

Dromology of Nihilism: Capitalism, Acceleration, Thinking

Mykola Lipin (ORCID 0000-0003-0940-088X)

State University of Trade and Economics (Ukraine)

Nataliia Husieva (ORCID 0000-0002-6062-6406)

State University of Trade and Economics (Ukraine)

The purpose of the article is to study the relationship between nihilism and acceleration in the conditions of late capitalism. The nihilistic essence of accelerating reality, which is initiated by the intensive dynamics of the innovative economy, is revealed. It is shown that in the space dominated by capitalism, nihilism unfolds as a force of emancipation, which makes it impossible to turn to authority, values or tradition in the secular world. On the contrary, such treatment only masks real nihilism under the mask of fighting it. The article considers options for determining modernity based on nihilism, war and thought. The assumption is justified, according to which, in the conditions of turning speed and mobility into new definitions of freedom, slowing down the work of thinking is able to neutralize the nihilistic potential for accelerating information and digital reality. Modern nihilism no longer involves the implementation of the project of reappraisal of values, it turns the desert as a embodied human ability to be meaningless and absent, as an ideal scheme of annihilation of human individuality, desolation (devastation), which destroys the future and presupposes atrophy of cultural memory. A "nihilistic society" can exist only under conditions of constant acceleration. It is a society that defines itself as a network of power relations, as an order in which war smoulders at its foundation. One metaphor for war is economic competition, determined by the inertia of a drive toward extremes. This competition demands the acceptance of forced acceleration as a necessary condition for survival in a world of unending war of all against all. Nihilism makes the distinction between peace and war nearly imperceptible. The acceleration it thrives on is simultaneously an intrinsic feature of war.

The intensity of modern warfare enables the minimization of interpersonal interaction on the battlefield, enhancing the "natural" dehumanization of the enemy through the technological mediation of violence. War, by exposing the latent "escalation to extremes" in the capitalist mode of production, routinizes violence and establishes nihilism as the only "realistic" worldview.

KEYWORDS

*nihilism,
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acceleration,
speed,
capitalism,
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slowdown,
modernity*

Introduction

In the XXI century, being modern means constantly accelerating, growing and renewing yourself. Speed and mobility are established in our time as the main values of human existence, which is simultaneously accompanied by the annihilation of social time (the time of human development). As a result, modernity becomes not a temporal, but a spatial metaphor. "Time has become a perpetual present and thuspatial. Our relationship to the past is now as *pastalone*" (Jameson, 2007: 47). The deformation of the mechanisms of individualization of social time problematizes the functioning of socio-cultural memory, as a result of which society remains a political image and no longer seeks to surpass itself, and human life ceases to correspond to the content of social development.

Under these conditions, the permanent urge to novelty is wrapped up in the eternal repetition of the desolate form of the same thing. The place of social development is occupied by acceleration: "faster" becomes the synonym of better, mobility – the synonym of freedom. In the "dromological society" that at the end of the XIX century was diagnosed by F. Nietzsche (1967) as nihilism, in the second half of the twentieth century was described by A. Toffler

(1970) as a "shock of the future". The speed under which everything only succeeds to be just the beginning of the end, today not so much destroys traditional methods of rooting, but turns them into empty heads, which confirms the relevance of the warning made at the dawn of the last century: "The deserts grow: woe him who does them hide!" (Nietzsche, 2006: 248).

The article attempts to study acceleration as a significant characteristic of modernity, to identify its foundations, as well as their relationship with the expansion of nihilism in information and digital reality.

Research methods

The research was carried out using a critical approach, general philosophical principles of objectivity and historicism, theoretical generalization, comparative analysis, which made it possible to identify the significance of classical forms of thought for understanding Christianity in the parameters of the accelerating world.

Results and Discussion

Starting with F. Nietzsche (1967) and M. Heidegger (1991) there is an influential tradition to describe modernity



as a process of unfolding Christianity and “attempt at a revaluation of all values” (*Nietzsche, 1968: 3*). In our time, the destruction of traditional meaning-forming orientations of society is interpreted, first, as one of the fundamental causes of the crisis of Western civilization (*Russ, 1998*) and as a liberating force for human (*Badiou, 1999*). Similarly, speed appears in modern research simultaneously as the reality-absorbing nihilistic energy of capitalism (*Byron, 2019; Honore, 2009*) and, at the same time, as the possibility of overcoming the limitations of the established system of power (*Rosales, 2014*) that is incomprehensible to it. As a result, both apologists for capitalism and its critics agree that “the faster, the better”. In one case, we are talking about the fact that we must hurry for our time, in the other case, that we must catch up with it.

