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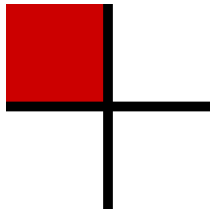
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Theory of the Multitude

Akseli Virtanen and Jussi Vähämäki

The breeze blowing from Seattle and Genova broke the immovable air of the desert that, like a television screen, was suffocating sense of life. It gave a voice to the life that was lying underneath: muttering, groaning and complaining, but also living, working and producing new forms of life which before these events seemed unattainable. The voice was that of a new kind of subjectivity, the *multitude*. As a word multitude is both old and young. It was cast out in the dawn of modernity but it never ceased to haunt its political and economic organization. As a concept it makes a giant leap over the modern world into the past and destructs the carefully guarded distinctions between past and future, theory and practice, necessity and possibility, nature and culture.

The desert is now buzzing with life that wants to create the world in its own image. But as an image it risks to remain a purely extensive and descriptive category, only an image of thought. What *ephemera* wants to do is to go beyond this image, into that what is spoken under the visible and touch that which constitutes the body of the multitude giving it intensity, depth and memory. Our aim is not to give a complete reproduction of the concept in its history and in its present actuality, but to show that as a concept it introduces a kind of a new 'person' inside contemporary society, a person whose very existence transforms basic structures and institutions of politics and economy. We believe that only when we hear the voice that is speaking under the desert, the movements that create the wind, all the actions and differences we see on the surface acquire their sense.

In his article, 'Who Killed God Pan?', Christian Marazzi analyzes the crisis of monetary sovereignty that turns monetary politics into a variable that depends on the stock markets. The new architecture of production and exchange of the riches in the post-fordist economy has constructed in language the *space* of the multitude. Now the multitude is the figure of money, the form of its sovereignty. And it has the wisdom and the power to kill the God Pan, the herdsman who makes the flock manageable and who has had traditionally the function of hoarding in the exchange process.

According to Maurizio Lazzarato, we are today faced with a form of the accumulation of capital that is no longer only based on the exploitation of labour in the industrial sense of the term, but on the exploitation of *life*. What organizations produce and sell not only includes material or immaterial goods, but also forms of communication, standards of socialization and perception, models of education, housing and

transportation. It is not so much the production of ‘goods’ but the production of the rigidity of convictions and the solidity of passions that is the condition of capitalist valorization today: capitalism does not first arrive with factories but with words, signs and images. Capitalism tries to control the conditions of the process of constitution of difference and repetition, i.e. the movements of the multitude.

For the first time these movements or that general potentiality which makes human beings ‘human beings’ and which belongs to everyone – yet is no one’s property – is stepping forward to our immediate experience from behind its actual use or its actual meaning. This is, as Akseli Virtanen argues, what defines economy and our experience of it today. He uses the concept of *general economy* to argue that economy has reached the zone of indistinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*, labour and action, life and politics, communication and the faculty of language in general. This zone of indistinction is the source of the crisis of restricted economy where its conception of time and value can no longer grasp ‘that’ which creates value. To say that economy has become general is to say that multitude, society itself is productive. The foundation of production is no longer in capitalist investment but in the investment of social brains. The factory-office and its borders have dissolved into society, into a multitude of productive singularities whose productivity cannot be reduced to actual production, to any actual mode of existence, to any historical time. It is activity that does not materialize into machinery or products but rather retreats from materiality and turning into actual products.

It is impossible to organize and control a labour force that has turned into a ‘mental category’ through its spatial conditions or through the actual deeds it performs (as in disciplinary society). This is why Jussi Vähämäki argues that the presence of multitude forces capitalism to invent new kind of tools, methods of the mind or ‘mental politics’ whose logic Vähämäki unfolds through the concept of *commonplace*. The modern production process is a production of commonplaces, a production of general precondition to every discourse, action and knowledge which capital searches from the space and unity of the multitude itself, from language as such. Commonplaces do not transmit any significant or meaningful information. It is impossible to learn them or teach them through their content. It has no sense to discuss their relevance or to contest them. It is only possible to copy, imitate and follow them: they are structured like pure commands. These commands constitute now the grammar of the mode of power that is replacing the old disciplinary and biopolitical tools.

Katie Vann gets down to the specifics of value theory utilized in the analysis and the practice of post-fordist production. She debates the waning of transcendental ordering practices and the self-valorizing power of labour. Vann argues that the capitalist *embrace of difference* has a constitutive role in the commodification process. The managerial inscriptions of labouring activity have a performative function that turns on the capacity of language through which a reflection of particular forms of exchange – for which production is organized – is brought to life. Indeed, perhaps we could say that we do not lack communication, but rather we have too much of it. What we lack is creation, resistance to the present.

But how is it then possible to create; how is it possible to resist the present? Sandro Mezzadra shows how the progressive removal of every obstacle from the movement and

circulation of goods, services and capital is accompanied by the multiplication and rearmament of borders against migrants and refugees. The free movement of knowledge and free usage of human intelligence is accompanied by a rigid control and shameless destruction of human bodies that carry knowledge and create ideas. This process together with the dynamics of globalization is changing the whole configuration of democracy and the notions of citizenship and wage work in western societies. Yet the mobility of migrant women and men is an expression of a series of subjective movements of escape from the rigidities of the international division of labour. These *movements of escape* constitute one of the eradicated and denied motors of the radical transformations which have influenced the capitalist mode of production during the last two hundred years.

Multitude is thus not only that which can do something. If we wish to think multitude as a new kind of subjectivity, we have to also ask what produces this subjectivity. For this reason Pekka Piironen distinguishes three forms of economy: in the first form (limited bourgeois form) multitude appears as something measurable. In the second form (the analyses of post-fordist production) communication has entered production. The analyses of the second form are the best description of the contemporary economy but they are, as Piironen argues, still insufficient in determining *that* which produces the problem of economy, the multitude. This is then the task Piironen assigns to what he calls the *third form of economy* where multitude and economy belong together: the third form makes it possible to think that multitude intends to achieve an end. But this intentionality does not serve as means towards an end. Rather, the multitude with intentionality dwells in facticity where thinking about element and technique are mixed. The third form of economy makes it possible to move on from the definitions of multitude to stating the question '*What should we do?*'.

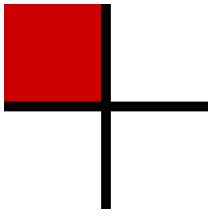
The setting of this problem for thinking is the essential political problem. Ole Fogh Kirkeby addresses it by a theory of the way in which we are able to relate to the event. The event is the active, creative centre in the middle of our lives which we carry with us and without which there would be no change. But we are only able to relate to the event *by proving worthy to it*. We are centres of incalculable actions (general potential to produce) but cannot endure the merciless potentiality of the event: we are unable to become those who we are not. This is our tragic and happy obligation to become, the game of necessity and fate we are playing. We are obliged to act in relation to that which actually is in our power but have to change the world in the name of the unnameable, that is, in approaching and even handling the event and its inherent zones in our capacity of bodies which are corporeal hostages of reality. To do this in a way *equal to the event* means the uniting of theory and practice, of being ready and prepared to give assent to reality by creating it, by being its motor of transformation. Without thinking our relation to the event as multitude's mode of being, the multitude will remain abstract, deprived of meaning or of what Deleuze calls 'intuition', and we are thus unable to determine the conditions of problems, expose false problems and discover variables under which the problem of economy and politics must today be stated correctly. Or to put it differently, without developing this *memory*, multitude will remain just a reactive series of sensations following one and another and thus unable to create and change (become) – to *organize in accordance with life*.

We are convinced that some of the key concepts employed in the issue – concepts such as *multitude*, *event*, *mimesis*, *linguistic resistance*, *escape*, *cooperation between minds*, *firm without factories*, *commons*, *general economy*, *whatever subjectivity*, *tools of the mind*, *means without ends*, *noopolitics*, *intuition*, *memory* – outline the terrain on which we move tomorrow and with the help of which the economics and politics of wealth are understood. This attempt to find words for things that exist but do not yet have words or specific meanings points to the need to create new concepts, a new ‘language’ or a new sense to the movements that we see developing in different parts of the world and ‘environments’. This is maybe the most obvious connection this special issue has with the tradition of Italian operaismo – the unorthodox wing of European workers’ movement which never accepted work as the defining aspect of human life. When work or production in its traditional sense is not anymore a centre of human life and at the same time in life there is nothing but work and production, we have to create new forms of resistance, new ways to create the good life. For this we have to look directly into the eye of our *power to do anything*. We already feel its breeze in our face.

the editors

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Who Killed God Pan?*

Christian Marazzi

translated from the Italian by Taina Rajanti

abstract

Pan is a Greek God who lives on the zone between nature and culture, between beasts and humans. He inhabits the space that is neither that of history or community nor that of pure nature: the fields and meadows just outside the city walls are his dominion. He is two-formed and two-natured, human and animal, a man and a goat. When humans live inside the house and beasts in their dens or in their nests, Pan like a herdsman sleeps in a cowshed. And the herdsman is big, tall and a good warrior. He is a messenger between the city and the fields. Plato equates Pan with language; like Pan, language has a snake's tongue; it is good both in lying and in saying the truth. Pan declares all things and he is the perpetual mover of all things. Panic and the disorder that leads to panicking are due to the growing distance between the Gods and men. They destroy or deny communication between the Gods and the human community and between men and lead humans back to bestiality. Pan transforms human being into a gregarious animal and lets the herd instinct proper to humans free so that it is possible to reorganize the community using 'human nature' as a tool in the reorganization. Panic, like terror, has been a privileged instrument in modern politics because it spreads fast without discussions and it is impossible to contest or go against it.

Historically panic functions as a factor of hoarding on a planetary scale. But, despite the gravity of the crises that have punctuated the coming of the New Economy, one cannot avoid being stricken by the weakening of this panic factor.

Let us ask the question then: in the era of the New Economy, what is Pan (God-goat of nature) to which the experience of panic refers, the experience of that occasion of strong anxiety generated by a fear so intolerable as to obstruct the organizing of thought and action, capable of depersonalising, of inducing impersonal behaviour and mass mimetism? What is the 'herd instinct' that produces, *brings to light* the instinct of 'everything or nothing' that 'liberates' the latent anxiety? "If Pan is the God of nature 'within', then he is our instinct."¹

* This article is an extract from the book: Marazzi, C. (2002) *Capitale & Linguaggio: dalla new economy all'economia di Guerra* (Capital & Language. From the new economy to the war economy), Derive & Approdi, Milano.

1 Hillman, J. (1972) 'An essay on Pan', in Hilman and Roscher, *Pan and the Nightmare*. New York: Spring Publications.

Already the fact that Pan – notwithstanding his mythological ‘naturalness’ – is a creature that does not exist in the natural world (he is, in fact, half human and half animal), that he is a creature totally *imaginable*, permits us to define the ‘herd instinct’ that is within us and that feeds our instincts as a *metaphor*. As Jung explains, if instinct acts and *at the same time* forms an image of its action (produces that which is its representation), then ‘to be at the mercy of’ the depersonalisation that panic brings about constitutes the experience of a behaviour that is simultaneously primary *and* intelligent. There’s a method in panic.

We have come to this paradoxical conclusion studying the genealogy of financial crises, in particular the crisis of 1929, as the explosion of the same *rationality* of speculation, the activity that, as Keynes has written, consist of foreseeing the psychology of the market, of ‘outwitting the crowd’.² “Knowing that our own individual judgment is worthless” – writes Keynes – “we endeavor to fall back on the judgment of the rest of the world which is perhaps better informed. That is, we endeavor to conform with the behavior of the majority or the average. The psychology of a society of individuals each of whom is endeavoring to copy the others leads to what we may strictly term a *conventional* judgment.”³

The *mimetic relation* between the individual, economic subject and the others (the aggressive ‘crowd’ of investors/speculators) has its rationality in the deficit of information about each. When conventional indicators, which represent average values, do not reflect the logic of the functioning of the economic system any more, when the opaqueness typical to financial markets induces behaviour whose rationality is by now in dissonance with the ongoing economic transformation, mimetic behaviour amplifies the crisis: it reveals the contradictory logic that sustains the economic process, the immanence of the crisis within the development. The procedure of the functioning of panic is thus presupposed by the panical crisis.

