expected in the context of Nancy's work, the word 'non-sense' should *not* be understood as what has no meaning or is simply gibberish. The hyphen clearly indicates that it is both sense and what has no-sense that is intended here. This does not imply an undecidability, but the impossibility of ascribing an absolute meaning or rationale to sense as such.
- <sup>34</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, 'The Commerce of Plural Thinking: An Interview with Jean-Luc Nancy,' in Gratton and Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy and Plural Thinking*, p. 235.
- <sup>35</sup> There is no space to explore here the way Nancy understands the body and its role in and as the world. For a good analysis, see Boyan Manchev, 'Ontology of Creation: The Onto-aesthetics of Jean-Luc Nancy,' in Alena Alexandrova, Ignaas Devisch, Laurens Ten Kate and Aukje Van Rooden (eds), *Re-treating Religion: Deconstructing Christianity with Jean-Luc Nancy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), especially, pp. 268-72.
- <sup>36</sup> Nancy, *Corpus*, p. 103.
- <sup>37</sup> Nancy, *The Creation of the World*, p. 51.
- <sup>38</sup> If there was enough space, one should really evaluate this subject-reject with Nancy's earlier analysis of the German Romantics' subject-work. The latter implies an aspiration to foster an immanent communal identity that always runs the risk, as Arendt noted in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, of ending up cleansing what fails to meet this aspiration. By contrast, the former can only challenge the validity of any aspiration precisely because

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such aspiration is itself always-already a subject-reject. For Nancy's analysis of the subject-work, see Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Literary Absolute*, trans. P. Barnard and C. Lester (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988, pp. xi-xiii).

<sup>39</sup> Nancy, *Corpus*, p. 107.

<sup>40</sup> François Raffoul is perhaps the most prominent author advocating this interpretation. Although, as we have seen, Nancy clearly says that 'one must not oppose the world and the unworld,' Raffoul, for example, writes: 'Nancy will oppose to the un-world a "creation" of the world...' François Raffoul, 'The Self-Deconstruction of Christianity,' in Alexandrova, et al., *Re-treating Religion*, p. 48. For other examples of this interpretation, see also, François Raffoul 'The Creation of the World,' in Peter Gratton and Marie-Eve Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy and Plural Thinking*, pp. 13-26 and Raffoul, 'Le rien du monde,' p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Muses*, trans. Peggy Kamuff (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 85.

<sup>42</sup> In a really problematic essay—mainly because it falls so lazily for clichéd male posturing: 'I'm right, he's wrong'—Martin McQuillan quips that 'what is required here is not the creation of an *ex-nihilo* without producer, but the recognition that production as such is always only ever a reproduction.' While it is true that production necessarily implies reproduction, Nancy never imagines the 'disappearance of the producer.' Any careful reading of his work clearly reveals that creation cannot take place without (re)production and this is precisely what overall reveals the heterogeneous experience of lived globalization today. Martin McQuillan, 'Deconstruction and Globalization: The World According to Jean-Luc Nancy,' in Gratton and Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy and Plural Thinking*, pp. 71-2.

<sup>43</sup> Nancy, *The Creation of the World*, p. 51.

<sup>44</sup> I'm thinking here specifically of the way Heidegger interprets Nietzsche's famous saying, 'the desert grows.' See Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. G. Gray (New York: Harper Perennial, 2004), p. 49.

<sup>45</sup> First name Smerick, 'No Other Place,' in Gratton and Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy and Plural Thinking*, p. 34.

<sup>46</sup> Nancy also uses the expression un-equivalence [*inequivalence*] in Nancy, *L'équivalence des catastrophes*, pp. 64-9.

<sup>47</sup> Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy*, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> As Christopher Watkin rightly says: 'The challenge, Nancy notes, is one of not introducing another system of differential values, but of achieving a sense of evaluation, of evaluative affirmation, that gives to each evaluating gesture—a decision of existence, of work, of bearing—the possibility of not being measured in advance by a given system but of being, on the contrary, each time the affirmation of a unique, incomparable, unsubstitutable "value" or "sense."' Christopher Watkins, 'Being Just? Ontology and Incommensurability in Nancy's Notion of Justice,' in Hutchens, *Jean-Luc Nancy: Justice Legality, and World*, pp. 26-7.

