



Time is (not) out of Joint

Inquiries on Non-Synchronicity in Times of Late Capitalism

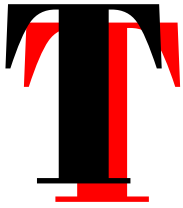
SEBASTIAN SCHULLER

In this essay, I inquire the possibilities to actualize Bloch's concept of non-synchronicity; my wager is that Bloch's thinking not only helps us to analyze our present predicament but also hints at forms of political practice which may transgress the temporal regime of late capitalism. In three interconnected steps this inquiry will at first examine the time frame of the present of late capitalism, then discuss Bloch's concept and its historical trajectory in order to synthesize both parts in a third step in which I will identify non- and hyper-synchronic structures within really existing neoliberalism. What is at stake here is the notion that we cannot simply take the contemporaneity of Bloch's thinking for granted, but that it is necessary to understand it as a non-synchronic formation in itself that nonetheless can be inserted into our contemporaneity and thus reveal immanent

contradictions which could be used by the left in and against neoliberal capitalism.

Temporal Regimes between *Hamlet* and Capitalist Realism

The time is out of joint – O cursèd spite
That I was ever born to set it right!(1)



These concluding verses of Act I, scene 5 of *Hamlet* mark a key moment of the whole play: After being visited by his father's ghost, Hamlet has resolved to take revenge on Claudius, his murderer. The line "The time is out of joint" indicates on one side that this is not only a private act but a political necessity: After the murder of the legitimate king, the state (of Denmark as well as of all things in the world, even time itself) can be compared to a limb being 'out of joint.' Hamlet as avenger plays the role of a physician who is going "to set it right," healing the social body of Denmark through the act of revenge. Yet, beneath this obvious interpretation, we find an actual experience of (narrated) time expressed in these two verses, as Jacques Derrida showed in his reading of this particular passage.(2) Hamlet's time is indeed out of joint, the chronology of the play is broken as the event – the death of the father- is rendered present time and again, inducing thereby the effect that time itself becomes dubious: "Time passes. As time passes, time passes. Instead of taking place, it disappears, it ceases to take place."(3)

I propose to decontextualize this analysis of the temporal regime of *Hamlet* and reread it as a characterization of the fundamental experience of our present predicament: Living under the impression of acceleration of daily life which becomes more and more infused in the ever faster circulation of capital mediated by new media technologies our timeline is broken down, chaotic, deprived of all linearity. We find ourselves in a situation in which the distinction between past, present and future is blurred by the haunting presence of capital. Life, reproductive time, culture and even our imaginary capacities are affected and inseparable immersed in this presence of capital which constitutes a temporal regime beyond the progress of history: The very meaning of time as the progress of history is disappearing, and with it time does indeed pass, leaving us with a broken, post-historic chronology.

In this sense, the verse "The time is out of joint" relates not only to the temporal regime of *Hamlet* but resounds in our own present temporal disorder, for which the Marxist cultural critic Mark Fisher found the term capitalist realism. In short, 'capitalist realism' does not refer to a certain

literary genre or mode of representation but describes a situation which is determined by permanent repetition of commodification.(4) The present of late capitalism is a present beyond all progress of time. Social relations, everyday practices and even our imaginary are commodified and thus rendered simultaneous with the ever accelerating movements of capital. In the words of Mark Fisher:

Work and life become inseparable. Capital follows you when you dream. Time ceases to be linear, becomes chaotic, broken down into punctiform divisions.(5)