As long as we can trust that the convention, however arbitrary, shall be upheld, mimetic behaviour is quite rational. “But it is not surprising that a convention, in an absolute view of things so arbitrary, should have its weak points.”⁴ The explosion of panic, the insensate rush to the counters to return to one’s possession, in the form of money, the propriety considered ‘at risk’, is nothing more than a revelation of the panic nature of capitalistic production, its intrinsic precariousness. The contradictory nature of the market economy is manifested in the panic demand for money: each returns to his propriety and, simultaneously, finds himself closer to others because of mimetic effects, because of the contamination and reactions it provokes.⁵

2 Keynes, J.M. (1973-89) *Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes* Vols. I-XXIX, D.E. Moggridge and E. Johnson (eds.) London: MacMillan for the Royal Economic Society. Vol. VII ‘General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money’, Ch. XII, Part V, §4.

3 Keynes, J.M. (1937) ‘General Theory of Employment’, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February: 209-22.

4 Keynes, J.M. (1973-89) *Collected Writings* Op cit. ‘General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money’ Ch. XII, Part V, §4.

5 Orléan, A. (1988) ‘Per una teoria delle aspettative in condizioni di incertezza’, in *Moneta e produzione*. Torino: Einaudi.

The violence of the crisis, instead of reflecting the irrationality of the ‘herd instinct’ within us, represents the fear of the inadequacy of the conventions and institutional powers in knowing how to manage the altered social conditions of economic development. At the same time, the ‘enthusiastic’ use of ideas emerging from the ongoing processes of transformation by individuals or groups represents the concealed desire to be rid of every authority, to emancipate from the slavery of the past. “Is not the Terror of 1793 at the same time the culmination of sacred terrors and the proclamation of their death? Even if the religious spirit still inspires all the facts and acts of the Revolution, it is also dying, as is shown by the failure of the revolutionary feast organised by Robespierre.”⁶

The ambiguity of meaning in the concept of panic, the confusion between the true name and false alarm, has brought Colonel Chandessais, researcher of catastrophes, to conclude categorically, that ‘panic does not exist’. Also, at Hiroshima “the panic that caused some Japanese to throw themselves in the lake is doubtful.”⁷ There are only images of panic and the fascination brought about by these images. The origin of panic thus always depends on a *procedure* of alarm and on an *interpretation* of the signs of danger. In this resides properly the *linguistic dimension* of panic; that panic is a ‘word play’. Considered simultaneously as the essence of the Crowd and the image of its dissolution, as the origin of the Crowd’s being and its destruction, panic is the image of the disarticulation of language and representations. To be at the mercy of panic, much more than heavy sweating, pallor, palpitations, dyspnea and tremors, means *losing the ability of speech*. The fear is such that one cannot concentrate on any object of reference from which to defend oneself, which is the same as *not being able to produce representations anymore*.

The disarticulation of language defines the coordinates of panic experience in post-fordist society.⁸ Also, in it ‘the herd instinct’, the God Pan – who, according to the Jungian principle of synchronism, connects the nature ‘within’ to the nature ‘without’ – is defined as a form of manifestation of the world in general. But in post-fordist society the world in its totality, the context in which it is connected to every being, where all facts happen and all discourses resound, is a primarily *linguistic* world. Language, the communicative and discursive presentation that encloses like a great text the world in its totality, is the ‘herd language’ with which we perceive the material context and have our experience of the world. Language *in general*, language as *faculty* or capacity to communicate, is what we fear to lose. In a post-fordist context in which language has actually become a means of production of goods, and thus the *material* condition of our very lives, the loss of the faculty of speech, of the ‘faculty of language’, means loss of belonging to the world as such, loss of what unites the many who constitute the community.

At the moment when panic displays itself as the loss of the use of the word, as disarticulation of language – as physical incapacity to denominate or remember objects

6 Dupuy, J.-P. (1991) *La Panique*. Paris: Laboratoire Delagrangé.

7 Jeudy, H.P. (1997) *Panico e catastrofe*. Genova: Costa&Nolan.

8 Virno, P. (1994) *Mondanità. L'idea di mondo tra esperienza sensibile e sfera pubblica*. Roma: Manifestolibri.

(aphasia or dysphasia) – it is the capacity of language, language as possibility of existence that we fear to lose. Aphasic experience, described by Jakobson as “escape of identity towards contingency”, as an escape from the referentiality of language towards contextuality, is precisely about the relation between language and the world.⁹ When one is at the mercy of panic one escapes towards nowhere, towards anywhere: one seeks refuge in the world in its totality. It is this mass-escape towards a world without form that blocks the exits and exposes thus how narrow the space becomes when everybody belongs to the same linguistic context, when everybody has the same fear of being deprived of the same property, of the same faculty of language. As Virno has written, “panic fear is not the result of a rupture between the individual biography and the impersonal powers that sustain the society, but, to the contrary it stems precisely from the magnetic adherence of the individual to the general intellect. Or rather, from an adherence that is magnetic because it lacks a spatial regulation”.¹⁰

In a panic situation, for instance, a fire in a movie theatre, the other becomes suddenly a real enemy; in the middle of the risk of being trampled, suffocated, each gesture is an attempt to assassinate my body. The *private* use of the *general intellect*, so to speak, clashes with its *social* nature; the individual body that incorporates the linguistic division of labour sees the bodies of the others as an obstacle. Apparently the cinema was a space through which the many exercised their linguistic faculty.

Researchers of catastrophes claim that the more one refuses to believe that the danger is imminent and is reluctant to abandon one’s property, the more one prevents the likelihood of a risk, and thus a possible catastrophe. In a context that is for the best part linguistic, where one works by communicating, the resistance that prevents the occurrence of a risk is possible if one is able to distinguish the false alarms from the real ones. The capacity to interpret the indicators, the *benchmarks*, which in the form of simple figures summarize a set of complex variables that can be interpreted on the basis of a shared rationality, is possible only if the resistance of one is at the same time the resistance of many, only if the interpretation of the signs of a catastrophe happens through the use of language that unites and *preserves* the multitude.

In a context that has high systemic risk (the linguistic is global, like the post-fordist system of production and circulation of goods) the *linguistic resistance* is powerful. The linguistic resistance is rational and autonomous of false signs if it succeeds in challenging the dominant language without reproducing another totalising language, that is, if it functions as a ‘war machine’ that does not reproduce as a negative what it is opposing, a catastrophic confirmation of individual actions, but rather the implosion of the realm of meanings, of correspondences and identities. The community as a people is catastrophic, mentally ill, the community as multitude is in good health “even if all goes wrong”.¹¹

9 Jakobson, R. (1968) *Child language, aphasia and phonological universals*. The Hague: Mouton.

10 Virno, *opt cit.*

11 Deleuze, G. (1997) *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. D. Smith and M. Greco. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

But in what way in the post-fordist society – characterised by an elevated systemic complexity which the indicators in common use do not by definition succeed in representing to the full – the rationality of mimetic behaviour succeeds in protecting the community of the multitude from false alarms and the stereotypic representations of panic that the mass media keeps transmitting? How does one protect oneself from panic when all seems to contribute to creating optimal conditions for mimetic behaviour which risks to produce actual catastrophes?

The question is not meant to be taken as an implicit repression of the history of social, cultural, economic and ecological damage produced in the course of time by irresponsible political choices, *concrete* choices which have created and spread the impression that an imminent disaster could destroy the world in which we live.¹² It is on the contrary necessary to demonstrate how it were possible to avoid the social injustice and natural disorder within the same logic that turns anxiety into panic, the action of multitude into behaviour that is uniform and thus catastrophic.

The Asian crisis, the ‘millennium bug’ at the end of the 20th century and the very crisis of the New Economy demonstrate that the scenarios of a financial collapse and ICT catastrophe, repeatedly advertised by the mass media, *have not provoked panic behaviour*. For instance, during the Asian crisis analysts were surprised by the wisdom of the millions of savers who, even though assailed by signs of systemic risk, did not rush to withdraw their possessions from pension or investment funds. The climate of imminent catastrophe created by the syndrome of the ‘millennium bug’ did not create the contagious behaviour one could rightly expect, and which, independently of the truth or falsity of the danger, would *indeed* have provoked the catastrophe, would have made it inevitable and certainly destructive for well-being.

The euphoria of the stock-markets depicted the possibility of a world-wide financial collapse. The economic and financial indicators and a comparison to the advancement of the stock-market in the 1920s gave reason to be afraid of a collapse of vast proportions. In such situations the reasoning of those who, as the stock values increase, see reflected not the irrational excitement of speculation but a real increase of social productivity, indeed isn’t enough to protect one from the risk of a catastrophe. Nobody wins against the crowd, and the examples of those who succeed in winning against the logic of the ‘reasonable expectations’ of the market are rare indeed.

The problem does not even concern anymore the relation between objectivity and subjectivity, between an analysis of the real economy and the financial system corresponding to it on the one hand, and on the other, the change of the ‘semantics of risk’. The social contagion of the orientation towards risk – the compulsion to risk in a monetary economy in which the ‘growth without inflation’ forces to divert capital directly in the enterprises quoted in the stock market – makes it ever harder to tell the Luhmannian difference between risk and danger, system and environment, operation and observation.¹³ He who exposes himself to the elevated risks derived from his own decision to invest in stocks ought, according to the Luhmannian sociology of risk, to

12 Davis, M. (1999) *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*. London: Picador.

13 Luhmann, N. (1993) *Risk: a sociological theory*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

react in a completely different manner towards the danger of damage to his portfolio resulting from the euphoria of the stock market and the mimetic logic underlying it. If that were the case, the manoeuvres of the Central Bank for reducing the dangers in a contaminated stock climate ought to contribute to reducing the risks orientation of individual participants in the stock market game.

The problem is that, even if it wants to fix a different proportion between real values and financial values, an increase in interest rates by the Central Bank doesn't seem to be enough to convince investors to change their minds, to move their savings into stocks that render less but are more secure. To re-establish the relative autonomy of monetary authorities (the State, that is) it is necessary for the multitude to open itself to the *uniqueness* of monetary indicators. To 'normalize' the market, to regulate them from above by central authorities, it is necessary to *provoke* a catastrophe, to generate a panic that is capable of unifying the behaviour of the many, capable of transforming the multitude into a people united by the same logic.

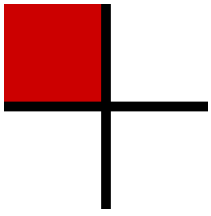
The *crisis* of monetary *sovereignty*, the incapacity of the Central Bank in affecting monetary associations, does not reduce the role of the State to its function of contributor of legal money 'in the last instance', but subsumes it to processes of financial valorisation making monetary politics a variable that depends on the stock markets. The architecture of production and exchange of post-fordist riches has constructed *in* language the *space* of the multitude. The multitude is the figure of money, the form of its sovereignty. Having killed the God Pan, the multitude must learn to protect itself from the Gods of the moment who, as spirits, haunt the chance of events.

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From Capital-Labour to Capital-Life^{*}

Maurizio Lazzarato

translated from the French by Valerie Fournier, Akseli Virtanen and Jussi Vähämäki

abstract

The most important element for anyone who looks at my objects is my fundamental thesis: each human being is an artist. It is even my fundamental contribution to the history of art (...). Within each human being lies a virtual creative ability. This is not to say that everyone is a painter or a sculptor, but that there is some latent creativity within each domain of human work... each type of work has a connection to art; and art is no longer a type of activity or an isolated group, with people able to do art whilst the others have to do another type of work. ... Therefore culture and economy are one and the same thing and, within our society, the most important means of production, the most important factories that create capital are schools and universities. This is why they are in the hands of the state, and this why we have to free them. (Joseph Beuys)

How to understand concepts of labour, production, cooperation and communication when capitalism is not only a mode of production but a *production of worlds*? To speak in these conditions about 'production', it is necessary to construct a radically different method than we find in political economy, economics and sociology. The question is not of the 'end of work' nor of 'everything turning into work'. It is rather that we have to change the principles of valuation, the ways in which we understand the value of value. We need a new concept of 'wealth', a new concept of 'production'. To create these new concepts, it is necessary to forget the philosophy of subject and that of labour, which restrain us from understanding *cooperation between minds*. Spirit, like intellectual or immaterial labour, has a tendency to cross the borders; it is without spatial existence and does not reduce to its manifestations. In the era of immaterial labour and cooperation between minds it is not possible to think social conflicts in terms of the friend/enemy dichotomy or in terms of the conflict between two classes, nor in terms of liberal (private/public) or socialist (individual/collective) traditions. Creation acts in another way than exclusion, competition or contradiction, the evolutionary principles of the above. How should we then translate the concept of the multitude into politics? A fertile starting point might be Gabriel Tarde's sociology of 'difference and repetition', which allows us to understand that some of the key concepts of Tarde, like those of *invention*, *imitation*, *memory* and *sympathy*, might be very appropriate for explaining the mode of the cooperation of the multitude.