Capitalism as a force of acceleration

In our opinion, the acceleration of technological, socio-political, cultural and economic processes today, as well as a hundred years ago, is still determined by the logic of the functioning of capitalism. So, for example, J.-F. Lyotard (1984) described back in 1979 a new type of social organization (post-industrial society) and its inherent culture (postmodern) as a movement towards even greater efficiency and operationalization of the principles of capitalism, in the parameters of which the main criterion for selecting knowledge is its effectiveness and productivity.

The influence exerted on the status of knowledge by the emergence of capitalism and technology is represented in the sources of the unfolding of nihilism and the loss of legitimacy by classical metanarratives of the XIX century. The rapid spread of scientific knowledge was the result of the spread of technological progress and the expansion of capitalism, which, in turn, became possible due to the nihilistic destruction of ideas about the existence of objective reality and universal truth.

For the birth of modern science and capitalism, it was necessary to launch what J.-F. Lyotard (1984) defined as a “lack of reality” procedure. The consequence of the action of which was the belief in the existence of only such a reality, which is established as a result of consensus between multiple partners. There is no other, as J.-F. Lyotard (1984) believed, reality guaranteed by metaphysical, political, or religious metanarratives. Consequently, the condition for the development of science and capitalism is doubt about the legitimacy of the existing reality, the constant invention of its new images and models. “The objects and the thoughts which originate in scientific knowledge and the capitalist economy convey with them one of the rules which supports their possibility: the rule that there is no reality unless testified by a consensus between partners over a certain knowledge and certain commitments. ... No industry is possible without a suspicion of the Aristotelian theory of motion, no industry without a refutation of corporatism, of mercantilism, and of physiocracy. Modernity, in whatever age it appears, cannot exist without a shattering of belief and without discovery of the “lack of reality” of reality, together with the invention of other realities” (*Lyotard, 1984: 77*).

In this context, it is worth paying attention to the study of G. Vattimo (1988), which analyzes the transformation of nihilism in postmodern culture. Based on the Nietzsche-Heidegger tradition, G. Vattimo defines nihilism as a loss of faith in objective truth (*Vattimo, 2002: 120*). Moving in the context of the theory of delegitimization of metanarratives, G. Vattimo (1991) interprets postmodernism in terms of “the end of modernity”, that is, the inability to fit the multiplicity of

manifestations of human life into a universal temporal context. With this in mind, G. Vattimo (1991) captures the need for distinction of “modern” and “postmodern” nihilism. One of the most important differences between them is the formation of “modern” nihilism around the idea of progress, based on which the task of self-overcoming nihilism is affirmed. “Modern nihilism” appears as a tool for clearing social space from the remnants of traditional society in order to build a new, better society in their place. Nihilism of F. Nietzsche (1967) can be interpreted as an example of just such “modern” nihilism, because the destruction of higher, metaphysical values is carried out by it in order to establish new, true values of life.

Instead “postmodern” nihilism, which unfolds in line with the affirmation of the end of ideas about universal history, cannot be overcome (*Vattimo, 1991*). If history cannot be considered as a linear process, then the linear history of nihilism also becomes questionable. Outside of the idea of progress, the act of overcoming nihilism cannot be thought of as a transition to a new period of enlightenment, and therefore overcoming nihilism cannot be adequately represented. From this point of view, only the totalitarian claim to universalism remains outside of nihilism. In a post-metaphysical situation, nihilistic thinking becomes “our only chance” (*Vattimo, 1988: 20*). Nihilism in its postmodern definition is complete nihilism, and postmodernism can then be considered as a “nihilistic society” and as the “end of history” (*Woodward, 2002: 65*).

In this context, it is nihilism that is declared a prerequisite for maintaining the groundlessness and uncertainty that ensure the realization of the possibility of freedom. Instead of looking for a new solid foundation, G. Vattimo (2004) defines the prospects for emancipation from the standpoint of nihilism. Consequently, “it is the dissolution of foundations, – as G. Vattimo insists, – that brings freedom” (*Vattimo, 2004: xxvi*).

Consequently, the replacement of ideas about an unchanging, objective and stable existence with the concepts of “weak ontology” becomes the key to the formation of a democratic and tolerant society. J. Caputo and G. Vattimo (2007) as well as J.-F. Lyotard (1984), see in “power of de-realize” the possibility of emancipation. The intersubjective world, which is constituted on these principles, appears as a space of endless competition, constant struggle and conflict of interpretations, which leads to the maximum convergence of hermeneutics and nihilism, relativism and innovation (*Vattimo, 1992*).