We can observe this presentist regime of contemporary capitalism at work in all sectors of society: On a social and ideological scale, the punctiformity of time expresses itself as the loss of historicity: not only is neoliberalism embraced and affirmed as the ultimate form of a post-historic society, but history itself is set free of the idea of linear progress which could touch and transform the structure of society. Social and technological progress are disconnected, creating a situation in which dissociative, accelerating technological improvements take place in the seemingly timeless post-historicity of neoliberalism.(6) Just as Hamlet is haunted by the death of his father and thus confronted with a past that appropriates his (its) present, our punctiform, capitalist-realist present is not fully present but haunted by the non-contemporary: In the sphere of economy, for instance, trading with *futures* is a common way of accumulation which literally reverses the flow of time: While in times of industrial capitalism, an investment was made in a present to gain a profit in the future, profit is now realized *before* the act of accumulation takes place, with the result that the present (which makes use of the profit of future accumulation) arrives from the future and not from the past anymore. Thus, the present is filled with its future, the future realized before it can take place. The past, on the other hand, is not abolished either, but intrudes our present contemporaneity as well, as we can observe especially in contemporary mass culture(7): From Hollywood cinema recycling past forms (like superhero-themed movies or the countless prequels and sequels of the Star Wars franchise), through smash hits which are more or less outspoken covers of 70s or 80s songs to the stereotypical re-use of images of the middle ages in pop literature or in popular Netflix series. Cultural production not only relates to the past, but by relating to it, the past is commodified and reproduced. The past artifact is introduced into the present context as bygone yet uncannily present; the past does not speak *to* us but *like* us. Thus, the past gets re-covered in the present of capitalism, bereft of all antiquity, being but the changing-unchanging repetition of the same. Capitalism prevails as the seemingly timeless horizon of social interaction and at the same time we experience a fractured present, which is not contemporary with itself. The non-synchronic is made contemporary, the contemporary reproduces itself in the non-synchronic. Consequently, history is rendered not only unthinkable, but unthought, the progress of time is replaced by a notion of the everlasting presence of the present, which re-

presents itself as the original, timeless (and thus futureless) order of things.

Therefore, the present predicament of late capitalism is always also to be understood as a predicament of the present – a present that is not fully present, but dissolved into the fluidity of the presence of permanent commodification. In other words: The present of late capitalism is not to be thought of as a point on the timeline of historic progress but rather as a network of punctiform moments of past, present and future, rendered simultaneous. The non-synchronic does not disrupt the present, but this disruption *is in reality* that what is present in our current situation. We are thus confronted with a phenomenon already deemed a central structural problem for capitalist societies by the Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch: the synchronicity of the non-synchronic.(8)

Originally, Bloch developed his conceptualization of non-synchronicity in *Erbschaft dieser Zeit (Heritage of our Time)*, in which he undertook to analyze the emergence of National Socialism as a specific form of fascism. According to Bloch, orthodox Marxist theories of fascism fall short of explaining National Socialism as they do not take into account non-synchronicity as a characteristic (cultural) feature of capitalist societies and a driving factor for the rise and success of fascist formations.

One has one's times according to where one stands corporeally, above all in terms of classes. Times older than the present continue to effect older strata; here it is easy to return or dream one's way back to older times. [...] In general, different years resound in the one that has just been recorded and prevails.(9)

These anti-modern negations of modernity and the desires of a return to the premodern have, according to Bloch, a utopian potential, which could be used to “gain additional revolutionary force from the incomplete wealth of the past.”(10) Non-synchronicity poses against the alternative between capitalist and communist modernity the desire to return to pre-modernity, which is imagined as a golden age of organic communality.(11) Unlike the communist movement which did not address these desires and dismissed them as irrelevant and reactionary holdovers, fascist formations proved (or: proof) able to take advantage of the non-synchronic within capitalist contemporaneity by including the anti-modern in their platforms and ideologies, thus gaining popular support and ultimately power.(12)

What is at stake here is more than just a political analysis of the rise of National Socialism: While the Marxist orthodoxy of his time considered capitalist society to appear as a more or less monolithic and homogenous block, simply determined by the *basic* (read: socio-economic) contradiction of labor and capital, Bloch deliberately complicated this image: By assuming that non-synchronic residues within a capitalist society engender utopian desires and militant potentials which were used