Let's follow a neo-Leibnizian or neo-monadological thread to understand contemporary capitalism. We first have to put aside everything we know about Adam Smith and Karl Marx's theories of value, wealth and work, developed in *The Wealth of Nations* and *Capital*; or in short, we have to put aside all the beliefs underlying political economy in

* This article is an earlier version of Chapter 3 in Lazzarato, M. (2004) *Les Révolutions du Capitalisme*. Paris: Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond / Le Seuil.

general. We should neither start from the institution (the business firm, the State or Empire), because, as we know, institutions are not the source of power relations but rather derive from them (and thus it is not them from which we should start our description of contemporary economy). Yet these habits and set ways of thinking are so deeply embedded in us that if we don't start from these we are likely to give an impression of being and thinking like 'beautiful souls'. Let us nevertheless apply a neo-monadology to the contemporary business organization and revise some of the fundamental statements about it: first of all, the enterprise does not create its object (goods) but *the world within which the object exists*. And secondly, the enterprise does not create its subjects (workers and consumers) but *the world within which the subject exists*.

Within contemporary capitalism, we need to distinguish between *the enterprise* and *the factory*. Three years ago, Alcatel, a large French multi-national announced that it would let go of its eleven production factories. This separation between the enterprise and the factory is an extreme case, but one that is becoming more and more common within contemporary capitalism. In the great majority of cases, these two functions are integrated, but I would argue that their separation is emblematic of a deep transformation within capitalist mode of production. How does such a multi-national, a 'company without factories', define its boundaries? What will it keep within its concept of the company? In short, all the functions, all the services and all the employees that enable it *to create a world*: marketing, research and development, design, strategy, communications, that is, the ensemble of all the forces and arrangements (or machines) of expression.

The company producing a product or service produces a world. In its logic, the service or the product, just as the consumer or the worker, must correspond to this world; and the world in its turn has to be inscribed in the souls and bodies of consumers and workers. This inscription takes place through techniques that are no longer exclusively disciplinary. Within contemporary capitalism the company does not exist outside the producers or consumers who express it. Its world, its objectivity, its reality merges with the relationships enterprises, workers and consumers have with each other. Thus, the company, like God in the philosophy of Leibniz, seeks to construct a correspondence, an interlacing, a chiasm between the monad (consumer and worker) and the world (the company). The expression and effectuation of the world and the subjectivities included in there, that is, the creation and realization of the sensible (desires, beliefs, intelligence), precedes economic production. The economic war currently played out on a planetary scale is indeed an 'aesthetic' war for many reasons.

Communication / Consumption

Let's start with consumption because the relationship between supply and demand has turned upside down: clients are at the centre of an enterprise's strategy. In reality this statement stemming from political economy does not even touch our actual problem: the rise in the power of, and the strategic role played by, the machine of expression within

contemporary capitalism (through opinion building, marketing, communication according to a more sociological definition etc).

Consumption cannot simply be reduced to buying or consuming ('destroying') a service or product, as political economy and its critique would have it, but above everything it involves belonging to a world, adhering to a certain universe. And what kind of a world is it? We only have to switch on the television or radio, walk in a city or buy a weekly magazine or daily newspaper to know that this world is constituted by the arrangements of statements, by regimes of signs where the expression is called advertisement/publicity and the expressed constitutes a solicitation, an order which are in themselves valuations, judgements and beliefs about the world, of oneself and others. The expressed is not an ideological valuation but an incitement (it forms a sign), an invitation to espouse a way of life: a way of dressing, of having a body, of eating, communicating and travelling, a way of having a style, a way of speaking etc.

Television is a flow of advertisements interspersed by films, variety shows and news programmes. The radio is an uninterrupted flow of broadcasts and advertisements: it becomes increasingly difficult to know when one begins and the other ends. And, as Jean-Luc Godard has said, once we have removed all the pages containing advertising, a magazine is reduced to an editorial by the editor-in-chief. Unfortunately we have to admit that Deleuze was right in arguing that the company has a soul, that marketing has become its strategic centre, and that advertisers are 'creative'.¹ The business firm exploits and neutralizes the dynamics of the event and the process of the constitution of difference and repetition by making them depend on the logic of valorization. The 'event' for the company is called publicity (or communication, or marketing). Even a traditional industry like the automobile industry produces only cars which have already been sold. And to sell them means to construct a consumer, a clientele. Business companies invest up to forty percent of their turnover in marketing, advertising, styling, design etc. (in the American audio-visual industry fifty percent of a budget of a film is invested in its promotion and launching). Indeed the investments in the expression machine can well exceed the investments in 'labour'.

Publicity, in a manner of 'event', organizes first the ways to feel so that it can solicit a way of living; it actualizes and organizes the way to feel and to be felt in the souls to be able to realize them in bodies. The company without factories thus performs incorporeal transformations (the order words of ads) that say themselves and say themselves only of the bodies.² Incorporeal transformations produce (or would like to produce) first and foremost a change in sensibility, a change in our way to value and perceive. Incorporeal transformations have no referent, they are self-referential. There are no preliminary needs, no natural necessities that their production would satisfy. Incorporeal transformations pose valuations and their object at the same time as they create them.

1 "We are told businesses have souls, which is surely the most terrifying news in the world"; Deleuze, G. (1995) *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. M. Joughin. NY: Columbia UP (p.181).

2 Of the functioning of *order words* and their relation to *incorporeal transformations* see also Deleuze G. and F. Guattari (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi. London: Athlone Press. Ch. 4, esp. pp. 79-85; 108-109.

Publicity constitutes the spiritual dimension of the simulacrum 'event' which the companies and advertising agencies invent, and which has to be realised in the body. The material dimension of this pseudo-event, its realisation, takes place when the ways of living, eating, having a body, dressing, inhabiting a place, etc. get incarnated in the body: materially, we live among goods and services that we buy, in houses, among furniture, with objects and services that we have grabbed as 'possible' in the flows of information and communication within which we are immersed. We go to bed, we get busy, we do this or that whilst these codes continue to circulate (they 'insist') in Hertzian flows, telematic networks and newspapers etc. They double up our world and our existence as a 'possible' which is already, in reality, an order, a command, authoritarian word even if expressed as seduction.

We could push even further the use of Gabriel Tarde's toolbox to explain this process. In what way does marketing produce the actualisation in the soul? What type of subjectification is mobilised by publicity? The conception of an advertisement the sequence and rhythm of images, the sound track, are constructed like a *ritornello* or 'whirl'. Some adverts resonate with us like motifs or chorus. To your surprise you may have found yourself whistling the tune of an ad (at least it has happened to me). The Leibnizian distinction between an actualisation in the soul and a realisation in the body is very important since these two processes do not coincide and can produce absolutely unpredictable effects on the subjectivity of monads.

Television networks do not know boundaries between nations, classes, status, income etc. Their images are received in non-Western countries and by the poorest in the West all of whom have little or no purchasing power at all. Incorporeal transformations act on the souls of television viewers (in poor countries, just as on those of the poor in rich countries) by creating a new sensibility, for a new 'possible' does exist, even if it does not exist outside of its representation in television images. For this to possibly have a certain reality it only needs to be expressed by a sign, as Deleuze has demonstrated.

But its realisation in the bodies, the ability to buy, to live with one's body among the goods and services that signs express as constituting possible worlds, does not always follow (not at all for most of the world's population), leading to expectations, frustrations, refusals. Suely Rolnik, an observer of these phenomena in Brazil, speaks of the two subjective figures that constitute the extremes between which the variations of the soul and body produced by the logic described above are articulated: the glamour of the 'luxurious subjectivity' and the misery of 'rubbish subjectivity'.³ The West is terrified by new Islamic subjectivities. But it itself created this 'monster' through the most pacifist and seductive techniques. Here we are not faced with the remains of traditional societies to be modernised, but with the real cyborgs that combine the most ancient with the most modern. Incorporeal transformations come before and faster than corporeal transformations. Three quarters of humanity are excluded from the latter but they have easier access to the former (first and foremost through television). Contemporary capitalism does not first arrive with factories, these follow, if they follow at all. It arrives with words, signs, and images. Today, these technologies do not only precede factories, but also the machine of war.

3 Rolnik, S. (2003) 'L'effet Lula, Politiques de la Résistance', *Chimères*, 49, printemps.

The advertisement event is an encounter, even a double encounter: an encounter with the soul and another one with the body. This double encounter can lead to double discrepancy since it is only an opening onto the possible in a modality of a problematic. Publicity is only a possible world, a fold that envelops virtualities. The explanation of what is enveloped, the development of the fold, can produce heterogeneous effects since the monads are all autonomous, independent, virtual singularities. Another possible world is always virtually there. The bifurcation between divergent series haunts contemporary capitalism. Incompatible worlds unfold in the same world. For this reason the process of the capitalistic appropriation is never closed onto itself, but is always uncertain, unpredictable, and open. 'Exist is to be different' and each time this differentiation is uncertain, unpredictable and containing risks.

Capitalism tries to control this bifurcation – the worlds are always virtually there – through continuous variation and modulation. It does not produce the subject nor the object but subjects and objects in continuous variation managed by technologies of modulation that are themselves in continuous variation – we are here far beyond the various theories of domination (e.g. Frankfurt School, Situationism, Bourdieu's sociology). In Western countries control is not performed only through the modulation of brains but also through the moulding of bodies (prisons, schools, hospitals) and the management of life (Welfare State). It would be too generous towards our capitalist societies to think that everything happens through continuous variation of subjects and objects, the modulation of brains, and the capture of memory and attention. The control society also integrates 'old' disciplinary *dispositifs*. In non-Western societies, where disciplinary institutions and the welfare state are weaker and less developed, control means more directly the logic of war – even in times of 'peace' (as in Brazil).

The paradigmatic body of Western control societies is no longer the confined body of the factory worker, the mad, the sick, but the obese body (full of the worlds of business firms) or the anorexic body (refusal of these same worlds) who watch on television the bodies wounded by hunger, violence, thirst, of the majority of the world population. The paradigmatic body of our societies is no longer a mute body shaped by disciplines, but the body and soul are marked by signs, words, images (companies' logos) registered in us in the same way that Kafka's machine of 'prison colony' grafts its commands on the skin of the condemned.

In the 1970s Pasolini described very precisely how television has changed the soul and bodies of Italians, how it became the main instrument of an anthropological transformation that affected first and foremost the young. He used almost the same concept as Tarde to explain the ways in which television acts at a distance: it operates through example rather than through discipline, imitation or constraint. It is a conduct of conduct, action on possible action (of which also Foucault talks about). These incorporeal transformations that run in our heads like tunes – that circulate all over the planet, that enter in every home, that constitute the real weapon of conquest, of capture of brains and bodies – are simply incomprehensible for Marxist and economic theories. Here we are facing a paradigmatic change that we cannot capture if we start from the concepts of labour, of praxis. Indeed, these concepts could give us a false image of what production is today: the process we have just described precedes all organizations of work (and non-work).

Production of the 'Possibles'

The 'possible' (product or service) that expresses the 'world' of the business company does not exist in advance but must be created. The world, workers, consumers and services do not pre-exist the event. On the contrary, they are generated by the event. It is on the basis of this neo-monadological assertion that we should reformulate the theory of labour completely. One can no longer understand production based on the pin factory of Smith or the Manchester factories of Marx because it actually is an effectuation of worlds before being a 'production'. Contemporary capitalist economy follows literally the cycle of capital accumulation described by Tarde: *invention*, as the creation of the possible and its process of actualisation in the souls (of consumers as well as workers), is the real production, whilst what Marx and the economists call production is, in reality, a *reproduction* (or a manufacture of a product or a management of a service even if in this case the things are a bit more complicated).