The existence of modern society is determined by the extensive logic of the existence of capitalism and therefore is closely interrelated with such phenomena as mobility, speed and destruction. When instrumental “purposefulness without a goal” becomes the main way of functioning of the socio-economic system of spontaneous order, then “creative destruction” acquires the right to exist as a reverse dimension of accelerated production. Starting from the understanding of innovation as “creative destruction” and up to the idea of the need for “organizational liquidation” (*Drucker, 2001*) or “planned aging of goods” (*Slade, 2006*), an opinion is established about the transience, fluidity and fragility of the existing state of affairs. Accordingly, the duty of everyone who strives to remain modern is forced acceleration. Today, one of the easiest ways to be on the sidelines of a “world without periphery” is slowdown. In an “overheated” globalized world, stopping is tantamount to death (*Eriksen, 2016*).

But in the acceleration of reality provoked by capitalism lies the possibility of freedom and thinking. Destruction of social ties of traditional society, from the point of view of

A. Badiou, is a credit to capitalism. The acceleration of reality breaks "the traditional figure of the bond" (*Badiou, 1999: 55*). It is the abstract power of capital that makes any symbolic sanction for sacred communication impossible and asserts the principles of social atomism. In this sense, A. Badiou recognizes that our era testifies to the dominance of nihilism. "If one takes «nihilism» to mean desacralization. Capital, whose planetary reign is beyond any doubt ... is certainly the only nihilistic potency of which men have succeeded in being the inventors as well as the prey" (*Badiou, 1999: 56*)

However, A. Badiou in "Manifesto for Philosophy" uses the term "nihilism" mainly in quotation marks: in fact, he wrote, our era is neither technical nor nihilistic (*Badiou, 1999: 57*). On the contrary, we still lack the technology to solve many problems, and we still cannot get rid of references to "Sacred Presence" and "symbolic connection". In this sense, modernity is still insufficiently "nihilistic". Until recently, according to A. Badiou, philosophy didn't know "how to think in level terms with Capital, since it has left the field open, to its most intimate point, to vain nostalgia for the sacred, to obsession with Presence, to the obscure dominance of the poem, to doubt about its own legitimacy" (*Badiou, 1999: 58*). Based on the ambiguity of the term "nihilism", A. Badiou believes that it can be used to refer to any phenomenon in the modern world. "Nihilism" is a least-worst signifier" (*Badiou, 1999: 58*).

But in his other work *Ethics: an Essay on the Understanding of Evil* A. Badiou (2002) sees the symptoms of nihilism (without quotation marks) in modern society in the dominance of ethics.

We should go even further, and say that the reign of ethics is one symptom of a universe – ruled by a distinctive (singuliere) combination of resignation in the face of necessity together with a purely negative, if not destructive, will. It is this combination that should be designated as nihilism (*Badiou, 2002: 30*).

The reverse side of blind necessity, which A. Badiou indicates as "economics" or "logic of Capital", the will to nothingness arises. Moreover, this will can be asserted despite, and sometimes even due to, the intensification of industrial activity of individuals. After all, the "objective" necessity established by the mechanism of the market economy automates the productive activity of a person, that is, it seems to pass by their integral presence.

Today, the self-esteem of speed and accelerated transformation turns nihilism against itself. In the beginning, nihilism cleared space for the expansion of capitalism and scientific and technological progress, but today it neutralizes the liberating power of interpretation. The destructive power of nihilism is not directed at its own source, it does not emancipate a person from the dogmas of capitalism. We are talking about the fact that the growth rate of socioeconomic transformations weakens individual and collective opportunities for their theoretical understanding. Acceleration, which, for example, is particularly powerfully represented by modern information and communication technologies, leads to the fact that events and phenomena begin to be present simultaneously everywhere and, the next moment, they cease to exist, losing their own relevance: they are replaced by other news, new information messages, new signs and symbols. Information technologies make it possible to rotate capital in "real time". Information circulates just as quickly on the network. But "real time" paralyzes a person and therefore makes them unable to think and make responsible decisions. "We live in an era

of sound-bites, not thoughts: ephemera calculated for maximum impact and instant obsolescence" (*Bauman, Don-skis, 2013: 46*).

The speed of information circulation is determined by the rate of transformation of information into a product. The value of information is temporary, which determines its impact on the temporal modes of existence of society. From the point of view of B. Stiegler (2018), the temporal nature of information distinguishes it from actual knowledge or work, the value of which is not determined by time. Information, being a commodity, correlates time and value and opens up new forms of temporality. The circulation of news in information networks is doomed to accelerate because their value depends on time. The production, dissemination and disposal of information necessarily tends to acquire the speed of light, that is, to turn into a continuous information stream of self-destruction, because the functioning of information is based on the principle of instant oblivion. It has a limited shelf life, and therefore the speed of its distribution is so important: information has value only because it loses it.

