

Chris Reitz

Making it ()hole

The Aesthetics of "Structural Adjustment" in the Literature,  
Economics, and Culture of Neoliberalism

Dissertationen der LMU München

Band 105

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by  
Chris Reitz



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Erstveröffentlichung 2026

Zugleich Dissertation der LMU München 2026

Druck und Vertrieb im Auftrag des Autors:

Buchschmiede von Dataform Media GmbH, Julius-Raab-Straße 8  
2203 Großbeersdorf, Österreich

Kontaktadresse nach EU-Produktsicherheitsverordnung:

[info@buchschmiede.at](mailto:info@buchschmiede.at)



### **Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek**

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet abrufbar über <http://dnb.d-nb.de>

Open-Access-Version dieser Publikation verfügbar unter:

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bvb:19-368910>

<https://doi.org/10.5282/edoc.36891>

ISBN 978-3-99192-621-4

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*But surely we are forgiven / for hardening our strophes / against the marketplace /  
in an epoch whose novelty lies / in the precise arrangement of its word / cloud  
titrated forth / from other epochs and after all / one traverses an era / as one  
passes the Dogana point / that is to say rather quickly / [...] / and this restless  
motion marks / the adventure of value / set loose in the circuits / and unable to  
know itself / without arriving headlong / at the price briefly valorized / a pause  
eros a sum on paper / then crashing onward / into the orbits sweet / with longing  
like Francesca / circling immaterial / through the fifth Canto / able to fling a  
phrase / or two at most before hurrying on / [...] / the Comedian as the letter C /  
in the general formula MCM' / that crawled ashore on the sea / flecked lip / of  
the world / system not far from Rimini / where Francesca died and Sigismondo /  
lived and died / but across the peninsula / at the Casa San Giorgio with its rule /  
so discreet and sophisticated / that historians for a long time / failed to notice it /  
but it was here the young formula / [...] / and scrawled its spirals / from Genoa  
Amsterdam / Londonopolis each imperial canto / unspooling a bit / broader than  
the last / and each with its own forms / and its own anxious fogs / from the Med-  
iterranean / [...] / to the brume air of the nineteenth / nervous century meeting /  
the yellow smoke of London / like a little bookkeeper grown old / and now the  
dead / white fog of Suisun Bay / midmorning amid metaphors / of the Pacifico /  
where a weary hegemon / heaves up on Benicia's beaches / ten thousand cars /  
paratactically abandoned / [...] / and they all hunch / in the weak sun too tired /  
to launch into the circuits / and some say this is a crisis / of overproduction / and  
some say / this is a crisis of accumulation / and some say this is the most / beau-  
tiful sight the dark earth offers / and some say / they should all be driven / into  
the Pacific / [...] / in hopes we can start / again in the factorial haze / of the Pearl  
River Delta / among the TVEs and the pop / up cities or maybe / we'll be rescued  
by / the new totalizers from the moon / but as the formula / sinks downward to  
darkness / on extended credit / discouraged and unemployed / I have heard late  
the chants / of the option-wallahs / and the end of days / traders and the arm-  
chair / Austrian fanboys singing / marginal songs / in the comment fields of the  
republic / where the endgame / of the lyric turns to the language / of value and  
who will take the owners of debt / and make them whole / and who will take the  
shareholders / and make them whole / and who will take / the debauched and  
defaulted / and make them whole / and who will take / our brothers and sisters  
in the equity / and the mezzanine tranches / and make them whole /and when  
will this end and really /what will be money's Jena / [...]*

**Joshua Clover, Years of Analysis for a Day of Synthesis, 6–9**



## Note on Translations

Throughout this study, secondary sources – particularly theoretical works – are cited in English translation to ensure readability, except where no translation is available or where reference to the original wording is necessary because important semantic nuances would otherwise be lost. Literary texts are generally quoted in their original language, with some exceptions in cases where the language is one I do not speak and where the texts are only discussed briefly.