by fascism, he implies along the line that fascism cannot be reduced to a single and basic process within capitalism, and, what is more, that capitalist society itself is rather a complex set of different and contradictory processes. (13) Regressive moments in culture and ideology, which can be traced back to objective, economic processes, as well as the persistence of anachronistic, outdated social structures or modes of production (for example handicraft as individual labor belonging to the age of feudalism) traverse the objective contemporaneity of capital and industrialized labor. These holdovers of the past are neither a mere effect of the capitalist mode of production nor do they in any way rely on the movement of capital or labor, but constitute a power of their own right; they are thus bringing forth utopian moments of a non- or pre-capitalist outside *within the space of modern capitalism* contradicting the contemporary, basic contradiction. Therefore, the social reality of capitalist societies cannot be reduced to the homogeneity of the basic contradiction, but this contradiction is in itself contradicted by the non-synchronic, resulting in a “mehrräumige Dialektik,” a ‘multi-spatial dialectics.’ (14) Beneath the surface of modernity lurk layers of the non-synchronic, which address and contradict the existing order and its contradictions, opening up new space of contradictory potential (which is neither progressive nor regressive in itself but can be used by both: regressive and progressive formations); a capitalist society is thus not to be imagined as a plain field but rather as a dynamic process in which the non-synchronic and the synchronic are intermingled.

Non-Synchronicity of/in the Present

At this point, we are meeting a problem: It may appear obvious to simply adapt this analysis to our current predicament which we already have characterized by its non-synchronicity. Yet Bloch addresses in his analysis naturally the social reality of his own time, i.e. *industrial capitalist* societies, which of course differ from today’s capitalist realism. Therefore, if we do not want to simply draw a mere homological connection between Bloch’s non-synchronicity and the structures we encounter in daily life under the temporal regime of capitalist realism, we are obliged to examine their historical interconnection. A good point of departure for this is Fredric Jameson’s seminal reading of Ernst Bloch’s concept in *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*:

[T]he postmodern must be characterized as a situation in which the survival, the residue, the holdover, the archaic, has finally been swept away without a trace. In the postmodern, then, the past itself has disappeared [...]. Ours is a more homogeneously modernized condition; we no longer are encumbered with the embarrassment of non-simultaneities and non-synchronicities. Everything has reached the same hour on the great clock of development or rationalization. (15)

Jameson’s wager is that this presence of the non-present is not only characteristic for but also limited to ‘modernity.’ In *late* capitalism on the other hand, these moments of the non-synchronic have disappeared. Late capitalism, setting itself as the ultimate horizon of the thinkable, has

engulfed and internalized all non-synchronicities, resulting in a regime of capitalist synchronicity; the present predicament (of postmodernity in Jameson's analysis) is a predicament of the latent presence of capital engendering a temporal homogenization, dissolving all "holdovers" of the non-synchronic premodern. (16) Yet, although the non-synchronic no longer interrupts the synchronic present, it has not completely disappeared but still functions as a virtual point of reference: The very notion of the postmodern relies on the prevalence of the category of an exterior which was *going* to be internalized but is not yet and not completely integrated into late capitalist simultaneity. (17) *Postmodernism*, in other words, is to be understood in contrast to modernity as the dissolution of the non-synchronic which is negated by late capitalist simultaneity but therefor also preserved as (even virtual) category of the negation.

This touches the main difference between our current predicament and the 'early' period of late capitalism: Jameson, analyzing the cultural logic of 'early' late capitalism, is still able to elaborate on the predicament of postmodernity by meaningfully relating to its other and exterior, while in our present, more than a quarter of a century after the publication of *Postmodernism*, the very category of the exterior has disappeared. We find the general structures and ideological machines of postmodernism still functioning and at work, but the whole setting is 'naturalized,' in the sense that the conditions of postmodernity are embedded in the fabric of psycho-social ideality. Not only is the future cancelled, but the sense of futurity and thus the very idea of historical change dissolved, resulting in a perceived eternal present of capitalism which does not need and cannot know a significant past or future. (18) Hence, the negation of modernity (and thus the non-synchronic) does no longer take place, as Mark Fisher notes:

Capitalist realism no longer stages this kind of confrontation with modernism. On the contrary, it takes the vanquishing of modernism for granted: modernism is now something that can periodically return, but only as frozen aesthetic style, never as an ideal for living. (19)