To describe the characteristics of labour in contemporary enterprises I draw upon Philippe Zarifian's research which seems to confirm our hypotheses in several respects. According to Zarifian, even in factories, one of the cradles of disciplinary techniques, the organization of labour is invested by the logic of the event. The change is radical. The disciplinary logic incarnates in a tradition of thoughts and an ensemble of practices that "consider events as negative: they should not take place, everything should unfold according to what was anticipated and planned, and serve the normalisation of labour".⁴

The disciplinary vision of the organization of labour is 'anti-event', 'anti-inventive', since, as we know, it has to subordinate event and invention to reproduction. But the activity of firms that are tuned in with their customers is no longer exclusively organized by forecasting and planning. Instability, uncertainty, the necessity to face changes in real time, all deeply penetrate the organization of labour. Labour becomes, as Tarde had seen well, a set of events, "of things that happen in unpredictable ways that exceed what would be considered normal".⁵ The response to the rise of the unforeseeable, the uncertain, events, involves mobilising individual and collective attention towards 'what is happening, what has happened and what will happen', and this means invention, the ability to organize, to combine, to make happen. Events and inventions are distributed all along the cycle of 'production' (from the design to the manufacturing of the product) and get organized alongside routines, habits, codified actions. Even the organization of labour is literally 'difference and repetition'.

In one of his most visionary writings, Marx talks about labour no longer as a direct act of transformation of raw materials, but as an act of control over production. But in contemporary capitalism control means paying attention to events whether they are taking place in the 'market' or the workshop; it means paying attention to being able to act, to anticipate and 'being up to it'. It demands learning from uncertainty and mutations, it means becoming active in the face of instability and collaborating in 'communicational networks'. Summarizing Zarifian's thoughts on the organization of

4 Zarifian, P. (2003) *À Quoi Sert Le Travail?*, La Dispute, p.95

5 Zarifian, p.95.

work in contemporary companies, we might say that we have passed from operation to action and from teamwork to activity in networks.

Moreover, according to Zarifian, competition between companies is aimed not at conquering a market but at ‘capturing a clientele’, at building a *customer capital* which is managed monopolistically. The market, as understood by political economy, does not exist or is identified with the constitution/capture of customers. Two elements are essential to this strategy: building customer loyalty and having the capacity to renew what is on offer through innovation. The space within which this strategy is constituted is an informational and communicational territory which transforms the co-operation between minds into a public/clientele. The capture of a clientele and the building of its loyalty means first and foremost capturing attention and memory, capturing minds, creating and capturing desires, beliefs (the sensible) and networks.

All production is production of services, that is, a transformation of “the conditions of activity and the capacity for future actions of customers, users, and the public”, which in the end always aims at the ‘mode of life’.⁶ The service does not satisfy a pre-existing demand, but it must anticipate it, it must ‘make it happen’. This anticipation takes place entirely within the domain of the virtual by mobilising resources such as linguistic resources and language, communication, rhetoric, images etc. The anticipation of services by the virtual and signs has the advantage, on the one hand, to be able to use all properties of language, thus opening up the exploration of several possibles, and, on the other hand, to enable work on sense through communication.

Autonomy and Responsibility of the Worker-Monad

If this conceptualisation of activity as event mobilises some of the terms of Deleuze and Spinoza’s philosophies, Zarifian, inspired by Tarde, draws upon Leibniz’ monadology to think about the subjectivity of workers and their cooperation within contemporary capitalism. Even in the firm without factories the modulation of spirit (spiritual memory) is organized with the moulding of body (forming of corporeal memory – which is the essence of Taylorism). Monadology allows Zarifian to articulate his paradoxical thesis: activity becomes jointly more deeply individual and more deeply collective. As Tarde rightly saw, Leibniz allows us to escape from the dilemmas involved in the relationships between individual and collective, and thus both from individualism and holism, since the collective and the social (the world in Leibniz’ language) are included in the individuality of the monad: “The relationship of the individual with his/her activity tends to become a monad, a totality in itself (...) This relationship is no longer seen, at first sight, as a fraction, functionally determined, of the organic division of labour. It becomes global on its own account.”⁷

As for Tarde, the worker-monads are open, even twice: from the inside towards the outside and from the outside towards the inside. Zarifian gives the example of a

6 Zarifian, p.47.

7 Zarifian, p.62.

financial adviser who works for the Post Office, having his/her own autonomy, responsibility, power of initiative and decision towards a client. Supiot's work as well as our own research suggests that responsibility, autonomy, initiatives are the competencies of an increasing number of workers with no distinction whether salaried, independent or unemployed (competences of an unspecified subjectivity).

The relationship of the monad (financial adviser) and a client is a singularity included within a universe, the universe of the commercial operations of the Post Office. The monad is an 'opening from inside' in the sense that it condenses within it the 'stakes surrounding it'. The universe of the enterprise "penetrates the monad from the inside without cancelling its singularity. On the contrary, it is only within this very singularity that this global universe acquires meaning and makes its impact".⁸ To be sure, the stakes are defined from above, but they are "reabsorbed, condensed and reformed within each monad, each time in a unique way."⁹

Here we are confronted once again with what we saw earlier (monads are for the world of the enterprise, and the latter is included within the soul of each of them in a singular way), and what Zarifian calls the *interpenetration of two globalities*: a monad is a universe of the enterprise which is present in the monad's interiority. The company not only has to create a world for the consumer, as we saw above, but also for the worker. To work within a contemporary organization means to belong, to adhere to its world, to its desires and beliefs. To be sure, this is the ideology of contemporary organizations but it represents a radical change in the 'subjectivity' of the organization and the subjectivity of workers. It is at this price that 'work' is carried out. And this is a double edged sword: on the one hand, it affirms workers' autonomy, independence and singularity (individual substance), on the other hand, it requires workers to belong to the organizational world, since this "world is internal to the situation and conduct of the subject."¹⁰ This situation is neither better nor worse than the Taylorist division of labour, it is only different. And it is from this difference that we should start.

The distinction between actualisation in the souls and realisation in the bodies is also valid here. Managerial practices are confronted with the unpredictability of this double encounter in the soul and in the body which is a pure event; and leads to discrepancies between the workers' subjectivities and organizations' strategies in the same way as was discussed above in relation to the consumers. These techniques of control do not replace disciplinary techniques but are combined with them. The emphasis on control or discipline depends on hierarchical levels, competencies of the workers and the type of production they are engaged in. In the new organization of labour the Tayloristic socialisation of workers based on physical proximity inside the factory workshop is lacking and gives way to individualisation which is not based on *carceral* solitude of the working post but on a sort of *monastic* solitude. According to Zarafian, this is a form of individualisation that condenses within itself an increasing number of social relationships. The dimension of the monastic solitude of work nourishes social exchanges that acquire meaning and value only through what got initiated within the

8 Zarifian, p.64.

9 Zarifian, p.64.

10 Zarifian, p.65.

monad – what Zarifian refers to as the opening of the monad from inside towards outside. Here the activity does no longer develop in a team, as with disciplinary mechanisms, but in networks which modulate the relation between singularity and multiplicity according to the requirements of valorization. The neo-monadological paradigm of the event, of the invention of the possible (subject and object) shows its effectiveness precisely in the domain of work.

Finance and the Machines of Expression

The machines of expression and constitution of the sensible (desires and beliefs) do not only act within the organization of production but also in finance. The same process that we saw at play in advertising applies in the fixation of rates on the stock exchange. Money is a force of choice, valuation and direction of investments. As shown by the latest work of the Regulation School, financial valuation is a product of the logic of opinion and not of simple objective and impersonal market mechanisms. Financial valuation and choices depend on the ability to ‘give birth to shared beliefs’ where there only exist different and heterogeneous ways of envisaging the future. Yet to explain the functioning of public opinion we shall not refer to the theories of the Regulation School, but to Gabriel Tarde who, drawing upon his neo-monadology, had already a century ago defined stock exchanges as laboratories in social psychology. A quotation on the stock exchange presupposes the transformation of individual judgements into collective judgements. According to Tarde, the determination of value takes place through public opinion whose development is in turn affected by two factors: the press and conversation.¹¹

As all social quantities, opinion has to be understood as a form of interaction and appropriation of the brains (of the monads) which relate to each other according to relations of *leaders* and the *led*. Opinion is never a simple procedure, an impersonal mechanism, a play of systematic mirrors as the Regulation School would have us believe. We talk about ‘opinion’ but in reality there are always ‘two opinions’, that is, there are always plays of forces, monads that agree or disagree according to one-sided or reciprocal relations.

But how did common opinion become such? Not spontaneously, given the diversity among people and the complexity of the questions. There have been suggestions from instigators who, throughout history, have been making opinion by expressing it; and there have been imposition from military or civilian despots who, by violating opinion, lead it. So let’s get it right: the real

11 “What Saint-Beuve says of genius, that ‘genius is like a king that creates its people’, is essentially true of the great journalist. How many advertising agents create their own public! To be true, for Edouard Drumont to incite anti-Semitism, his agitation attempts had to coincide with a certain frame of mind disseminated within the population; however, for as long as there wasn’t a voice to express this state of mind, it remained at an individual level, weak, not contagious, unaware of itself. Who voiced it created it as a collective force, maybe artificial, but real nevertheless.” Tarde, G. (1998) *L’Opinion et la Foule*. PUF. Paris: p.40-41.

government is constituted by the opinion of the group of leaders, or the group of military or civilian terrorists.¹²

Regulation economists, preoccupied by the justification of democracy, recognise the role of inter-cerebral relationships in the determination of stock exchange values, but they associate with opinion a soothing, regulating dimension mutilated of the passion to have. Looking at things ‘from above’, says Tarde, we could see in the prices the constraint of an exterior and impersonal authority or spontaneous authority (the market) that imposes itself on individuals.

But, in reality, when we enter into the precise and explanatory details, we see that there are no prices that have not been fixed by some dominating wills that have seized the market (...) the stock exchange only needs a bullish or bearish elite to decide the fate of value. The price of wheat, quoted on the London and New York stock exchanges, is the result of the conflict between two armies that speculate up or down, commanded by well known leaders of various influences, who legislate for the whole world.¹³

Even in stock exchanges the market does not exist but is rather identified as the capture or constitution of the public, the clientele. The one-sided power relationships that the ‘terrorists’ or ‘despots’ impose on the management of intersubjective connections that produce opinion are based upon the forms of knowledge that give them a differential advantage, and that allow them to *conduct* temporarily the *conducts* of others. The power to act increases as society acquires new relational technologies as the machines of expression develop. “It seems (...) that it increases with the means of action, the press, the telegraph, telephone that the progress of the civilization leads to influential individuals”.¹⁴ But why has finance acquired today such a power of choice, valuation, and decision on the economy that it reverses the relationship between industry and finance characterising disciplinary societies? Because money *is*, in the same way as language, the existence of the possible ‘as such’. It is for this reason that money, rather than the ‘real economy’, is able to control and capture the organization of difference and repetition and its motor: the virtual.

In societies of control money represents the colonisation of the power of virtuality by capitalists. Tarde is useful here again. He asserts that money is above all a *force* of mind, that it is a “possibility, an infinite virtuality” that tends towards its actualisation. If political economy looks like social physics, it is not only because of the possibility to quantify its activities and products, but mostly because of the exchange between *virtual* and *actual* which money makes possible. Just as physical phenomena are a continuous conversion of potential energy into actual energy, so are economic phenomena, for Tarde, a perpetual exchange between money and concrete wealth. When wealth expresses itself in money, its power to act becomes virtual and it multiplies. The difference between the power to act of material wealth and the power to act of money corresponds to the one that exists between “the actual and the virtual, I was going to say the finite and the infinite”.¹⁵ A guaranteed and unconditional income seems to me the

12 Tarde, G. (1899) *Les Transformations du pouvoir*. Paris: Felix Alcan, p.14.

13 Tarde, G. (1902) *Psychologie économique*, I. Paris: Felix Alcan, pp.32-33.

14 *Psychologie économique*, I, pp.32-33.

15 *Psychologie économique*, I, p.311.

only way to give back to money its virtuality, appropriated by the capitalists. In the capitalist economy, the virtuality of money is subordinated to capitalist valorization. It is thus limited. Only guaranteed income could make the virtual power of money to act in an absolute immanence, that of the cooperation between minds.