# I Representing a “( )hole Complex”

“The Global *Zeitenwende*,” “New Cold War,” “Great-Power Competition” – in the discourses of power, the 2020s are certainly not imagined as the heyday of political or economic stability.<sup>1</sup> The *Belle Époque* of the “rules-based order,” “Free World,” and “Pax Americana” has faded, it seems, into a faint nostalgic object. In such hasty conclusions, however, there is always the danger of historical amnesia. The talk of crisis risks suppressing secular tendencies. By contrast, this study hypothesizes that the epistemic function and operating principle of “crisis” has shifted across the last decades. Sure, it still is invested with the grand representational promise of acting as a moment of synthesis through which a complex society might emerge as a narratable, intelligible whole. At once, the construction of a sudden epochal break tends to reify the short-term. As such, it blends well into the micro-timescales of election or business cycles. It fits ideologies of “disruption” in which the old is incessantly destroyed, gladly making the past a blank slate, to open new venues for “growth” or “competitiveness.” Besides, it omits that through its inflationary use the descriptor “crisis” increasingly stops to simply name an event limited in time and space. The press may have compartmentalized the overlapping emergencies of the early 21st century into regional hotspots or standalone incidents and issues (Greek crisis, wage-price spiral, local weather events, etc.). Ultimately, though, it is the ubiquity of “special crises,”<sup>2</sup> overextending the (narrative) containment measures of crisis-management, that indicates a new permanence of crisis on a global scale – alternately reflected in declinist narratives, urges to adapt to a “new normal,” yearnings for “creative destruction,” or paling genetic visions of national rebirth.

1 Olaf Scholz. “The Global *Zeitenwende*.” *Foreign Affairs*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/germany/olaf-scholz-global-zeitenwende-how-avoid-new-cold-war> [last accessed 05.02.2023]; Uri Friedmann. “The New Concept Everyone in Washington is talking about.” *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/08/what-genesis-great-power-competition/595405/> [last accessed 05.05.2022].

2 Cf. Jürgen Link. *Normalismus und Antagonismus in der Postmoderne: Krisen, New Normal, Populismus*. Göttingen. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 263.

If a prevailing “structure of feeling” (Raymond Williams) in the 2020s, then, is one of permacrisis, the key literary texts examined in this study can be read as registering its longer genealogy, tracing its emergence across the first decades of the 21st century. The entry point of my analysis will be the 2003 novella *Cosmopolis* authored by Don DeLillo (\*1936), since it negotiates the thwarted immunization of capitalism against systemic crises. Turning the market’s technologies of invisibility – “pretend[ing] not to see the horror and death at the end of the schemes it builds”<sup>3</sup> – into the subject of representation, the financial epic brings into focus an “end of history” narrative characterized through and through by the suppression of contradiction. In a similar vein, the prose of the Austrian writer Kathrin Röggla (\*1971) unearths in the language of the New Economy, the start-up jargon moulded in the post-Cold War decade, a dystopian kernel that comes into its own in the austerity programs after the 2007–9 recession. She decodes this sequence of protracted crisis-management as a “löcherstopfsystem”<sup>4</sup> that can be traced back to the increasing importance of risk-capital to the global economy since the onset of the neoliberal era. Finally, almost inversely to DeLillo, the 2014 novel *Tram 83* written by the Congolese writer Fiston Mwanza Mujila (\*1981) brings into view exactly the horror and death at the other end of global value-chains. Counteracting the mythical identification of trade with peace, the novel tells the story of a Katangese mining frontier taken apart by neoliberal programs of “structural adjustment” (Robert McNamara) respectively “shock therapy” (Jeffrey Sachs) wherein it is precisely a rules-based market order that acts as the medium of disenfranchisement and lethal force.