All is now. Past, present and future are rendered simultaneous, resulting in a 'present' that can be described as the simultaneity of punctiform moments within the network of post-historic capital accumulation. This present or rather: constant now of capital constitutes a capitalist interior which does not negate but integrate and thus liquidate its outside. Capitalist realism does not dismiss the non-synchronic, but moments of non-synchronicity are integrated in capitalist realism's now. (20) This, however, does not mean that the non-synchronic, *dissident* contradiction, Bloch examined, simply returns. The *capitalist-realist* synchronicity of the non-synchronic we are confronted with does neither engender a utopian dynamic nor result in a multi-spatial dialectics, but the non-synchronic appears as a constitutive moment of the absolute synchronicity of capitalism. The non-synchronic is not simply beyond and separated from the present, but it is re-presented within the social space of a present society, and thus rendered present; it denotes no actual

reality before a current reality but is constructed in relation to the present.

Capitalism as a socio-economic formation breaks down the present and at the same time integrates past formation into the permanent repetition of accumulation and thus reproduction of its own untimely conditions.⁽²¹⁾ The complex non-synchronicity of our present predicament is thus not only to be understood as a cultural phenomenon but also as an expression or rather: *the realization* of an immanent tendency of capitalism, already described by Karl Marx: Capital must, if we follow Marx, constantly reproduce itself and its formation, i. e.: it must realize a produced surplus-value by transforming it to capital, which means to expand the sphere of production. ⁽²²⁾ If capital cannot expand its very conditions are annihilated. The capitalist⁽²³⁾ has to realize the produced surplus value by accumulating it, this means by introducing the produced commodities into circulation and by re-investing the revenue to enhance productivity; if this is not possible, if capital cannot be accumulated the system fails, it needs to expand (ibid.). In other words, capital is not to be confused with simple fortune or any form of treasure: Quite the opposite, it is a constant process of accumulation and production and, what is more, of expansion. Capital can never be static, but must constantly expand, i.e.: subsume its exterior and transform it according to its own structures.

In general, capital can only expand in two dimensions, as Marx already described in his *Grundrisse*: space and time.

The more production comes to rest on exchange value, hence on exchange, the more important do the physical conditions of exchange – the means of communication and transport – become for the costs of circulation. Capital by its nature drives beyond every spatial barrier. Thus the creation of the physical conditions of exchange – of the means of communication and transport – the annihilation of space by time – becomes an extraordinary necessity for it.
⁽²⁴⁾

On the spatial axis, expansion of capital means the ongoing formal subsumption of a non-capitalist outside, on the temporal axis, expansion is realized by intensifying and thus accelerating the circulation of capital. In a highly developed stage of capitalism, these two axes or forms of capitalist expansion tend to fall together: What happens is, in short, that capitalism acts at first expansive, it subsumes its literal, spatial outside, foreign markets, etc. Yet, obviously there is a natural limit to this form of spatial expansion, capital cannot expand eternally. Therefore, after most or even the whole world is capitalized, capitalism will expand intensively. Space gets annihilated by time which implies at first and obviously that space is no longer the dominant category for capitalism in its developed stage. The reason for this is, second, that time itself becomes the space of capital accumulation, or in other words: Space is curved and organized

around the acceleration of capital accumulation, resulting in a space-time of capitalism: space – the interior of a capitalized world – is internalized by the ever growing and ever accelerating accumulation drive of capital. Life, reproductive time, culture and even our imaginary capacities are immersed into the sphere of capital accumulation. To use a psychoanalytic metaphor, Marx himself hints at in this passage, this space-time of developed, i. e.: late capitalism is the setting of the realization of the original ‘drive’ (understood in the Freudian sense as an inner-somatic stimulus) of capital itself. (25) It “drives beyond every spatial barrier” “by its own nature.” Under the conditions of late capitalism, when there is almost no non-capitalist exterior left into which capital could expand, the expansion of the sphere of capital becomes intensive, colonizing the interior of society. The acceleration of the circulation of capital negates the category of space, dissolving distance into time, restructuring the interior of societies by inducing the whole of social reality into the spatialized time of capital.