In the context of the establishment of the hegemony of continuous information flow, there is no longer a clear distinction between the lessons of the past and the prospects for the desired future, for which it is worth carrying out creative destruction. The current situation confirms the necessity of the imperative of late capitalism: to be in this information world, you need to accelerate. Therefore, the speed that turns into a self-sufficient process is carried out only by the "tyranny of the moment" (*Eriksen, 2001*). The speed of information messages that occur "in real time" paralyzes the ability of individuals to adequately perceive the world around them. There is no time left for interpretation (not to mention understanding) in the era of information technology dominance. Just as there is no subject left who can tame this time that has gone out of the rut of history. It's happening too fast. A person is deprived of the opportunity to think freely and critically, they are paralyzed by speed, and turns out to be passive (*Obrist, Virilio, 1991*).

Consequently, most researchers agree that "capitalism fulfills itself as the advent of nihilism" (*Stiegler, 2011: 137*). The formation of capitalism occurs through the transformation of the ratio of time and technology. In the context of the development of capitalism, the metabolism between human and nature is constantly accelerating. It can only function thanks to the dynamics of constant acceleration. "If any system has been associated with ideas of acceleration it is capitalism" (*Srnicek, Williams, 2013: 135-155*). However, the acceleration of capitalism is not always reflected in the individual acceleration of a person. The relationship between speed and nihilism within modern society can be adequately understood if you understand the direction of its progress.

This blinds us to the fact that the real crisis, the imminent catastrophe, has nothing to do with our speed, i.e., the acceleration or deceleration of growth, but with our direction: the crucial question is not whether to go faster or slower, but in which direction we wish to reorient the growth of our productive forces (*Mazeau, Moisand, 2013*).

The liberating power of nihilism degrades when the speed of socio-economic processes is not personified in the activity abilities of individuals, when the temporal regimes of the globalized world do not coincide with the rhythms of individual functioning of people. Outside of the reflexive work of thinking, nihilism loses its ability to be a source of "creative destruction", to create from nothing. It does not release, but generates a network of empty characters. As a result of the unprecedented spread of speed

and the resulting chaotic social existence, nihilism in information and digital reality is becoming an effective way to pass off nothing as something. Social dynamism and uncertainty do not really imply immersion in complete irrationality, on the contrary, they are the effect of an accelerated transition from order to disorder, which only for those who are unable to detect their hidden logic turns into complete chaos (Lash, 2002). This transition of order into chaos, which then turns into a new order and new ways of control, makes it necessary to reproduce the rhythms of information flow circulation by all spheres of social existence and through this absorbs everything in the process of its own self-reproduction. Nihilistic society leaves nothing but abstract information. Accordingly, the ability to maintain a distance in relation to information flows disappears, which, according to economic logic, are constantly accelerating, stimulating production and trade turnover. Consequently, a sign of the depletion of nihilism in information capitalism is the fact that the quantitative acceleration of the social system is not personified in qualitative acceleration. Today, speed and mobility are increasingly impersonal and super-individual processes, in which the universal of social time is not kept in the actual moments of personal existence.

What is modernity?

Beginning in the middle of the last century, a number of researchers have identified speed as a distinctive feature of Western society, which significantly transforms our ideas about time and space (McLuhan, 1963). From the point of view of P. Virilio (2006), modern society is constituted as a result of synergy of speed and war. It is the military goals and logic of war that constantly accelerate all spheres of social mechanism.

However, as M. Foucault (2003) showed, in western society, beginning with the bourgeois revolutions of the XVII century, war is interpreted as a permanent social attitude, as an indissoluble basis of all relations and all institutions of power. The basis of this interpretation was the replacement of philosophical and legal discourse with historical and political discourse and the establishment of the idea of war as an immanent source of movement for all social institutions and orders. This new discourse of war establishes a link between truth and power, between knowledge, violence and authority. In this context, truth becomes a weapon in combat, it turns into one of the most important tools with which you can gain superiority in general conflict.

A society based on the war of all against all or, saying otherwise, a society based on power relations falls into the trap of "escalation to extremes". As in his last work, R. Girard (2009) showed, rivalry and struggle are circulating in accordance with the "reciprocity logic": each blow, maneuver, gift, each use of force and violence creates the need for an asymmetric response, which in turn will lead to another response, and therefore more intensive, more aggressive and powerful corresponding action. War, like power, exists in conditions of constant increase in speed: the order must be fulfilled instantly. Therefore, in a society that has made war its foundation, speed annihilates space and time. In these circumstances, scientific and technological progress ensures the needs of war by directly participating in the war of speed. The scientific and industrial mode of production is perhaps only an avatar or, as they say, fallout, of the development of the means of destruction, of the absolute accident of war, of the conflict pursued down through the centuries in every society, irrespective of its political or economic status – the great time war that

never ceases to unexpectedly befall us time and again despite the evolution of morals and the means of production, and whose intensity never ceases to grow apace with technological innovations,

to the point where the ultimate energy, nuclear energy, makes its appearance in a weapon that is simultaneously an arm and the absolute accident of History (Virilio, 1993: 212-213).