The literary constellation at the heart of this project, hence, makes world capitalism emerge – to put it in the words of Reza Negarestani – as a “()hole complex (with an evaporative W)” in which the surface appearances of political economy incessantly strive to exclude the dis-

3 Don DeLillo. 2003/2011. *Cosmopolis*. New York: Picador. 91.

4 Kathrin Röggla. “draußen tobt die dunkelziffer.” *besser wäre: keine: Essays und Theater*. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer. 271.

cordant forces that it at once depends on “to architectonically survive.”<sup>5</sup> Constructed as a “book[] about holes,” DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* represents the “techniques of charting” whereby the economy is made to appear as a “wholeness.”<sup>6</sup> Rögglä, again, negotiates the systematic plugging of liquidity gaps but also plot holes in the “(h)ole complex” of global capitalism, notably the expressive means whereby the “hinterbliebenen”<sup>7</sup> of permanent crisis become invisible. Her prose brings forward the in-built amnesia (“betriebsalzheimer”) of a bailout capitalism in which the primacy of intervening *in medias res* – “Auf Sicht fahren” as Angela Merkel put it – exactly lends itself to the foreclosure of structural realities. Last but not least, Mujila’s account of the violence carried out in the name of the free market re-inscribes a (neo-)colonial history of dispossession into the core of the capitalist project and, thereby, reflects on the obfuscated material basis that subtends a seemingly post-industrial economy. His writing fundamentally challenges the all-too easy split between a supposed state of normality and a state of exception. Putting the “tradition of the oppressed” at the centre of literary representation, *Tram 83* suggests that “the ‘emergency situation’ in which we live” has long been “the rule”<sup>8</sup> of capitalist globalization and it is folding in from the margins to the centre. In the texts at hand, crisis emerges as an ordinary occurrence. It is not framed as an exogenous shock to an otherwise healthy system. Rather, it gestates within the status quo whose repressive mechanisms DeLillo, Rögglä, and Mujila retrace in their “drama[s] of adjustment.”<sup>9</sup> They trace, as Joshua Clover would have it, the attempts of the capitalist powers-that-be to “make [...] whole” again “the owners of debt,” “the shareholders,” the “debauched and defaulted,” or “our

5 Reza Negarestani. *Cyclonopedia. Complicity with Anonymous Materials*. Melbourne: re:press. 48, 44. The inaudible orthographic difference between whole and hole sums up Negarestani’s notion that “void excludes solid, but solid must include void to architectonically survive.” Exploiting a gap in language, the *double entendre* suggest that the whole never just *is* but is inherently thwarted.

6 DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, 190, 85, 89, 91.

7 Kathrin Rögglä. *die alarmbereiten*. Frankfurt a. M.: fischer taschenbuch verlag. 186.

8 Walter Benjamin. “On the Concept of History.” *Selected Writings. Vol. 4 – 1938–1940*. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Eds.). Edmund Jephcott et al. (Transl.). Cambridge/London: Belknap Press. 392.

9 Lauren Berlant. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham/London: Duke University Press. 77.

brothers and sisters in the equity / and the mezzanine tranches.”<sup>10</sup> Bringing into view capitalism as a leaking whole, the literary texts analysed in this study work on the representability of early 21st century capitalism precisely in and through the displacement of systemic contradictions at the heart of the recent past and present. In documenting the adaptive effects of a regime of crisis-management which has been taking shape already before the compounding crises of the 2020s, they depict the making and updating of a dispositive of structural adjustment. That said, this introduction is going to address four pivotal aspects of this study: 1) it will offer an approximate definition and contextualization of “structural adjustment” in the recent history and *longue durée* of capitalism, which naturally requires a brief excursion into the more general features of that social formation; 2) it hopes to establish the issue of representation as integral to the making of capitalism in general and “structural adjustment” specifically, in light of which literature can be explored as a “socially symbolic act”<sup>11</sup> that is ambiguously placed within bourgeois society; 3) it wishes to delineate the space of literature in/against the neoliberal turn; and 4) it figures recent literature as a sensorium for the historical trajectory of neoliberalism. Finally, I argue that the works examined in my close readings register the authoritarian transformation of the 2020s as an actualization of long-term tendencies latent in the “family of neoliberalisms.”<sup>12</sup>