This results in new, decisively capitalist realist forms of synchronicity of the non-synchronic: Not only are societies immersed in processes of globalization, but the structural logic of capital accumulation, the ‘accumulation drive’ so to speak, becomes the inner drive of the social formation itself. The capitalist compulsion to repeat incessantly the primal act of accumulation and expropriation is realized as the very and only horizon and *structuring principle* of social life. Hence, the intensive expansion of late capitalism constitutes the described permanent present beyond all progress of time, where commodification repeats itself again and again not only within the present but also in the non-synchronic. Past and future become accumulated and thus integrated into the space-time of capital, which means, turned around, that the accumulation drive of capital realizes itself by immersing the non-synchronic into the synchronicity of permanent late capitalist space time. Past and future become *sites* of capital expansion, and thus cease to be anachronistic interruptions of the present, invading it from beyond our time; instead, they are non-synchronic in a dialectical sense, belonging not *in* our time but still *to* the present as spaces within the space-time of capitalism. And this means, we encounter at the place of historical progress only the repeated variation of a commodified, capitalist present.

At this point, we can return to the *Hamlet*-passage from which we departed: The moment, Hamlet realizes that the state of things and thus order of time is disturbed, he acknowledges also that there is no longer a future in the sense of possible alternatives from which he could choose. (26) Being immersed in a time-frame out of joint, he has no ‘free,’ i.e. *alternate* choice and thus has to act in compliance with this utter denial of alternatives. For us (not unlike Hamlet), time is not only out of joint because past, present and future are fused together in (capitalist) post-historicity, but also because all possible (and thinkable) alternatives to it have disappeared. In fact: The non-synchronic which could in Bloch’s lifetime still constitute a site of resistance to capitalism within capitalist contemporaneity has not disappeared but finds itself

engulfed and internalized by capitalist synchronicity. The progress of history is disrupted, and in this disruption we find ourselves in an interplay of past, present and future, which have become simultaneous with the flow of capital. Our time does not go by, it is gone, all utopian dreams, even our imagination, culture and the aesthetic have been synchronized with the needs of an eternal present of the market.

Hyper-Synchronic Interruptions of Capitalist Realism

Such a diagnosis of our predicament might sound pessimistic or even claustrophobic, however it does neither mean that all hope is lost, nor that Blochian Marxism, relying on an emphasis on the utopian moment within capitalism, would be of no relevance today. On the contrary, the liquidation of the utopian moment of non-synchronicity opens up the possibility of actualizing Bloch's concept in order to save it from turning into an empty gesture or the mere catchphrase of 'combined and uneven development.' This thought resounds with Bloch's own re-reading of his concept of *Ungleichzeitigkeit*, which he undertook roughly 25 years after the publication of *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* in his (unfortunately still untranslated) *Tübinger Einleitung in die Philosophie*:

Durchaus unberührt von solchem Rücklauf zeigen sich die herrschenden Gleichzeitigen, die Männer up to date. [...] Ungleichzeitig ist hier freilich gar nichts mehr, doch auch nichts die Zeit bewußt überholend, also übergleichzeitig.

(27)

[The ruling contemporaries, those men called up to date, appear untouched by such forms of regression [...]. There is no non-synchronic anymore, yet there is neither anything that would consciously overtake time, and that means: be hyper-synchronic. Trans. by the author.]

Bloch makes a double-fold point: First, he states that indeed the uncontemporary residue of the past in the present, albeit still existing, has lost its utopian potential both for the left and the ruling class. Non-synchronicity does no longer generate antagonisms and contradictions which could be used in anti-communist, fascist politics; it is no longer of use for the ruling class, which is simply and plainly contemporary with itself. In consequence, Bloch indicates that his analysis in *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* does no longer address a contemporary situation.