So, the constant acceleration is established thanks to the ongoing war raging in the bowels of society. In a globalized society, economic competition is becoming an expression of this hidden war. Starting with C. Clausewitz commerce is interpreted as a sluggish, but no less formidable war (Girard, 2009: 58-59). W. Sombart (1913) wrote in his classic work about the connection of capitalism and war in the early twentieth century, and in our time M. Lazarato (2021) says that the productive power of capital is war. The globalization of capitalism, understood as a war continued by other means, inevitably gives the discourse of war a universal character.

Because the current state of war is both global in scale and long-lasting, with no end in sight, the suspension of democracy too becomes indefinite or even permanent. War takes on generalized character, strangling all social life and posing its own political order (Negri & Hardt, 2004: xi-xii).

Of course, in a world where the imperatives of digital capitalism dominate, the effects of speed necessarily replace the entire variety of social development:

In fact there is no "industrial revolution" but only a "dromocratic revolution"; there is not democracy, only dromocracy; there is not strategy, only dromology (Virilio, 2006: 69).

Our troubled time is aware of itself through narratives of speed and mobility, which are built around metaphors of space, not time. Therefore, mobility is more often mentioned by geographers, not historians (Cresswell & Merriam, 2011). Accelerating movement first destroys space ("deteritorialization") and only then dispenses with time. But absolute speed in the limit turns into absolute rest: deteritorialization, after mastering time, becomes not overcoming space, but giving it an abstract-universal character. The nomad person, being not rooted anywhere, refusing to move, falls into the trap of global flows, merges with them in the unstoppable "here and now". Therefore, it is quite logical that in social and humanitarian disciplines at the same time as the "mobile turn" there is a "spatial turn", in the paradigm of which society begins to be understood as the spatial interaction of individuals, as the "movement of people from place to place" (Sheller & Urry, 2006: 208). Using the examples of these "turns", we can observe the completion of the process of transformation of static with its characteristic traditional rooting into the local area by the dynamics of the global void era (Lipovetsky, 1989).

However, modernity has not always defined itself through acceleration and mobility. At the dawn of its formation, it identified itself with the ability to independently use its own mind and on this basis to master time (Kant, 1996). Being modern meant becoming a point where the past and the future connect into one whole, becoming a bridge between the past and the future. In fact, this meant being able to personalize various temporal modes, being an individual story. To do this, a person must not just float along the flow of time, but absorb this time into himself, process chronological time into a story, i.e. carry out as a personified story. In creativity, a person stops the passage of time and saves from the transition to nothing personal meanings of culture. Therefore, we can say that modernity begins with the history of time.

The history of time began with modernity. Indeed, modernity is, apart from anything else, perhaps even more than anything

else, the history of time: modernity is the time when time has a history (*Bauman, 2006: 110*).

It can also be assumed that modernity begins with the development of the personality of public time. The time that has history ceases to be a chronological flow that devours everything in its path and which so frightened the thinkers from Plato to E. Severino (*Severino, 2016*). The time of history requires responsible care of the content that it contains. This is not a chronological time alien to human, but a time of concentration of general human content in a single biography, which only thanks to such a combination of opposites unfolds as something not just unique, but as special. The time of history does not annihilate things, meanings and all human beings, provided that it has become the logic of human thinking and feelings of self-development.

The possibility of understanding, as well as thinking, has long assumed a discrepancy with the empirical circle of existence, staying in a certain position, from which the possibility of treating the world as a whole opens up. The fullness of the world, and not just the direct data of the social environment, requires staying in history, i.e. distributing the cultural and historical content and objectifying it in the form of human abilities, in the form of not indifferent reason and not thoughtless feelings. Based on the possibility of such a relationship, the prospect of assimilating the speeds of the changing world, neutralizing or nihilistic potential opens up.

Being modern does not lie in recognizing and accepting this perpetual movement; on the contrast, it lies in adopting a certain attitude with respect to this movement; and this discuss, difficult attitude consists in recalling something eternal that is not beyond the present instant, nor behind it, but within it (*Foucault, 1984: 39*).