## 1 The New Normal?

In reading from literature to the broader historical context, then, a certain “capitalist catastrophism”<sup>13</sup> comes to the fore that points toward a regime of accumulation and power that governs through the management of threat multipliers. As Donald Rumsfeld put it in the early days

10 Joshua Clover. “Years of Analysis for a Day of Synthesis.” *Red Epic*. Oakland: Commune Editions. 8–9.

11 Fredric Jameson. *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Oxon: Routledge.

12 Dieter Plehwe et al. “Introduction.” *Neoliberal Hegemony: A Global Critique*. *ibid.* (Eds.). New York: Routledge. 2.

13 Kai Heron. “Capitalist Catastrophism.” *ROAR 10*. <https://roarmag.org/magazine/capitalist-catastrophism/> [last accessed 10.05.2023].

of the War on Terror, strategic thinking has become occupied with the “unknown unknown,”<sup>14</sup> that is, a condition of objective uncertainty in which control cannot be established via linear cause-and-effect patterns but only by “captur[ing] chance.”<sup>15</sup> In military theory, hence, the governance of disorder becomes paramount, while urban studies are enthralled by the “terminal condition”<sup>16</sup> of the modern metropolis. At times, military and civil management even coalesce in the elaboration of counter-insurgency models to the “challenge of slums”<sup>17</sup> that project the surge of social unrest in a warming world.<sup>18</sup> Complementarily, the discipline of logistics – the key sector of just-in-time economics – is traversed by notions of “resilience” concerned with infrastructural vulnerability that increasingly assume “a future of inevitable and worsening crisis”<sup>19</sup> which can only be minimized in its effects. In economics, again, the expectation that a crisis will soon hit is now a constant feature. If the years leading up to the Crash of 1929 or the dotcom crisis of the early 2000s were marked by a myopic euphoria – an “irrational exuberance”<sup>20</sup> in the words of former Fed chairman Alan Greenspan – the frail upturn of the 2010s<sup>21</sup> is steadily haunted by the prospect of bursting bubbles. Every boom is considered a ticking timebomb, a temporary “bezzle,” wherein “what appear[s] to be a virtuous cycle” is no more

14 Donald Rumsfeld. 2002. *Department of Defense New Briefing, February 12*. <https://archive.ph/20180320091111/http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636> [last accessed 16.03.2023].

15 David S. Alberts and Richard E. Hayes. *Power to the Edge*. Washington D.C.: CCRP Publication Series. 213; See also Brian Massumi. *Ontopower*. Durham/London: Duke University Press. 101.

16 Rem Koolhaas. “To Lagos.” *Mutations*. Bordeaux/Barcelona: Actar/Arc en Rêve. 652.

17 UN-Habitat. 2003. *The Challenge of Slums. Global Report on Human Settlements*. London: Earthscan Publications. <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/The%20Challenge%20of%20Slums%20-%20Global%20Report%20on%20Human%20Settlements%202003.pdf> [last accessed 05.07.2022].

18 Cf. David Kilcullen. *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerilla*. London: C. Hurst & Co. 102ff.

19 Stephanie Wakefield. “Infrastructures of Liberal Life: From Modernity and Progress to Resilience and Ruins.” *Geography Compass*. 6.

20 Alan Greenspan. *The Challenge of Central Banking in a Democratic Society*. Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute. <https://www.aei.org/research-products/speech/the-challenge-of-central-banking-in-a-democratic-society/> [last accessed 03.09.2022].