Yet this does not mean that contemporaneity is simply contemporary in his eyes; instead there are yet to be realized latencies of the future inscribed in the present, which have to be developed against the ruling class. We can turn this point around: Contemporaneity is not fully contemporary, but, to go back to a famous metaphor of Marx, future is awaiting its time inside 'the womb of the old society.'⁽²⁸⁾ Therefore, to be only up to date, means to be behind history, for what is only synchronic is in reality non-synchronic with itself, that is: with its own latent potentials. Technological progress, the development of human

productivity and the overall acceleration of life through intensive expansion of capital have brought us to the point, where the capitalist structures of society are mere anachronisms – yet anachronisms which re-present themselves as the ultimate horizon of reality in which all social progress is criminalized and rendered unthinkable. Capitalism itself is non-synchronic, it is atavistic, non-contemporary with the possibility of human productivity. Our present is not only suspended from history's linearity but also and more: it is non-synchronic with itself: Internalized by the space of capital capitalist contemporaneity lags behind time; capital can still expand and intensify its grip on space and time, but it loses its creative potential with the ongoing dissolution of historical progress. It can neither engender new utopian projects (as it was the case with neoliberalism), nor significantly guarantee a future, but is only able to reproduce a constant present which is extended into shreds of the future and the past. As non-synchronicity becomes the essence of capitalist reality, capitalism itself becomes non-synchronic.

Bloch's conclusion which he does only mention *en passant*, is that it is still necessary to repeat the dialectical operation he proposed in *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* and turn non-synchronicity against itself, using its potentiality as a way to overcome both the past and the present for the sake of futurity: to be, in Bloch's words, *hyper-synchronic (übergleichzeitig)*. This can be transferred to our situation: We can understand the capitalist present as non-synchronic in itself, forming an obstacle for the march of history. Therefore, the original utopian and thus revolutionary operation in late capitalism's present would be, to be more present than the present, i. e. to recognize the concrete potencies of the present which already belong to the future, demanding their realization and thus interrupt the present by exposing it as non-synchronic with itself.⁽²⁹⁾ This means in consequence, to break through both the idea of a constant, linear progress of time and the history-free time-space of late capitalism: Instead, the present is to be understood as the place of the objectively possible, concrete utopian, which is a still to be realized actuality.

The consequence of this thought is to negate on the one hand major tendencies within the contemporary mainstream left: Non-synchronicity defines the very structure of the existing mode of neoliberal late capitalism, dissolving the horizon of a possible future in the constant and repeated mutual appropriation of past and present. The left tends to take this seriously, discussing again and again possible ways to restore a utopian perspective for our supposedly futureless society. Following Bloch, one has to outright negate such attempts: The utopian has not to be restored as it is already an immanent and essential part of the existing non-synchronicity. What is there tends already towards the future, while it is precisely the *contemporary* social and ideological formation that is lagging behind time. This means that all attempts to break *out* of capitalist realist space-time (be it in form of anti-capitalist movements desiring to create spaces outside of global capitalism, be it in form of local, often individual acts) are to be deemed regressive and thus counter-

productive; instead of any attempt to break out of our present predicament, it would be necessary to overtake capitalist realism by realizing the hyper-synchronic tendencies that already have broken *in* our non-synchronic contemporaneity.

On the other side, one should not confuse such an act with the (vain and oftentimes openly reactionary) operations of (left and right) accelerationism hoping for the spontaneous self-evolution of capital. (30) To assume that there is a concrete utopian potential buried within the real existing capitalist now is quite different from thinking of capitalist realism as utopian in itself; if we follow the adaption of the Blochian notion of non-synchronicity for capitalist realism, I proposed above, we must describe capitalism as a non-synchronic contradiction against the actual 'synchronicity' of the not yet realized hyper-synchronic tendencies. "Capitalism," as writes Samo Tomšič, "[...] needs to be thought of as the restoration of pre-modernity within modernity, a counter-revolution [...]." (31) This should be taken literal: There are indeed *hyper-synchronic* moments within our capitalist realist now, technological and social possibilities, which *could* constitute a revolutionary, post-capitalist modernity. But these are hindered by the synchronicity of capitalism. Just as Bloch indicated in his *Tübinger Einleitung in die Philosophie*, the contemporary (meaning: the contemporary mode of production) is in itself outdated, non-synchronic. In order to overcome it, we have to take sides with the hyper-synchronic so as to abolish the 'pre-contemporary' which still holds it back. Therefore, it is necessary to organize political practices which fight the contemporary present to open up the possibility space of its hyper-synchronic latencies and tendencies.