It is amazing how, during the constant acceleration, the definition of modernity as a path to liberation was lost, which is opened primarily through liberation from the topical dictates of "here" and "now", through thinking that is always untimely and "archaic", that is, it is turned not only to the present moment, but also to the present moment, simultaneously to the sources and to the coming times.

Those who are truly contemporary. who truly belong to their time, are those who neither perfectly coincide with it nor adjust themselves to its demands. They are thus in this sense irrelevant (inattuale). But precisely because of this condition, precisely the rough this disconnection and this anachronism, they are more capable than others of perceiving and grasping their own time (*Agamben, 2009: 46*).

Pragmatic compliance with the needs of the current moment provides broad prospects for the production and use of handy things, effective adaptation of individuals to the rapidly changing social environment, but in return leaves a person with a distance between him and the empirical circle of his life. Without holding yourself in the grip of this distance, there is no memory of the fullness of the world as something valuable in itself, and not just as a means of satisfying your interests. Therefore, pragmatic activity has only instrumental memories, while active thinking preserves the memory of the world. In contrast to reverent memories, memory reads and cares in the past not what was and died in it, but only the immortal eternal that did not come true, did not survive: its testament to the coming days and generations.

Thinking is present in the activity as a guarantee of the presence of the results of human concessions, even after the disappearance of their material traces. It lasts and preserves what is destroyed under the influence of human activity, and each time it is created again. Thus, thinking

takes over time, being itself outside of time and space (*Arendt, 1981*). By slowing down and moving away from the conditioned needs of survival, it creates assumptions of their meaningfulness and fit into the meaning-forming context of the whole.

Classical philosophical tradition interpreted thinking as the ability to turn Infinity on the side of the finite and, starting from the era of Enlightenment, this ability becomes the most important sign of modernity. The question of the essence of modernity leads to a seemingly paradoxical result: to be modern means to be untimely, to be "the slow beings" or, what is the same, to have the courage to use your mind independently. Thinking, as the ability to bring the one under the general, connects the past, present and future into a single temporal structure. Based on this, it does not obey the tyranny of real time, does not allow a person to dissolve in it without a trace and therefore preserves it in history. However, it should be borne in mind that the temporality of thought is developed not as something external to our everyday existence, but out of the fullness of the moment.

This implies that we transpose ourselves to the temporality of independent action and decision, glancing ahead at what is assigned us as our task and back at what is given us as our endowment (*Arendt, 1981: 182*).

Being present in the fullness of the moment suggests that it shows the fullness of history. This means that a person makes a choice: either they want to be simply dragged forward by the flow of time, or they want to become a creator, to find the conditions and means to become them again (*Arendt, 1981: 174*). These conditions and funds are preserved in history.

Thinking does not resist nihilism and speed from the outside. It allows a person to be a "slow being" not because it is alien to speed and acceleration. On the contrary, it can be used to mobilize absolute speeds. Therefore, the capitalist system does not interfere with thinking, but exposes it and tries to overcome it, speeding up business to the speed of thought, automating thought operations with the help of information machines (*Gates, 1999*). In reality, thinking always has to do with speed, movement, and nihilism. It, what M. Heidegger (1991) thought, can neutralize the negativity of nihilism only by immersing itself in it.

According G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, the problem of thought is "infinite speed", which does not lead us from one definition to another, but creates the impossibility of correlation between them, "since one does not appear without the other having already disappeared, and one appears as disappearance when the other disappears as outline" (*Deleuze, Guattari, 1996: 42*). The thought reduces the chaos of infinite speed, without losing movement. And on the contrary, a lack of thinking plunges a person into the immutability of chaos and it is the lack of thinking, the lack of the ability to keep the reflection of everything in a moment, that can be determined as a symptom and cause of nihilism.

Nihilism is often associated with thinking as its direct preface. In this case, the critical potential of thinking considers the source of nihilism, and ways to overcome the latter are found on the way to neutralize the former. Of course, as it was supposed to be by B. Russell (1997) and H. Arendt (2003), thinking itself is dangerous, "but nihilism is not its product" (*Arendt, 2003: 177*). Nihilism, as H. Arendt (2003) thought, is not something else, but the reverse side of conventionalism. Nihilism is based on the denial of present, "positive values", to which it still remains forever tied. Value thinking is a necessary condition for nihilism (*Heidegger, 1991*).

Any critical study goes through the stage of hypothetical denial of accepted opinions and values by clarifying their consequences and implicit assumptions. In this context, H. Arendt (2003) sees nihilism as a danger that constantly accompanies thinking.

But this danger does not arise out of the Socratic conviction that an unexamined life is not worth living but, on the contrary, out of the desire to find results which would make further thinking unnecessary (Arendt, 2003: 177-178).