21 Cf. Aaron Benanav. “Crisis and Recovery.” *Phenomenal World*. <https://www.phenomenalworld.org/analysis/crisis-and-recovery/> [last accessed 03.05.2023].

than “a vicious cycle”<sup>22</sup> prone to implode. Meanwhile, climate change is taken for granted as a new condition of capitalist competition. It is subjected to a cost/benefit logic in which environmental risks are financialized in the form of “carbon markets,” “green” or “catastrophe bonds,”<sup>23</sup> and exploited for geostrategic wagers in imperialist expansion scenarios.<sup>24</sup>

The early 21st century, it seems, has given way to expert or elite discourses that resort to or take to task “crisis” as a ubiquitous category of strategic analysis. From Dick Cheney through McKinsey and Xi Jinping to Sebastian Kurz and Jens Stoltenberg: visions of a “new normal” have become commonsensical since 9/11 and the dotcom crash up through the decade following the Great Recession until the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia’s war of aggression on Ukraine, and on.<sup>25</sup> As epitomized in the 2023 World Economic Forum that was placed under the motto of “polycrisis,”<sup>26</sup> the current moment is recognized as the conjuncture of multiple interlinked global emergencies. In this, a change in the very nature of crisis becomes apparent. It morphs from a concept of discontinuity into a concept of temporal permanence. Eva Horn, therefore, introduces the notion of a “meta-crisis” – “a *catastrophe without event*” – to account for this transfiguration of the term into a vision of catastrophic continuity.<sup>27</sup> What is meant by crisis, here, is not a rupture but the continuation of the status quo. In a sense, the view that crisis is the true essence of capitalist development is not reserved anymore for radical leftists such as Walter Benjamin. The perspective of breakdown is integrated into the

22 Michael Pettis. “Why the Bezzle matters to the Economy.” *Carnegie*. <https://carnegieendowment.org/china-financial-markets/2024/02/why-the-bezzle-matters-to-the-economy> [last accessed 06.04.2026].

23 Éric Alliez and Maurizio Lazzarato. *Wars and Capital*. Ames Hodges (Transl.). Pasadena: Semiotext(e). 359–360.

24 Kai Heron et al. “For an Anti-Imperialist Ecological Modernity.” *Journal of Labour and Society*. 2ff.

25 Cf. Suman Gupta. *Political Catchphrases and Contemporary History: A Critique of New Normals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 11–45; See also Link, *Normalismus und Antagonismus in der Postmoderne*, 280–281.

26 Simon Torkington. “Polycrisis.” *World Economic Forum*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/01/polycrisis-global-risks-report-cost-of-living/> [last accessed 15.02.2023].

27 Eva Horn. *The Future as Catastrophe. Imagining Disaster in the Modern Age*. Valentine Pakis (Transl.). New York: Columbia University Press. 8.

discourses of power. It is hence that a certain logic of failure containment, which breaks with modern semantics of progress, takes over. At the latest during the 2010s “adaptation,”<sup>28</sup> as against prevention, crystallizes as a new societal leitmotif, which competes for hegemony with ideologies of coercive rupture celebrated by Musk, Milei & Co or the likes of Björn Höcke and their threat of a “wohltemperierte Grausamkeit”<sup>29</sup> – both articulating rival strategies for enforcing adjustment to intensified competitive pressures and/or systemic impasses.

In that regard, however, the notion of crisis is fundamentally disconnected from the moment of critique so central to the temporal logic of bourgeois society studied in Reinhardt Koselleck’s engagement with crisis as the “structural signature of modernity.”<sup>30</sup> It is dissolved in an apocalyptic movement without revelation (from *apokálupsis* [revelation, disclosure]). If, etymologically speaking, the notion of crisis designates an event that cuts through chronological time (from *krínein*, [to cut, to separate]), it now rather functions like an epochal term in the sense of *epokhé* (stoppage, fixed point of time). Under this aspect, though, there might be a need to take an analytic distance from the inflationary usage of the term. In a context in which capitalism “functions through crisis and even feeds on it,”<sup>31</sup> it might be more precise to identify and denote the operational logic underlying the mode of social domination in question. The “dramas of adjustment” played out in the key literary texts inspected in this treatise bring us on the right track in that respect. Working through the “tics and tremors”<sup>32</sup> in the vernacular of crisis-management, these pieces bring into view the current era of capitalism as one of perpetual “structural adjustment.” Hereby, of course, a central concept of the neoliberal tradition is evoked – theorized by Friedrich A. von Hayek and his disciples (“order is adjustment”<sup>33</sup>) and most crucially enforced by the IMF and World Bank as