The Firm Without Factories and the Cooperation Between Minds

To understand the event of the cooperation between minds, it is not enough to say that work becomes emotional, linguistic or virtuoso because even the configuration of capitalistic accumulation and exploitation changes radically. The capitalist economy is no longer structured through the temporal sequence of production, markets and consumption, as the economists and Marxists still teach us. Let's take as an example the first stock exchange capitalization of possible worlds: Microsoft (even if the same goes for the 'cultural', artistic and media production, as we saw with Zarifian, but also for the classical industrial production). Political economy and Marxism describe the process as follows: Microsoft is a company which recruits workers (data-processing and information technology engineers) who provide a product or a service (software) which, thereafter, is sold to the customers in the market. Microsoft realises surplus value exploiting its workers and then it enters into competition with other companies and this competition leads to a monopoly. Neo-monadology offers us a radically different account: Microsoft does not initially have a relation with a 'market' or with 'workers', but through the latter with the cooperation between minds. It is from here that we must start.

Cooperation between minds expresses a power of co-creation and co-realization which means, in this specific domain, the capacity of creating and realizing (free) software. To express itself this cooperation does not need the company or the capitalist, as claimed by Marx and Smith. On the contrary, it depends strictly on the development and diffusion of science, technological devices and communication networks, the systems of education, health, and any other service which concerns the 'population'. The cooperation's power of creation and realization depends thus on the availability and accessibility of 'public goods' or 'collectives' and 'commons' (science, knowledge, Internet, health etc.).

It expresses itself according to modalities which are quite specific to the cooperation between minds: an invention of software is always an arrangement and organization of a multiplicity of intelligences, know-hows and affects that circulate in networks (network of networks), which is not a homogeneous fabric but a heterogeneous arrangement of singularities, flows and patchworks (community of free and singular developers). The creation and realization of software are a power of disjunction and coordination both in creation and in realization (diffusion) because it arranges a multiplicity (of developers) to create software but also a multiplicity (of users) to effectuate it. And the two processes tend to merge.

Capture, both in creation and realization, is always a reciprocal seizure open to the unpredictable and infinite, because the 'creator' and the 'user' tend to merge. The two functions, radically separated by political economy, are thus reversible. Capture, the reciprocal seizure, makes the other monads 'collaborators' even if not all express the same power of creation and organization. The form of creation and realization is public because it is done under the eyes, desires and beliefs of all (under the eyes, desires and beliefs of 'unspecified subjectivity' and not as recognition but as a meeting of possible worlds). The public dimension of cooperation is guaranteed and defended by a licence (Copy-left, the protector of the right to copy, modify and diffuse), which recognizes at the same time the individual initiative, the singular (the moral right of each inventor) and the public nature of activities and their products (all the inventions constitute a 'common pot' available and 'free' for all).

Microsoft acts differently. Its amazing profits are not based on the exploitation of employees, as political economy and Marx teach us, but on the constitution of a clientele and a monopoly exerted upon it. The 'work' of the company and its employees consists in a one-sided capture which aims at transforming the multiplicity of 'collaborators' (monads) into a multiplicity of 'customers'. Its employees (not only engineers but also marketing people, lobbyists etc. trying to guarantee its monopoly) constitute an interface with the cooperation between minds, and their work activity consists of the neutralization and deactivation of the co-creation and co-realization of multiplicity. The power of arrangement, instead of being distributed in a heterogeneous way in the cooperation between minds, is concentrated in the cooperation of the company.

The immediately public form of cooperation is denied by the secrecy which governs the activities in the company (patent) and the secrecy which governs the diffusion of the software (copy-right, impossibility to access the source code) in the cooperation between minds. The neutralization and the capture of the power of co-creation and co-realization are now founded on *intellectual property* and not on property as the means of production as in the 'productive' cooperation of the factory.

Under the conditions of contemporary capitalism, the constitution of the company (and the capital-labour relationship) is a political operation because it divides the cooperation between minds into 'workers employed', on the one hand, and into public/customers on the other. In this way the power of co-creation and co-realization, instead of being divided in a heterogeneous way in the multiplicity, is divided between the *invention* which is assigned to the company (and to the 'workers employed') and the *reproduction* which is assigned to the public/customers. The categories of political economy impose a division between 'production' and 'consumption' which does not hold any more in the cooperation between minds.

The enterprise and the capital-labour relation determine a rigid and non-reversible distribution of the forces of invention and repetition by assigning them onto different subjects in a normative way. Intellectual property has thus a political function: it determines who has the right to create and who has the duty to reproduce. The enterprise and the capital-labour relation not only prevent us from seeing the social dimension of the production of wealth, but they determine the new forms of exploitation

and subjugation. Unemployment, poverty and precariousness are the direct result of the action of companies (and the politics of employment): the capture of social productivity imposes a social hierarchisation, a division between what is 'productive' and what is not. The company exploits society above all by exploiting workers.

Products of the Cooperation Between Minds: Common Goods

Cooperation between minds, unlike cooperation in the Smithian and Marxian factory, produces public, collective or common goods: knowledge, language, science, culture, art, information, forms of life, relations with oneself, others and the world etc. We distinguish common goods and public or collective goods as understood in political economy. Indeed, the former are not only like water, air and nature etc. – 'goods' of all – but rather created and realized like the modalities that Marcel Duchamp uses to speak about artistic creation. A work of art is indeed for one half the result of the activity of the artist and for the other half the result of the activity of the public (which looks at it, reads it, or listens to it).

It is this 'artistic' dynamic, and not the one of producer/consumer, which is at work in the creation and realization of common goods. These goods, unlike the tangible, appropriable, exchangeable, consumable products of the capital-labour relationship, are intelligible, inappropriable, inexchangeable, inconsumable, as Gabriel Tarde puts it. Common goods, the results of unspecified subjectivities' co-creation and co-realization, are free, as well as undivided and infinite. The inappropriable nature of the common good means that the common good (knowledge, language, work of art, science, etc.), assimilated by the one who acquires it, does not become anyone's 'exclusive property', and that it finds its legitimacy by being shared. Only the goods produced within the capital-labour relationship imply necessarily an individual appropriation because their consumption expends and 'destroys', that is, renders them intransmissible for anyone else. They can only be 'for me or for you' and the attempt to share them fails systematically because of the nature of the object.

A common good is inexchangeable because of its indivisible and inappropriable nature. In economic exchange everyone, as political economy teaches us, finds his/her own account, but only by alienating herself from that she has in her possession. In the 'exchange' of common goods (of knowledge, for example), the one who transmits them does not lose them, does not suffer by socializing them, but, on the contrary, their value increases in the organization of their diffusion and sharing. Common goods are neither consumable in terms of the criteria of political economy. Only the exchange of goods produced in the factory of Smith and Marx satisfy a desire through 'destructive consumption' of the exchanged product. But "does one consume his beliefs in thinking about them or the masterpieces that one admires by looking at them"?¹⁶ Any consumption of a common good can lead immediately into the creation of new knowledge or new masterpieces. Circulation becomes the fundamental moment of the process of production and consumption.

16 *Psychologie économique*, I, p.88.

The rules of the production, circulation and consumption of common goods are not the same as those of the 'productive cooperation' of the factory and its economy. Marxism and political economy enter into a crisis because the creation and realization of common goods – which takes the same place in contemporary capitalism as material production had in industrial capitalism – are no longer explicable by their conception of the productive cooperation (organized and commanded by the capitalist). The sharing of wealth thus created can no longer be measured nor legitimated by the ideas of 'productive labour' or 'utility'. The capital-labour relationship is, as we saw in the case of Microsoft, the fundamental instrument of reducing common goods into private goods, of ignoring the social nature of 'production', of transforming collaborators into customers. This means imposing a logic suitable for political economy onto the cooperation between minds (whose action is 'indivisible and infinite'): a logic of scarcity onto an economy that has overcome it.

The theoretical option contained in Marxism and political economy is conservative and reactionary: it legitimates the expropriation of common wealth by the enterprise. The apprehension and measurement of the production and distribution of wealth on the basis of the capital-labour relationship constitutes one of the major obstacles that social and political struggles confront today (cf. the impotence of the trade unions and institutional left who have no answers to the blackmail operated by the 'financial holes' of the social budgets – the deficit in the pension regime, the deficit in the health insurance system etc. – and who defend the 'social rights' of Fordism because they do not understand, nor do they want to, that the production of wealth exceeds the capital-labour relationship).

The resistance to the capitalist appropriation of common goods (an appropriation which today constitutes the essence of the neo-liberal strategy) will have effectiveness only if it assumes the primacy of the cooperation between minds over the capital-labour relationship. The firm without factories must integrate in its organization of labour the modalities of creation and realization of the neo-monadologic cooperation and the dynamics of unspecified subjectivities to be able to capture this social 'productivity'. Even for the company, it is an imperative to assume the cooperation between minds as a political stake. It is only in this way that it is possible to define the new objectives and terrains of struggle which concern precisely the multiplicity of which also workers are part of. It is only in this way that the public/clientele relation may be reversed into the political process of the constitution of the multitude.

Capitalism and the Ignoble Ways of Life

We can now draw a few general conclusions. The differences to theories that adopt the 'paradigm of subject/labour', which I have tried to highlight, are remarkable. It is not 'productive' labour (commanded, subordinated) that is exploited, but the arrangement of difference and repetition. It is the arrangement of the creation of possible worlds and their realisation (of which manufacturing and its factories is only one mode) that is the object of capitalist appropriation. 'Productive' labour, as understood by Marxists or more generally by economists, is integrated within this arrangement but forms only one of its constituent parts. 'Production' is a heterogeneous arrangement which entails a

multiplicity of subjects who are involved in multiple activities both inside and outside the firm (workers, consumers, public). Among these activities we should include watching television, as Godard and Guattari suggested.

More deeply, we should rethink the category of labour. It is strangely reduced and mutilated by economists and socialists who always regard it as an activity subordinated and mobilized by the firm and distinguish between the activity of invention and activity reproduction, between difference and repetition. We should rethink it on the basis of 'free' activity independent of, and as a precondition to, the mobilization by the firm, that is, on the basis of *whatever subjectivity*.

Gabriel Tarde gives us the categories to define this 'free' activity independent of, and as a precondition to, the mobilization by the firm. It can be located in a spectrum that ranges from the activity of an automaton to that of a genius. One can pass from the one to the other by infinite and infinitesimal variations. What is involved in the one as in the other is memory and its *conatus*: attention. In the activity of automaton, attention is completely absorbed in the realization of the completed action and memory is more a 'habit' inscribed in the body. Subjectivity is an automatism; a centre of action that receives and transmits movements and it corresponds to the senso-motorial memory.

In the activity of genius, on the contrary, activity is not captured by completed action and memory inserts itself in between action and reaction as indetermination and choice, surrounded by a 'peaceful cloud' of possibles. Subjectivity is always a centre of action, but it now has the capacity to insert a delay, duration between action and reaction, in order to develop something new. Memory no longer coincides with sensori-motor memory. It is no longer a habit, an automatism, but intellectual memory able to embrace heterogeneity and invent. According to Tarde, we should therefore first "separate as clearly as possible work from invention".¹⁷

Labour, as the Marxists and economists understand it, is the capture of this 'free' action, and has to be included within this new framework, within this new way of evaluating activities. Only once we have established this distinction will we be able to see, in the interior of economic labour, like intellectual labour or artistic labour, in what proportions invention (production) and labour (reproduction), creation and imitation, contribute in defining the different activities.

In the Marxian formula of 'living labour' it is not only the concept of 'labour' but also that of 'living' that we must criticize. For indeed the latter does not refer to the concept of living we borrowed from biologists – memory that preserves and creates the sensible – but to the faculties of the subject of the classical German philosophy. The difference to industrial work, which acts principally on physical (or chemical) forces, is that the action of memory acts principally on 'psychological forces' (the sensible) because of its capacity to *imprint* and receive the *print* of the desires and beliefs of other minds. Yet in the paradigm of difference, the activity of memory is distinguished from 'labour' not only because it relates to the sensible but also because it arranges in inseparable ways the *differential* activity (invention) and the *repetitive, reproductive* activity (imitation)

17 *Psychologie économique*, I, p.226.

as powers of time. It possesses both the faculty to create something new (an image, a sensation, an idea) and the faculty to reproduce it infinitely (it is the ‘perpetual printing of images, sensations, ideas’).