<sup>49</sup> See for example, the way Nancy evades any non-theological discourse for this imperative in Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, p. 39.

<sup>50</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, 'La pensée est le réveil du sens, Interview with Nicolas Truong,' in *Philosophie Magazine*, 13, 01 October 2007, pp. 13-4.

<sup>51</sup> Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, p. 76.

<sup>52</sup> Nancy, 'Preamble,' in Alexandrova, et al., *Re-treating Religion*, p. 19.

<sup>53</sup> Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, p. 80.

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- <sup>54</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, 'La Métamorphose, le monde: Entretien avec Boyan Manchev,' in *Rue Descartes*, 2, no. 64, 2009, p. 79.
- <sup>55</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Politique et au-delà: Entretien avec Philip Armstrong and Jason E. Smith* (Paris: Galilée, 2011), p. 20.
- <sup>56</sup> On this theme, see Raffoul, 'Le rien du monde,' p. 7.
- <sup>57</sup> Nancy, 'La Métamorphose, le monde,' p. 79.
- <sup>58</sup> See Nancy, *The Creation of the World*, pp. 43-7.
- <sup>59</sup> Nancy, *The Creation of the World*, p. 45.
- <sup>60</sup> For a good analysis of the relationship between Nancy and Heidegger, see Daniele Rugo, *Jean-Luc Nancy and the Thinking of Otherness: Philosophy and Powers of Existence* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).
- <sup>61</sup> See note 20 in *The Creation of the World*, p. 120.
- <sup>62</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. R. Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 39.
- <sup>63</sup> Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 129.
- <sup>64</sup> Nancy, *The Creation of the World*, p. 47.
- <sup>65</sup> Florian Forestier, 'Aurelien Barrau, Jean-Luc Nancy: Dans quels mondes vivons-nous?' *Actu Philosophia*, 2012, p. 2, my translation.
- <sup>66</sup> On the non-messianic dimension of Nancy's thinking see, Boyan Manchev, 'Ontology of Creation: The Onto-aesthetics of Jean-Luc Nancy,' in Alexandrova, et al., *Re-treating Religion*, especially, pp. 264-66.
- <sup>67</sup> As Nancy says: 'Although I realise that the word "people" has been high-jacked by populism, I don't see why one should be impressed by such high-jacking. Why should one renounce to use the word "people" if one uses it in such a way that it indicates not an identity, but a pleb? A pleb that claims its right to exist.... [People] puts forward the idea that a common statement can be made, that an "us" can be expressed.' Nancy, 'Nouveau Millénaire, Défis Libertaire,' my translation.
- <sup>68</sup> The most remarkable and subtle attempt to get Nancy to put forward a political strategy is perhaps Boyan Manchev's excellent interview: Nancy, 'La Métamorphose, le monde,' pp. 78-93.
- <sup>69</sup> As such, I distance myself from the way certain commentators have dismissed Nancy's political strategy because 'at the end of the day' it is only a desperate call to rescue absolute immanentism. For an example of such dismissal, see Seán Hand, 'Being-in-Common, or the Meaning of Globalization,' in Hutchens, *Jean-Luc Nancy: Justice Legality, and World*, especially, p. 143.
- <sup>70</sup> Nancy, *Politique et au-delà*, p. 18.
- <sup>71</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. W. McNeill and N. Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 365, my emphasis.
- <sup>72</sup> Nancy, 'The Commerce of Plural Thinking,' in Gratton and Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy and Plural Thinking*, p. 234.
- <sup>73</sup> 'What makes an individual's holding together, is the "systasis" [its political standing together] that produces it. What makes its individuality is its capacity to produce, and to produce itself, first of all, by means of its internal "formative force..."' Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Literary Absolute*, p. 49.
- <sup>74</sup> Nancy, 'Our World,' p. 52.