28 Cf. Philipp Staab. *Anpassung. Leitmotiv der nächsten Gesellschaft*. Berlin: Suhrkamp. 13, 16ff.

29 Björn Höcke. *Nie zweimal in denselben Fluss*. Lüdinghausen/Berlin. Manuscriptum. 254.

30 Reinhart Koselleck. “Crisis.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67:2. 372, 374.

31 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. “Empire. Twenty Years On.” *New Left Review* 120. 67.

32 John Cunningham. “Notes on the Anguished Languages of Crisis.” *Anguish Language: Writing and Crisis*. John Cunningham et al. (Eds.). Berlin: Archive Books. 5.

33 Jan Tumlir. “National Sovereignty, Power and Interest.” *Ordo* 31. 24.

a doctrine of governance during the debt crises that swept the Global South at the turn to the 1980s.<sup>34</sup> In that regard, the ubiquity of crisis idioms in the language of contemporary power shows genealogical links to the governmental framework of neoliberalism which is most concisely expressed by the recurring “there is no alternative” formula coined by Margareth Thatcher and the “end of history” thesis spread at the end of the Cold War. The normalization of crisis as a natural fact of the global order is situated in the general eternalization of the capitalism pushed by the neoliberal project.

Few have expressed this more acutely than Francis Fukuyama himself, who famously claimed that capitalism had rid itself of all “fundamental contradiction[s].”<sup>35</sup> Constructing an ad-hoc teleology around the date of 1989, Fukuyama contended that it is not state socialism but democratic capitalism that has, eventually, made true on the promises of the Marxist-Leninist vanguard: it “represents the essential achievement of the classless society envisioned by Marx.”<sup>36</sup> The basic point of the neo-Hegelian philosopher, therefore, did not consist in denying “novelty” or significant events but in that there will be no “change to the deep blueprints of politics and social structure.”<sup>37</sup> The post-historic condition described by Fukuyama is a society without systemic alternatives in that the global order which emerges in the aftermath of the global U.S.-Soviet clash is characterized by the disappearance of “competing visions”<sup>38</sup> concerning the essentials of socio-economic organization. It is an epoch without “fundamental contradiction” in which everything that is left to do is adaptation to the market.<sup>39</sup> As Tony Blair postulated

34 Cf. Staab, *Anpassung*, 8, 51–52.

35 Francis Fukuyama. “The End of History?” *The National Interest* 3. 9.

36 Fukuyama, “The End of History,” 9. Fukuyama sees the defeat of communism pre-meditated in Gorbachev’s pronouncement in 1988 that “the essence of socialism” is “competition.” Thereby, the last General Secretary of the CPSU had already ceased the terrain of struggle to capital before the “Iron Curtain” had even come down.

37 Alex Hochuli, George Hoare, Philip Cunliffe. *The End of the End of History. Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. Winchester/Washington: zero books. 22.

38 Hochuli/Hoare/Cunliffe, *The End of the End of History*, 24.

39 See also Link, *Normalismus und Antagonismus in der Postmoderne*, 122–124. This is not a statement about the reality of state socialism but that the conflict itself was real. Link connects this repression of antagonism to the “postmodern,” which he proposes to define as an epoch in which “elites” presume that all systemic antagonisms have been overcome

in a variation of the mantra that there is no alternative: “You might as well debate whether autumn should follow summer.”<sup>40</sup> Foreclosing the “conflictual historical development” that preceded the end of the Cold War, at times the very “notion that we lived in a system called ‘capitalism’ receded from view.”<sup>41</sup> The global economic order is treated like a natural “environment”<sup>42</sup> that one cannot transcend but only adjust to. In the capitalist *posthistoire*, the idea of the end loses its finality. Under this aspect, the crisis-management of the recent past appears as the epitome of a mature neoliberal society in which capitalism, deemed too big to fail, is immortalized and crisis appears as a natural disaster that one must acquiesce to in another grand structural adjustment.