Memory does not evolve nor is it socialized according to the methods of the objectification of subjective activity described by the various theories of labour. Memory has the particularity of being able to externalise without alienating itself. A discovery or an invention incarnates, at the same time, inside ourselves in our nerve or muscular memory “under a form of a mental cliché or acquired habit, a notion, or a talent – or outside ourselves, in a book or a machine. We could equally say that a book is an external memory, or that a memory is an internal book that an invisible librarian, hidden in our under-ego, puts under our eyes when the time comes.”¹⁸ Memory can operate a kind of double incorporation, internal and external. The possibility of being able to socialize without alienating itself is founded on the specificity of common goods and their economy – the inappropriable, inexchangeable, and inconsumable.

Even if, as Marx would have it, we start from the objective element, from the goods, we still come to the exhaustion of the paradigm of thinking based upon ‘subject’ and ‘work’: goods are not the crystallisation of the working time of the workers, but the crystallisation of events, inventions, knowledge on the one hand, and the crystallisation of the activity that reproduces multiplicities of subjectivities (which in turn can to different degrees be considered as a series of inventions, events, knowledge).

In the societies of control, the aim is no longer to *appropriate* as in societies of sovereignty, nor to *combine and increase the power of the forces* as in disciplinary societies, but to *create worlds*. This is the condition for capitalist valorisation today. By reversing the Marxian definition we could say that capitalism is not a mode of production, but a production of modes. Capitalism is a mannerism. In societies of control, the alternatives that are open are even more radical and dramatic than those afforded by disciplinary societies.

On the one hand, capitalist modes open possibilities for ignoble life. The ‘different’ styles of life are in reality a variation of the same; the capitalist ways of life produce a homogenisation and not a singularisation of individualities. The creation of possibles is not open to the unpredictability of events, but it is codified according to the laws of the valorization of capital; the modes of subjectification do not draw upon the infinity of monstrosities concealed within the human soul but they take for their reference the white middle-class man, expressed and caricatured in an almost criminal way by the neo-conservatives within the current American administration.

18 *Psychologie économique*, I, p. 353. Soviet psychology, whilst considering the French tradition idealist (through the work of Bergson), also discovered through its own means the double incorporation of memory described by Tarde. According to Vygotsky and Lurja, human beings differ from other animals through the use of both external instruments and internal instruments. Signs, symbols and language are not only external instruments to cooperate with others, but also internal instruments to plan and organize conduct. Vygotskij, L.S. and R.L. Aleksandr (1997) *Strumento e segno nello sviluppo del bambino*. Laterza.

Equally, the Western ways of life (the *American way of life*) cannot be extended to other world populations without risking, for example, the ecological destruction of the planet. Capitalism can no longer present itself as ‘universal’ – its expansionary power finds its limit precisely in relation to its modes of life: Westerners can no longer impose to the rest of the world a Marshall plan that would reproduce their ways of life. Any generalisation would presuppose a radical questioning of these modes of life. If, as the bloodthirsty American president would want, ‘one cannot touch the American way of life’, we need to prepare for and engage in a permanent war. The comparisons with the Roman Empire are often misleading because here we do not prepare war to expect peace, but to save Western ways of life at the expense of all other inhabitants of the planet.

The Anti-Productive Functions of Contemporary Capitalism

Capitalism, as a production of modes of life, as a proliferation of possible worlds, proves to be a force of anti-production and destruction of the cooperation between minds and its biological conditions of existence in several respects:

Firstly, it destroys the power of creation and reproduction of individual and collective singularities since it continues to measure the process of the constitution of difference and repetition as ‘work’. Unemployment, precariousness and poverty cannot be determined by the lack of ‘work’ (and employment). They are procedures of the destruction of the powers of invention, that is, the subjective conditions of the process that constitutes difference and repetition. What is at stake is not employment, but the virtual power of creation (Beuys) of all and each of us.

To eliminate genius is their obvious preoccupation. This should not concern us too much if only genius was at stake; but it is not only genius that is at stake, it is our individual originality, our individual creativity whose very effectiveness and existence are threatened; because all of us, in some ways from the most obscure to the most famous, do invent, improve, change, at the same time as we imitate. There is not one of us who, throughout his/her life, does not leave a profound or imperceptible mark on his/her language, religion, science, art.¹⁹

The paradigm of work-employment is actively involved in, and complicit to, this destruction since it legitimizes the organizing mechanisms of power and appropriation in societies of control. On the one hand, it legitimizes the appropriation (largely for free) of the multiple relations constituting the worlds without any distinction between work and non-work, between work and life. On the other hand, it legitimizes and organizes a distribution of income still bound to the exercise of employment, to the subordination to a private or public superior.

Today surplus is produced not in the exploitation of labour, but in this gap between the appropriation of wealth produced by the heterogeneity of subjectivities and the modes of organizing, as explained above, and its distribution organized and controlled by work-employment. The problem is not to proclaim ‘the end of work’, nor to put forward

19 Tarde, G. (1898) “La sociologie” in *Études de psychologie sociale*, Paris: Giard et Briere.

the opposite argument that ‘everyone works’, but to change the principles of valuation, to change the way of conceptualising ‘the value of value’, as Nietzsche suggested in *On the Genealogy of Morality* over a century ago.

Contemporary capitalism destroys cooperation between minds also in the sense that it transforms creative activities into ‘pollution’ of brains – to pick up again the proposal of Félix Guattari.²⁰ The activities that actualize the public, the collective perception and intelligence, are anti-productive since by subordinating the constitution of desires and beliefs (the sensible) to the imperatives of valorization, they produce an impoverishment, a formatting of subjectivity that offers a spectre of possibilities ranging from the glamour of ‘luxury subjectivity’ to the misery of ‘subjectivity loss’. The anti-productive functions express all their power of pollution to the mind because they touch directly the sensible, sense and living (memory).

From the Capital-Labour to the Capital-Life Relationship

In societies of control, it is no longer the activity of the worker that epitomises ‘alienation’, but the activity of the cooperation between brains organized and controlled by the logic of the firm without factories.

By using Tarde we may identify the power and stakes of these activities in the following way. We can define ‘cerebral work’ according to the ways in which it acts on the *wills*, *intelligences* and *sensibilities*. What are ‘the real objects’, the products of inter-cerebral action? The rigidity of conviction (beliefs) and the solidity of passions (desires) with which one wants to ‘defeat, transform, eradicate’ other convictions and passions. And what is the raw material out of which these convictions and passions are made, which contemporary workers use in the same way as industrial workers used iron, coal, etc.? This raw material is the *habit*, that is, opinions, tastes, customs and know-hows, which, born in the mind of an inventor, have become routines through imitation and repetition. Inversely, what are the tastes, opinions, behaviours, the ways of life? They are the contraction of bodily and mental habits. Habits and institutions that have to be constituted, or habits and institutions that have to be decomposed, to make place for others.

What are the forces that have to be mobilised in the inter-cerebral work? *Attention* and *memory* as the forces of creation and constitution of habits. Cerebral work does not therefore limit itself to the ‘manipulation of symbols’ or linguistic production, as it is too quickly assumed today to delineate the new conditions of this type of work. The formation of behaviours and habits, of competences and knowledge has to mobilise the intensive and pre-individual forces of memory and body to transform prejudices, opinions, tastes, passions, knowledges: “In the industry of transformation, the obstacle comes from chemical affinities, either from physical cohesions, or motor or other forces. In the work of inter-spiritual action, the obstacle stems first and *foremost* from the inattention on the part of those to whom we address ourselves and who need to be

20 Guattari, F. (1989) *Les Trois Écologies*. Galilée

touched; then from the ideas or desires, the feelings to uproot in them, as if they were contrary to the aim that we pursue, namely conflicting inter-spiritual actions exercised by others in the form of ancient customs, new fashions or individual whims”.²¹

We are, in other words, faced with a form of capitalist accumulation that is no longer only based on the exploitation of labour in the industrial sense, but also on that of knowledge, life, health, leisure, culture etc. What organizations produce and sell not only includes material or immaterial goods, but also forms of communication, standards of socialisation, perception, education, housing, transportation etc. The explosion of services is directly linked to this evolution; and this does not only involve industrial services but also the mechanisms that organize and control ways of life. The globalisation that we are currently living is not only extensive (delocalisation, global market) but also intensive: it involves cognitive, cultural, affective and communicative resources (the life of individuals) as much as territories, genetic heritage (plants, animals, and humans), the resources necessary to the survival of the species and the planet (water, air, etc). It is about putting life to work.

Foucault argues that life does not become the object of power without it also becoming at the same time the basis for new forms of resistance. On the basis of neo-monadology we can maybe make a few steps forward in the definition of the capital-life relationship. We know, and here we are moving away from Foucault, that life, its process of constitution, creation and evolution, is given by the arrangement of difference and repetition, and that the forces that are engaged in this process are those of ‘pure feeling’ and virtual bifurcations (beliefs and desires). Furthermore and more fundamentally, feeling presupposes memory (and its virtualities) and its conatus attention.

Power can only capture this dynamic by adapting to the characteristics of the action of monads and their constitutive process, since cooperation between minds precedes the division of labour. It can capture this force of actualisation and realisation, but it cannot subordinate it in the same way as it did with labour. The real subordination of activity to capitalist valorization that Marx describes cannot function with the cooperation between minds. It can only appropriate the organization of difference and repetition formally; in other words, it can make incursions in the archipelago, in the patchworks, in the networks of subjectivities and ‘communities’ – but it cannot draw the map of the archipelago or patchwork, nor create forms of life.

The Modality of the Cooperation Between Minds

Neither socialist nor liberal theories can organize and respect the conditions of cooperation between minds without destroying it, without producing anti-productive effects. Neither praxis and its collective wholes (such as class, value, the social) nor the liberal paradigm (and its triptych: individual freedom, market and property) can apprehend the modality of the cooperation between minds. If capitalism wants to exploit and control life it has to control the conditions of the process of constitution of

21 *Psychologie économique*, I, p.260.

difference and repetition. What are these conditions? We shall borrow a definition from Gabriel Tarde's neo-monadology:

Sympathy

The co-production here defines the functioning of the concatenation in the constituent process of life founded on sympathy, confidence and reciprocal possession. Monads relate to one and another through two modes of action:

1. Warrior to warrior, or rival to rival;
2. Assisted to assisted, or collaborator to collaborator.²²

Friendship, feeling of fraternity and pietas are the expressions of the sympathetic relation that is necessary to presuppose in order to explain the constitution and the dynamics of the whole society.²³ Even in the ancient societies 'the essence and content' of social relations is the relationship between *equals*, between *peers*, and thus the exclusion of the slaves, minor sons and women; and of course the latter are in relation to the common interest of the peers an obstacle to overcome. In relation to this same interest, minor sons, women, slaves are simple means to be used. But none of them is an associate.²⁴

What is specifically modern, according to Tarde, is the 'enormous extent' of the group of humans within which there is assumed the reign of a 'superior feeling' of sympathy and confidence. The relations of rivalry and collaboration are always more or less intertwined, but it is by sympathy, mutual assistance, collaboration and confidence that creation takes place. Sympathy is the fundamental social relation that tends – in spite of, and also thanks to, conflicts – to spread. By diffusing one-sided or reciprocal relations, imitation, by multiplying contacts between men, does nothing else but reinforce and spread sympathy: "The feeling of a man's sympathy for man is born of the contacts which put a man in a struggle with a man, and nourishes itself from all the relations of social life."²⁵ The changes in the modes of management of contemporary enterprises, like the strategies of the construction and capture of the publics/clienteles, must take account of the fact that you can't command or order an invention, and that confidence, sympathy and love are rarely favourable to the organization of the cooperation of minds.

Hybridization, Encounter, Interference

Sympathy, confidence and reciprocal possession are presuppositions of the constitution of the world and the self because difference is the motor of the cooperation between minds. Difference acts in another way than competition and contradiction, the evolutionary principles of practice and liberal theories. Difference unfolds its power of creation and construction through sympathetic co-production, confidence and love but

22 Tarde, G. (1884) "Darwinisme naturel et Darwinisme Social", in *Revue philosophique*, t. XVII, p.612.

23 Tarde, G. (2001) *Les lois de l'imitation* [The Laws of Imitation. tr. 1903]. Paris: Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, p. 378.

24 *Les lois de l'imitation*, p.377-78.