Accordingly, nihilism is not a problem of immoralism or ignorance. First of all, it is the result of ignorance of thinking or stopping thinking

The acceleration of the pace of modern socio-economic life problematizes the reflexive interpretation of everyday practices, in which social space and time are sacrificed not to a transcendent, but to a new deity – acceleration. Or they are annihilated, not destroyed, but made insignificant, ghostly and eventually abstract. As J. Wajcman writes: "By this account, then, speed is nihilism in practice" (Wajcman, 2015: 23). The era of constant acceleration is characterized by a nihilism that does not destroy anything, just as it does not create anything. On the contrary, today it serves to preserve the diversity of the plural world, while depriving it of signs of life, because what does not live cannot die. Nihilism, which, according to J. Baudrillard, "no longer wears the dark, Wagnerian, Spenglerian, fuliginous colors of the end of the century" (Baudrillard, 1981: 227), unfolds the desert as a embodied human capacity for thoughtlessness and absence, "the ideal scheme of humanity's disappearance" (Baudrillard, 1989: 68).

However, the consequences of devastation that destroys nothing are larger than the consequences of destruction. The latter is aimed at what has already been created, its scope of action is the past. Devastation neutralizes the creative ability of the individual; it neutralizes the future while maintaining the visibility of the violent activity of the present. The desert grows in parallel with the elimination of such a mode of thought as memory, which turns it into a tool for solving pressing problems, into a tool for lack of thought. Destruction also eliminates and, in particular, eliminates also Nothing, while devastation just establishes and expands the paralyzing and non-allowing (Heidegger, 1976: 29-30).

So, it is doubtful that the accelerating expansion of the desert can be opposed by the deliberate, in the spirit of russoist ideas, return to the bosom of nature, the rejection of mobility and fluidity of the social, cultural, political or economic existence of a globalized world. Such an escape is possible only as an individual or group act of "internal emigration", which leaves the course of social life unchanged.

From our point of view, the neutralization of nihilism is also impossible on the path of moralizing the revival of values or rational ordering of social life. In the disinclined world, instrumental rationality and ordering serve as the basis for the most complete manifestation of nihilism and the Enlightenment of value thinking. "That shows perhaps that order is not only compatible with nihilism, but composes its style" (Jünger, 2016: 78). Such combination of nihilism with reasonable order and with value-parasitizing moralizing is due to the fact that they both deprive the reality of its meaning and content, ravage it, turning it into a void intended for voluntary filling. So, as E. Jünger thought,

the nihilistic world is in its essence a reduced and increasingly self-reductive world, which necessarily corresponds to the movement to the null point (Jünger, 2016: p. 83).

The question of neutralizing nihilism is not a question of rationalism, irrationalism, instrumental calculation of their values. This is a question of thinking and at the same

time the question of the ability to maintain universal human meanings in the parameters of constantly accelerating socio-economic processes. After all, in order to understand something and preserve it through it, we must allow this someone to freely unfold in us and through us in the world. In order to maintain the ability to act meaningfully in this world, we must have the ability to go beyond the empirical circle of existence, to free ourselves from its immediate interests and from everything we have created in it. It is impossible to avoid the irreversible consequences of acceleration by rejecting technological progress, but through its understanding.

Back in the day, the Georgian philosopher M. Mamardashvili (2020) expressed the opinion that the opposite of nihilism can be classics which he understood as courage of the impossible. Classics are the feeling of staying the infinite in the finite and the power (assuming a strong soul, its non-convex "formalism") of constantly holding the former on the latter. In this sense, it is opposed not to romanticism, but to nihilism. And there is, of course, the courage of the impossible (Mamardashvili, 2020: 182). According to the content of the above reasoning, the classics is something that resists the nihilistic destruction of the human life world by the constant acceleration of changes in the innovative economy. It appears as the sphere of humane that, beyond time and space, absorbs eternity as the simultaneous presence of all spaces and all times, the sphere of holding the infinite in the finite. In this case, it is the classics that, keeping the universal in the singular, are able to resist the increasing speeds of our century not from the outside, but from the middle of them, neutralizing the extreme "escalation to extremes" inherent in them.