and any remaining conflicts do not touch the deep structures of the global system. He differentiates “geno-antagonisms” (system-immanent contradictions that are at once irreconcilable and generative of a system as such) from mere “pheno-antagonisms” which are in principle open to compromise. In that sense, he reckons that most “post”-compound nouns at the very least implicate the waning of (geno-)antagonisms. As such, the prefix “post” symptomizes the dawning of a supposed post-historical era. My analysis tends to agree with Link’s symptomatic reading. However, I argue that “neoliberalism” is a more accurate analytic category since it offers a sociological account of the underlying historical changes and attests more precisely to the specific strategic compendium but also ideological and material underpinnings of the ruling mode of governance that Link only vaguely refers to by way of “elites.”

40 Tony Blair. *Keynote Speech*. Labour Party Conference. Brighton.

41 Hochuli/Hoare/Cunliffe, *The End of the End of History*, 5.

42 Cf. Frank Ruda. “How to Act as if One Were Not Free. A Contemporary Defense of Fatalism.” *Crisis & Critique* 3, 189–190. Contrasting Badiou and Heidegger, Ruda argues that the market is treated like an environment today: “A world is a product – at least of projections and collective endeavors – whereas an environment is how it is; no transformation of it can be envisaged from within it. [...] Environments are natural and if the world [...] becomes an environment it also becomes a de-historicised entity – an entity without (and possibility) of history.”

## 2 Capitalism in the Long Run: The Moving Contradiction

Every civilization and every epoch have had their ends to history.  
— Deleuze/Guattari, “Capitalism and Desire,” 266.<sup>43</sup>

In historicizing the present, however, it is important not to lose sight of the long-term era of capitalism. For denominations such as structural adjustment or neoliberalism “can end up obscuring more than they explain” if they are “taken as descriptors of a qualitatively new historical moment, rather than as extensions of previous phases of capitalist development.”<sup>44</sup> Jacques Derrida, in that sense, recalls – in an early critique of Fukuyama – that “the eschatological themes of the ‘end of history’ [...] were in the 1950s [...] our daily bread”<sup>45</sup> already. The eternalization of capitalism, he notes, is a permanent feature of the system which has always aimed at exorcizing the spectres of an alternative society: a “future-to-come.”<sup>46</sup> As it were, the young Marx already remarked upon the “eternal laws”<sup>47</sup> invoked in the naturalization of the bourgeois order. In *Das Kapital*, too, he returns again and again to the mythologies of political economy. He satirizes the fondness for “Robinson Crusoe stories” or stories of “so-called primitive accumulation”<sup>48</sup> in bourgeois economics, both vindicating the unequal distribution of wealth by way of a morality play which contrives fictive origins for capitalism. In a similar line, still, Roland Barthes considers the conversion of “History into Nature” an emergent property of capitalism that is neither “illusory” nor “accidental.”<sup>49</sup> Describing the bourgeoisie “as the social class

43 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. “Capitalism and Desire.” *Desert Island and other Texts* (1953–1974). M. Taormina (Transl.). New York: Semiotext(e)/MIT Press.

44 Barbara Foley. *Marxist Literary Criticism Today*. London: Pluto Press. xiv.

45 Jacques Derrida. *Spectres of Marx*. Peggy Kamuf (Transl.). New York/London: Routledge. 16, 37.

46 Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, 28.

47 Karl Marx. “The Poverty of Philosophy.” *Karl Marx & Frederick Engels Collected Works Vol. 6 (1845–1848)*. Frida Knight (Transl.). London: Lawrence Wishart. 174.

48 Karl Marx. *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy. Vol. 1*. Ben Fowkes (Transl.). London: Penguin Books. 169, 873.

49 Roland Barthes. *Mythologies*. Richard Howard & Annette Lavers (Transl.). New York: Hill & Wang. 250–254.