25 *Psychologie économique*, II, p.40.

not through acting and coordinating egoisms. Two contrary terms can pass their contradiction only by the definitive victory of one over the other, while two different terms can combine their heterogeneity by hybridization. The fertility of the logic of difference results from its capacity to make heterogeneous forces to encounter, co-produce and co-adapt the forces that do not oppose according to the logic of contraries, but to develop themselves in a logic of autonomous and independent *series* of possible worlds.

This conceptual difference emerges again more radically if we consider, with Tarde, co-production as a veritable process of creation, as innovative hybridization of different series. Co-production does not mean compatibility of the process of constitution with its ambient but invention. To invent means, inversely, to adapt forces and combine them with others. Tarde assigns to the invention-adaptation couple the capacity to resolve conflicts, because it succeeds in determining an agreement between forces not by the means of a *mediation* or *convention* but by establishing a *new plane of immanence* where the forces co-produce new 'modulation' of their relations and discover a 'way not yet paved' (*fata viam inveniunt*) that permits them to use themselves reciprocally.

The most meaningful example of the modalities of action of the invention is the creation of living. Tarde himself established a direct relation between invention and creation in the birth of a new species.²⁶ "There is *meeting* and *interference* of two hereditary rays, of two lines that, alternating, are striving to agree on a *new specific plan*. In the impregnated germ, in other words, two different series, but not at all contrary, of successive generations, opens up an ensemble and they are *co-adapted* in the production of a *new harmony*, a new *modulation* of the common type".²⁷

The opposition, the struggle for existence, on the contrary, does not possess such inventive efficiency of new types; they do not draw a new specific plan, a new modulation. They limit themselves to the purification and defence of the types already created. Invention is therefore not a contract, a peace treaty or a convention. It is neither a balance, equilibrium nor a mutual neutralization, but an invention-force which at the same time as it creates something new invents new uses for forces. It is with this ontology of invention and repetition that capitalism must measure itself.

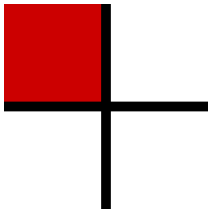
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26 Tarde, G. (1999) *L'Opposition universelle*. Paris: Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, p. 287.

27 *L'Opposition Universelle Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond*, p.136.

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General Economy: The Entrance of Multitude into Production

Akseli Virtanen

abstract

The concept general economy is an attempt to rethink economy or to understand economy on the same condition based on which political philosophy has began to talk about biopolitics. This condition means the general dissolution of the borders between economical and political, the spheres of life and politics which, for example, both Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben regard as the decisive event of modernity and the absolute condition for thinking politics today. I argue that this condition is as absolute for understanding economy as it is for thinking politics today. What defines economy and our experience of it today is that the bare humanness of human beings, that general potentiality and linguistic-relational abilities which distinguish human beings is revealing itself as the essence also of economic production. I will first concentrate on the dissolution of the borders between the spheres of economy and politics according to Michel Foucault's notion of biopower. I will then define in what way is this entrance of life into political order bound up with the development of capitalism more precisely, and finally outline general economy as the multitude's entrance into production which leads to a necessary rearticulation of its starting point: the very idea of biopolitics.

The modern economy confined in its distinct and self-contained bounds has come to an end. Economy cannot be conceived within the time or place of the 'factory-office'. It has rather become spatially boundless and temporally endless: it is impossible to make the distinction between working time and free time, it is difficult to say where or when the actual act of production is being carried out, what is work and what is not, what creates value and what does not. Economy has broken out from its restricted form and become general in the same sense that political has become biopolitical: it has reached the zone of indistinction between poiesis and praxis, labour and action, life and politics, communication and the faculty of language in general. This zone of indistinction where there are no borderlines between labour and action, working time and the time of life is the source of the crisis of the restricted economy where its conception of time and value can no longer grasp 'that' which creates value. To ask what is this crisis about is to ask what is *multitudo*, the multitude.

To ask what is multitude means to return to the first questions of political economy in a condition where the bare humanness of human beings, that general potentiality and linguistic-relational abilities which *distinguish* human beings, is revealing itself as the essence also of economic production: this is, I would like to argue, what defines economy and our experience of it today. We must therefore try to think economy again

now as its restricted determination has lost coherence and we are able to look our *ability to do anything* directly into the eye. We must again ask ‘what’ is it, in fact, that creates value, and how?

As I try to show multitude is not a poetic notion, but the simple name of the productive singularities whose productivity cannot be reduced to actual production. Paraphrasing Marx, we might call it ‘living labour’. As a power, which is not reducible to any specific act, to any specific mode of existence or to any historical time, living labour is multitude’s mode of being. It is activity that does not materialize into machinery or products but rather retreats from materiality and turning into actual products. This is precisely how we might describe the transformation of economy: from the confined or restricted economy where it was necessary to distinguish between work and leisure, production and reproduction, life and politics to general economy; where factory-office and its borders have dissolved into society; where the “foundation of productivity is no longer in the capitalistic investment but in the investment of the social brains... where the maximal amount of freedom and the breaking of the disciplinary relations becomes the absolute foundation of creating wealth” (Negri, 1998: 139-140).

Thus, to ask ‘what is multitude?’ means not to affirm ‘the end of work’ nor, on the contrary, to announce that ‘everything has become work’, but rather to change the principles of assessment, to change the way of conceiving the ‘the value of value’. This revaluation is not a solution to a problem but rather an opening of potential: it reveals the nature of multitude as a question. Without this questioning multitude will remain abstract, deprived of meaning, or of what Deleuze calls ‘intuition’ – and we would thus be unable to determine its conditions, to expose false problems and to discover variables under which the problem of economy must today be stated correctly.¹

Entrance of Life into History

In the Classical world the simple, natural life, the fact of living (*zoē*), which was common to all living beings (animals, human beings, gods), was plainly marginal from the perspective of the way of living proper to an individual or a group, that is, from a qualified life, the good life (*bios*).²

As a living being, man’s place was in *oikos* (dwelling, home, household) and as a political subject it was in *polis* (city-state, body of citizens). The entire Aristotelian tradition is quite clear that this was a difference constituted already in human nature: in so far as man was to realize his nature as a political animal, as a ‘living being who has language’, this was to take place in the *polis*, the community. Politics was almost as if the difference between the fact of living and good life, the place were mute life

1 For the true and false problems see Deleuze (1994: 157-164; 1988: 15-34).

2 It is on the basis of this distinction that Aristotle, for example, defines *polis* in the beginning of *Politics*: “[*polis* is] born with regard to life, but existing essentially with regard to good life” (*Politics*, 1252b: 29-30). It is also in this sense that Aristotle stresses the difference between *politikos* (statesman) vs. *oikonomos* (head of an estate) and *despotēs* (master of the family) who are both concerned with the reproduction and subsistence of life (*Politics I*, 1252a: 5-10).

(realizing itself in the *oikos*) transformed itself into good life, that is, into political life that took place in language: political order was constituted on the humanness of living man, on his having a language, not on the fact of living itself, on him having a voice.³

Both Agamben and Foucault agree that we can no longer distinguish between the simple fact of living (*zoê*) and the good life (*bios*); between our biological life as living beings and our political existence; between what is incommunicable and mute (or has only a voice), and what is communicable and sayable (or whose place is in language). We are animals in whose politics our very life as living beings is at stake: “for millennia man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living man with the additional capacity for political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question” (Foucault, 1990: 143). Life ‘as such’, set apart from its different forms – an idea impossible in the Greek and Roman tradition – now becomes the centre of political order.

Foucault analyses this entrance of life into the sphere of *polis* with his concept of biopower. According to Foucault, the ‘entrance of life into history’ – that is, the entry of phenomena particular to the life of the human species into the sphere of political techniques (the order of knowledge and power) – is begun at the moment when economy (*oikonomia*, the management of family and household) and politics (the government of *polis*) integrate. Life becomes the centre of politics at the moment when economy – at the time understood as *oikonomia*, the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the household (which a good father is expected to do in relation to his wife, children and servants) and of making the family fortunes prosper – is introduced to politics, the minute attention of the father towards his family into the management of the state.⁴ This is *political economy* in the original sense of the

3 It is not by chance that this passage of the *Politics* situates the place of *polis* in the transformation from voice to language: “Among living beings only man has language. The voice is the sign of pain and pleasure, and this is why it belongs to other living beings [...]. But language is for manifesting the fitting and the unfitting and the just and the unjust. To have a sensation of the good and the bad and of the just and the unjust is what is proper to men as opposed to other living beings, and the community of these things makes dwelling and the city” (*Politics I*, 1253a: 10-18). The humanity of living man becomes thus determined in the ‘politization’ of life. The animal who has language is the political animal. This is the original tie between politics and metaphysics. See Agamben (1998: 7); Virno (2003: 31-32).

4 Agamben’s starting point is that Foucault’s theses about the birth of biopower is substantially correct: the decisive event of modernity is the introduction of *oikonomia* into politics and the entry on bare life (*la nuda vita*) in the sphere of *polis*. But what is important is the sense in which the change is understood. By analysing in more detail Aristotle’s definition of politics as the distinction between bare life and good life (*Politics*: 1252b) and thus in a sense as if a place where life must acquire its ‘goodness’ (become political), Agamben argues that the juxtaposition in fact includes the former (bare life) in the latter (politics) by excluding it and that the exclusion of bare life is thus the constituting act of the *polis* of free men. Analysing Roman law and Hobbes’s justification of sovereignty, Agamben comes to the conclusion that in the last instance sovereign power has in fact always been founded on bare life: Western politics has been biopolitics from the beginning. According to Agamben, Foucault’s thesis must therefore be at least amended since the inclusion of the fact of living into politics is not an exclusive character of modern politics but constitutes rather the original nucleus of sovereign power. By placing biological life at the centre of its calculations, the modern state does nothing else but reveal this hidden tie between power and life and confirm the alliance of modern power with the most ancient of the secrets of government: life has always been its negative foundation. The structure within which bare life is separated from and included in politics

syntagma: economy understood as government and government understood as economy.⁵

General Economy: Economy as Government of Life

The attempt to set up an economy at the level of the state found its form in the eighteenth century Sweden-Finland organized around the question of the *Oeconomie* or *Allmänna hushållningen*, that is, ‘general householding’ or ‘general economy.’⁶ General economy was the general framework for organizing everything that directly and indirectly pursued the internal material and spiritual welfare of the state: it was about “all the ground rules that in some way affect the happiness of people.”⁷ The ‘internal welfare’ of the state refers here to the distinction between the positive general householding or *Politie* (*Polizei* in German, *police* in French and English), the means for increasing the forces of the state from within, and *Statsklokheden* or *Politik* (*politique* in French, politics in English), which ensures and develops the forces of the state through a system of alliances and organizing an armed apparatus.⁸ General householding had three parts which included all the measures, departments and facilities aiming to improve general well-being and making sure that everything in the state took place according to the appropriate order:

and made this way the bearer of sovereign power has always the form of the *state of exception* (Carl Schmitt) or the *ban* (Jean-Luc Nancy). The state of exception is essentially power of maintaining itself in relation to something with which there is no relation. What is banned is both surrendered to its alterity and at the same time consigned to the mercy of the one abandoning it – separated and at the same time captured. The ban relation ties together the two poles of the sovereign exception: bare life and power.

- 5 For example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes in his famous encyclopedia article on ‘Political economy’ (1755) that first of all the word ‘economy’ can only properly be used to signify the wise government for the common welfare of all and that this is its actual and original use since the word ‘economy’ comes from *oikos*, house, and from *nomos*, law, but the problem is how to introduce it, *mutatis mutandis*, into the general running of the great family, which is the state. Rousseau calls this ‘general economy’ (*économie générale*).
- 6 In his lectures on the birth of biopower Foucault’s material consisted, as he himself put it, mainly of writings on government in Italy and Germany from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century; that is, in countries which encountered the most hardship in getting established as nation states. But more precisely these writings were writings on economy, on economy as general government, that is, on economy as understood at the time. The use of the material from Sweden-Finland here allows us to confirm that Foucault was not simply dealing with some odd writers here and there but that – and in accordance with Foucault’s methodology – surprisingly few things are thought and said in a certain period of time given their potentially limitless possibilities. See e.g. Foucault (1974).
- 7 “The science of General Householding is about all the ground rules that in some way affect the happiness of people – except those that concern those rights, connections and obligations by which states are dependent of one another, as these belong to the state wisdom [*statsklokheden*]” (Berch, 1747: 11). Berch was the first professor of the science of *oeconomie* (Jurisprudence, *Oeconomie* & Commercial) in Sweden appointed at Uppsala University in 1741. The first chair in ‘*Oeconomie, Politia und Cameralwissenschaften*’ was established in 1727 in Halle, Germany.
- 8 Foucault (1991: 104; 1997: 68) calls the latter ensemble of political knowledge and technology the ‘diplomatico-military technology’. In this distinction lies the origin of the modern idea of the sphere of pure politics (between the states), or politics as such (but also economy as such, the social as such, etc.), an idea quite impossible for the Greeks for whom warfare, for example, was an integral element of *oikonomia*.