We can see such a practice at work in the *gilets jaunes* movement in France: The movement, far from being a centralized and organized uprising, expresses paradoxical demands; protestors are demanding *at the same time* the lowering of the price of gasoline and a more ecological state policy, they want the decrease of income taxes while fighting for the increase of social welfare expanses. These contradictory demands should not be misinterpreted as a paradoxical self-contradiction of the movement itself; *au contraire*, it is the immanent contradiction of late capitalism itself which becomes apparent in these demands. There are indeed technological means to, for instance, enhance public transportation (think for example of hyper speed systems like the transrapid-monorail or the hyperloop-system), but they cannot be realized within the present system. In other words: within the concrete capitalist present, demands are generated as well as the means, to meet them. However, capitalism itself, even though it creates these means, cannot realize their inner potential. Thus, the self-contradictory demands of the *yellow vests* are an expression of the deadlock of the non-synchronic capitalist present; there are no hyper-synchronic moments left in capitalism itself, it has lost its ability to create a future or at least a vision of the future, which is why all political formations operating within capitalist realism proof unable up to this point at least, to meet

the demands of the protests or even address them in any meaningful way, as they simply cannot be addressed without questioning the *status quo* itself. The *yellow vests* are bringing the non-synchronicity of our present to the surface of history by addressing these small moments of hyper-synchronic utopian demands embedded within everyday life, and they do so by repeating the cultural act of reintroducing and re-appropriating the past for the present: They heavily rely on the imaginary of French Revolution, even setting up a guillotine, thus using re-presentation of a non-synchronic past to illustrate their hyper-synchronic demands. The past stays past and is made present, rendering on one side the hyper-synchronic qualities of our present thinkable and restoring on the other a notion of history and historic agency, and thus futurity. The possibility space of history is opened within and at the same time against capitalist space time, unearthing the utopian possibilities of the now.

This leads us in conclusion to a dissident (third) interpretation of the Hamlet quote: As dissidents of the temporal regime, we might understand that Hamlet, although he is deprived of any choices, can at least act (as avenger that is) because he has realized that time is out of joint. In contrast, our capitalized time may *appear* to be out of joint but *in reality* it is not yet. It still flows, bound to the circulation of capital; the present has still a presence. Therefore, in difference to Hamlet, we are not here, to set it right, but to disturb, interrupt it, in order to expose its non- and utopian hyper-synchronicity. A Marxist re-reading of Bloch's concept of non-synchronicity and thus an actualization of Bloch's Marxism can help us, to think and organize such hyper-synchronic interruptions of the non-synchronic space-time of capital, and thus turn non-synchronicity against itself, in order to re-establish the notion and possibility of a utopian futurity and this means: the non-synchronic project of the liberation of humankind.

SEBASTIAN SCHULLER

Sebastian Schuller received his doctorate from Ludwig Maximilian University, Germany for a thesis on Marxist Literary Theory in the Age of Globalisation in 2020. Schuller, who is currently preparing a PostDoc-project, has published in the fields of Marxist literary theory, Hip-hop-studies, popular culture, and Bertolt Brecht studies. Schuller has edited an anthology on the rise of the Alt-Right in Germany, *Die Zeit der Monster* (2018) and is co-author of an anthology on the cultural and political implications on the current COVID-19 pandemic (*Social Analysis and the COVID-19 Crisis: A Collective Journal*, 2020).

NOTES

1. William Shakespeare: *Hamlet. Prince of Denmark*. Ed. Philip Edwards. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003, 126.