Conclusion

The acceleration of the modern world is driven by the logic of capitalist development, which, despite the proclaimed shift from industrial to post-industrial society, continues to determine the intensity of its metamorphoses. The development of capitalism entails the unfolding of nihilism as a means of liquefying the "solid" bodies of history and the world, serving as a way to emancipate the individual from the forces of the past that constrain their creative potential. Nihilism tests the strength of reality, obliging the individual to create their own world together with others, while simultaneously placing personal responsibility on them for what they have created. Whereas "modernist" nihilism still assumed the possibility of its own self-overcoming, we are now witnessing the establishment of "postmodernist" nihilism, which defines everything that lies beyond its own boundaries as a totalitarian claim. A "nihilistic society" can exist only under conditions of constant acceleration. It is a society that defines itself as a network of power relations, as an order in which war smoulders at its foundation. One metaphor for war is economic competition, determined by the inertia of a drive toward extremes. This competition demands the acceptance of forced acceleration as a necessary condition for survival in a world of unending war of all against all. Nihilism makes the distinction between peace and war nearly imperceptible. The acceleration it thrives on is simultaneously an intrinsic feature of war. The war industry subordinates all processes of social and cultural life to the imperatives of acceleration. Thus, acceleration becomes an end in itself, absorbing the political, cultural, and social aims and values of the information-digital world. The intensity of modern warfare enables the minimization of interpersonal interaction on the battlefield, enhancing the "natural" dehumanization of the enemy through the technological mediation of violence. War, by

exposing the latent "escalation to extremes" in the capitalist mode of production, routinizes violence and establishes nihilism as the only "realistic" worldview.

The widespread belief that mobility and speed alone define the character of modernity must be contrasted with the idea that the ethos of modernity, on the contrary, lies in the capacity to slow down – that is, in the primordial ability of thought to hold on to universal content within the fast-flowing current of everyday activity, to distance itself from it, and thereby to build a bridge between the past and the future. It is unlikely that the nihilism of unceasing acceleration can be meaningfully opposed by an imagined world of stable traditional values. Rather, this opposition is yet another symptom of the prevalence of nihilism. Acceleration cannot be stopped, but it can be understood. The intensity of external socio-economic transformations must be countered with the intensity of inner spiritual tension – the intensity of intelligent, rational thinking. In this context, we understand nihilism as the inability to carry out this labor of thought, the inability to use one's own reason, to preserve even a glimmer of Infinity in the final moment. The consequences of abandoning this intellectual work are especially dangerous not only – and not so much – during war, but above all after it.

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Дромологія нігілізму: капіталізм, прискорення, мислення

Микола Ліпін (ORCID 0000-0003-0940-088X)

Державний торговельно-економічний університет (Київ, Україна)

Наталія Гусєва (ORCID 0000-0002-6062-6406)

Державний торговельно-економічний університет (Київ, Україна)

Метою статті є дослідження співвідношення нігілізму та прискорення в умовах пізнього капіталізму. Розкривається нігілістична сутність прискорення процесів соціально-культурної реальності, що ініціюється екстенсивною динамікою інноваційної економіки. Показано, що в просторі панування капіталізму нігілізм розгортається як сила емансипації, що унеможливорює звернення до авторитету, цінностей чи традиції у секулярному світі. Навпаки, вербальна актуалізація цінностей або традицій часто лише маскує дійсний нігілізм під виглядом боротьби з ним. У статті розглядаються варіанти визначення сучасності на підставі нігілізму, війни та мислення. Обґрунтовується припущення, згідно з яким в умовах перетворення швидкості та мобільності на нові визначення свободи, сповільнююча робота мислення здатна нейтралізувати нігілістичний потенціал прискорення інформаційно-цифрової реальності. Сучасний нігілізм не передбачає реалізації проєкту переоцінки цінностей, він розгортає «пустелю» як втілену здатність людини до бездумності, як ідеальну схему анігіляції людської індивідуальності, спустошення, яке знищує майбутнє і передбачає атрофію культурної пам'яті. «Нігілістичне суспільство» здатне існувати лише за умов безперервного прискорення. Це суспільство самовизначається як конфігурація силових відносин, як такий лад, у фундаменті якого тліє війна. Однією з її метафор постає економічна конкуренція, зумовлена інерцією «escalation to extremes». Вона передбачає прийняття примусового прискорення як необхідної умови виживання у світі нескінченної війни всіх проти всіх, тобто ринкової боротьби. Нігілізм майже стирає межу між станами миру та війни, а прискорення, яким він живиться, водночас є сутнісною характеристикою війни.

Інтенсивність сучасних воєнних дій мінімізує безпосередню міжособистісну взаємодію на полі бою, підсилюючи «природну» дегуманізацію противника через технологічне опосередкування насильства. Війна, вивільняючи приховану в капіталістичному способі виробництва логіку «escalation to extremes», рутинізує насильство та закріплює нігілізм як єдино можливу «реалістичну» оптику сприйняття світу.

Ключові слова: нігілізм, мислення, прискорення, швидкість, капіталізм, техніка, уповільнення, сучасність.

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