2. Cf. Jacques Derrida: "Time is out of Joint." *Deconstruction is/in America. A new Sense of the Political*. Ed. Anselm Haverkamp, New York: New York UP, 1994, 19–23.
3. Derrida, "Time is out of Joint" 23.
4. Cf. Alison Shonkwiler and Leigh Claire La Berge: "Introduction: A Theory of Capitalist Realism." *Reading Capitalist Realism*. Ed. Alison Shonkwiler and Leigh Claire La Berge. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2014, 2–4.
5. Mark Fisher: *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* London: zero Books, 2009, 34.
6. Cf. Elena Esposito: "Die Konstruktion von Unberechenbarkeit." *Der Zeitkomplex. Postcontemporary*. Ed. Armen Avanessian and Suhail Malik. Berlin: Merve, 2016, 39–40.
7. I use the term mass culture in the sense Stuart Hall proposed: A field of antagonisms between consumers, forms of subcultures and cultural industrial processes, all struggling to organize hegemony. Cf. Stuart Hall: "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'." *Cultural Theory. An Anthology*. Ed. Imre Szeman and Timothy Kaposy. Malden and London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 73–77.
8. It should be noted that Bloch did not invent or coin the term, which was first introduced by the reactionary art historian Wilhelm Pinder in his monograph *Das Problem der Generation in der Kunstgeschichte Europas*, published 1929 (cf. Wilhelm Pinder: *Das Problem der Generation in der Kunstgeschichte Europas*. Frankfurt: Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt, 1926, 11–22). Yet, Bloch re-interpreted the concept of *Ungleichzeitigkeit* and showed in *Heritage of our Time* that it can serve as a useful instrument to understand the rise of fascism and especially national socialism, thereby introducing it into the Marxist discourse.
9. Ernst Bloch: "Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to its Dialectics." *New German Critique* 11 (Spring 1977). Trans. Mark Ritter, 23.
10. Bloch, "Nonsynchronism" 38.
11. Cf. Ernst Bloch: *Tübinger Einleitung in die Philosophie. Werkausgabe*. Vol. 13. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970, 114–122.
12. Ibid.
13. Cf. Bloch, *Tübinger Einleitung* 104–115.
14. Ernst Bloch: *Erbschaft dieser Zeit. Werkausgabe*. Vol. 4. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962, 118.
15. Fredric Jameson: *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1991, 309–310.
16. Cf. *ibid.* 313–318.
17. Cf. Fisher, *Capitalist Realism* 8–10.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid. 8.

20. Cf. Armen Avanesian and Suhail Malik: "Der Zeitkomplex." *Der Zeitkomplex. Postcontemporary*. Ed. Armen Avanesian and Suhail Malik. Berlin: Merve, 2016, 7–12.
21. Cf. *ibid.* 21–24.
22. Cf.: Karl Marx: *Capital*. Vol.1. London: Penguin Books, 1992, 25.
23. Capitalism is in the most basic sense characterized by the division of and contradiction between collectively organized labor and private appropriation of the produced surplus value by an instance of capital, be it a capitalist in flesh and blood, or, more common these days, an anonymous fund. If I speak of 'capitalist,' I therefore use this term in the sense of any private (i.e., not collectively owned, public) entity owning means of production, if a personal capitalist or a fund or a bank.
24. Karl Marx: *Economic Manuscripts: Grundrisse*. Trans. Martin Nicolaus. London: Penguin Books, 1973, 524.
25. Cf. Samo Tomšič: *The Capitalist Unconscious. Marx and Lacan*. New York: Verso, 2015, 211–229.
26. Cf. Derrida, "Time is out of Joint" 19–23.
27. Bloch (1970), 91.
28. Cf. Karl Marx: *Critique of the Gotha Programme. Selected Works*. Vol. 3. Trans. S. W. Ryazanskaya. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970, 23.
29. Cf. Bloch, *Tübinger Einleitung* 90–100.
30. Cf. Avanesian and Malik, *Der Zeitkomplex* 15–24.
31. Tomšič, *The Capitalist Unconscious* 235.