1. *Politia (Ordningswärdet)* looked after the order that the happiness and prosperity of the state required among its members, in their endeavours and in their way of life. Its tasks were to see to the order of society, take measures to increase the population and guide their activities towards worthwhile sources of livelihood, take care of health, vaccinations etc. The happiness of people consisted of the bounties of spirit, body and fortune: (a) *Politia* concerning *anima bona* facilitated and organized the religious service, upbringing and education; it looked after the way of life and supervision of those deeds that had to do with will, as well as public entertainment, luxury and games; (b) *Politia* concerning *corporis bona* concentrated on the issues of health: diseases, epidemics, and taking care of tidiness, housing, living and controlling the use and trade of medicines; (c) *Politia* concerning *fortuna bona* took care of general security and comfort, made sure that vagabonds and beggars are not on the streets, and included the issues of censorship, means of transport, roads and postal office.
2. *Oeconomie* focused on those rules on which the means of living had to be based on in order not to harm one another and to produce prosperity to society as a whole: farming, mining operations, handicrafts, trade.
3. *Cammar Hushållningen* again attained, collected and managed state income. It dealt with those means by which the necessary revenues may be collected and the circulation of money may be directed in order to enhance the beneficial ways of living, commerce and trade. The aim was not only to make the taxing department rich but to make sure that the inhabitants are in such a condition that the state may collect revenues from them.

In short, general economy included *everything*.⁹ It included the positive, active, productive aspects of life like education and useful occupations. But it also included the negative aspects of life: the poor and the unemployed, diseases, epidemics, accidents,

9 To give another example, in his lectures on the theory of *Oeconomie* in the autumn of 1754 Pehr Kalm distinguishes the following components of general economy: *Oeconomia publica cameralis*: takes care of income without burdening the people and seeing to that it is righteously distributed; *Oeconomia publica ruralis*: farming, agriculture, building code, land laws; *Oeconomia publica metallurgia*: mining operations; *Oeconomia publica opificiorum*: handicrafts, manufacture, markethall rights; *Oeconomia publica commerciorum*: laws and measures to improve trade so that more things are exported abroad than imported back; *Oeconomia publica medica*: action against human and animal diseases, tabelli-department, lasarets which develop medicine and take care of the poor; *Oeconomia publica urbica*: provision in towns, trade and privileges, organizing houses and streets so as to have clean and good air, poorhouses, fire guard, seeing to that beggars don't walk on the streets and what may and may not be planted in the town land; *Oeconomia publica politica*: roads and canals, military collegial body, postal office, departments taking care of increasing the population (dividing farms, attracting foreigners by permitting privileges and freedom of religion) and advancing the its well-being and enthusiasm, encouraging fellow people to take care of householding healthy life and seeing to that servants won't get too high salaries. Kalm, a student of Carl von Linné, was the first professor in *oeconomie* in Finland appointed 1747 in Turku. Kalm is famous for his first ever comprehensive study of the American nature: *En Resa till America*, Stockholm 1753-1761 (journal of his travel to America 1748-51) translated into English in 1770 as *Travels into North America*. In his *Species Plantarum*, Linné cites Kalm for 90 species, 60 of them new. Anders Chydenius who expresses the fundamental ideas of economic liberalism in his *The National Gain* (1765) was a student of Kalm.

fires and floods. And it included that which was produced and how as well as market and trade control. It also included the control of territory, space, property, legacies, donations, roads, rivers, canals, public buildings, forests and meadows. Yet it included everything from a very particular point of view. It dealt with religion not from the point of view of dogmatic truth, but from the moral quality of life. In looking after health and supplies, it dealt with the preservation of life. Concerning trade, factories, workers, the poor and public order, it dealt with the facilities and conveniences of life; and in providing games, luxury and entertainment its object was life's pleasures. Indeed, Berch employs a remarkable expression: what general householding looks after is 'life'. No longer was government dealing with people according to their juridical statuses but with people as living, working, trading and social beings, with people having sexual relations, diseases, desires, aptitudes and will. That people survive and live – and do even better than just that – is what general householding had to ensure. Why? Because "the plentitude of decent, rich and able people is the primary strength of the state" (Kalm, 1754: 3).

The aim was to develop those elements constitutive of individuals' lives in such a way that their development also fosters that of the strength (resources) of the state. There was a new historical outlook where the nation state had emerged as a reality which needed to hold out in a competitive grid and a disputed geographical area for an indefinite length of historical time. By organizing in detail the relations of living, working, trading and desiring beings to others and to themselves, people were supplied with 'little extra life' while simultaneously the state was supplied with 'little extra strength'. The happiness of the people (understood as survival, life and improving living – the state's internal strength) was, in other words, not only dependent on fertile land and fair climate or other nature's conditions, but on the exercise of healthy householding. It was the origin of the prosperity and well-being in a state.

Healthy householding entailed more than just implementing general principles of reason and wisdom, it was not government according to divine, natural or human laws: it was not *Oeconomie Vulgarem*, the vulgar, old way of doing things, but rather rational economy, *Oeconomie Philosophicam*, an economy exercised according to the rules of an art or *Oeconomie Artificialem*, a technique conforming to certain rules. These rules did not simply pertain to customs or traditions, but to knowledge, rational knowledge, a reflection causing to observe the nature of what is governed, that is, the state and its exigencies. It was absolutely necessary to know the state and to assess its strength. What was required was concrete, precise and measured knowledge of the state's strengths and weaknesses. The strength could be calculated and appropriate, positive intervention made when the number of people and their ways of living were known (number, age, sex, livelihood, degree of reproduction, death rate and their reasons).¹⁰ Herein lies the beginning of the political question of 'population' in which population becomes

10 Political arithmetic or population statistics (science of the state) was in Sweden amongst the most developed in Europe in the eighteenth century. Both Berch and Kalm devoted great energy to developing the methods and gathering knowledge about the 'economic conditions' of the various parts of the nation. Also, the Royal Swedish Academy of Science (*Kungliga Vetenskapsacademie*) was born out of the engagement in general householding and was first going to be named as a 'Society of the Science of Economy'. In any case it was an economic society.

analyzed as a collection of elements related to the general system of living beings (human race vs. mankind) which may offer a place for a coordinated intervention.¹¹

Event Bound up with the Development of Capitalism

This bringing of life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and making knowledge-power an agent of the transformation of human life meant the birth of a new mode of relation between life and history, ontology and politics. It is to describe these new power relations emerging by 'political economy' that Foucault needed a new political theory and a new ontology.¹²

Biopower, the power over life whose function was no longer to kill and seize but to invest in life, to increase its forces and make it useful in the right way, evolved in two basic forms about which Foucault was quite formal: The first organized itself at the end of the seventeenth century and focused on the man-body, on optimizing its capabilities, multiplying its powers and usefulness while at the same time taming and controlling the forces constituting it. All this was ensured with procedures of power that Foucault called 'disciplines'. Disciplines focused on the docility-usefulness economy of the body by means of anatomic politics: organizing and dividing a multiplicity of bodies in space, controlling their behaviour, training their movements and organizing their action in time. The second formed some fifty years later in the second half of the eighteenth century and focused not on the individual and the body but on the life of man-species, the species-body imbued with the mechanisms of life and biological processes that manifested regularities and aggregate effects such as the rate of birth and mortality, epidemics, relations between population and wealth which could no longer be reduced to the sphere of the family. The second set of procedures – which Foucault characterized as the *biopolitics* of the population – organized a set of regulative interventions on 'population', on its welfare, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity and all the conditions causing these to vary.

This organization of the living within the domain of emerging ideas about value and utility – rather than ascetic morality which seemed to abandon life and the living body –

11 This meant also the beginning of the reconceptualization of economy as an autonomous sphere of reality. Only the questions and development of general householding made it possible to discover problems specific to a 'population', which introduced its own regularities, aggregate effects, phenomena like epidemics and relations between work, habits and wealth which could not be reduced to phenomena of the family. This led to the displacement of the question of 'economy' from the sphere of *oikonomia* onto another level of reality, the one we today call *economy*: from being a way of government to being an independent area of reality which expresses a rationality fundamentally different to the calculative regulation of general householding.

12 Foucault needed a new political theory and a new ontology to describe these new relations emerging by 'political economy' because 'political economy' refers not to the political economy of capital and work nor to a single source of sovereign power (as for Agamben, bare life) but to a dynamic of forces that establishes a new relationship between ontology and politics. For Foucault, the fundamental political problem of modernity is therefore the multitude of forces that act and react amongst each other. The impossibility of distinguishing between *zoê* (man as a living being) and *bios* (man as a political subject) is not the product of the action of sovereign power but the result of the action of new forces over which it has no 'power'. Biopower and its function of 'coordination and combination' is most of all about the strategic coordination and organization of these relations in order to extract a surplus of power from living beings.

was, according to Foucault, the indispensable “event in the development of capitalism” (1990: 141). Capitalism as the adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes. It had to have the methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern. For people’s bodies and their time to become labour power and labour time, and “for there to be ‘over-profit’ (*sur-profit*), there had to be an ‘infra-power’ (*sous-pouvoir*)” (Foucault, 2000: 86, translation modified). This binding of man to labour was synthetic and political: it was a linkage brought about by power, power incompatible with the relations of sovereignty, power that permitted time and labour (rather than wealth, products and services) to be extracted from living bodies.¹³

The Relationship Between Life and Capitalism

Yet we still need to elaborate more closely what is the relationship between this event and the development of capitalism, in what way is the entrance of life into history bound up with the development of capitalism. In the heart of *Capital* Marx outlines the encounter of two elements – wealth and man – which was to form the initial phase of capitalism. This encounter was an encounter in a specific form, or more precisely an encounter without a form: a conjunction of the capacity to labour freed from the many (different, concrete, particular, material) means of employment, the constraints and guarantees of a particular form of life and that of wealth in general freed from any specific means of its investment (landed property vs. capital-money). This is also what Deleuze and Guattari call the original axiom of capitalism, the encounter of the deterritorialized worker who was free to sell his labour power and the decoded wealth which had become general capital-money.

As Marx says, Engels was right to call Adam Smith the economic Luther (Marx, 1844: 128-129; Engels, 1844: 1). Whereas Luther’s merit was to have determined the essence of religion, no longer on the side of the object, but as an interior religiosity, the merit of Adam Smith and David Ricardo was to have determined the essence or *nature of wealth* no longer as an objective nature but as an abstract and undetermined subjective essence,

13 The two forms remained separate still in the eighteenth century; the development of the first taking place in institutions like the school and army and in reflections about tactics, apprenticeship and education, while the other was developed in the analyses of the relations between resources and inhabitants and in the analyses of wealth and its circulation. But in the nineteenth and twentieth century they joined in the form of concrete arrangements like the factory and the welfare state. In terms of the wealth of the nation and the welfare of the population, the discovered relations between activities of the population and wealth meant the birth of modern economy and the consequent recentering of the rationality of the production of wealth from its circulation and exchange to its real production. Instead of exchange, labour and its organization became now the origin of value and well-being. Yet the determined steps of the welfare state to take labour power under its protection nor the factory as a solution to the organizational problem of production would not have been possible without the methods of guiding the accumulation of men, the skills of organizing the multiplicity, the means to join the powers of human bodies with principles of productivity and utility in a controlled manner.

the activity of production in general.¹⁴ Let me dwell on this man–wealth relationship for a moment, because it is the key to understanding the bond between life and the development of capitalism. The capitalistic relation of production is based on the difference between actual labour and labour power in general (measured by its effective use) which displaces *wealth into a relation with the human activity of production in general* – a distinction and a displacement possible only by the beginning of the order of knowledge called political economy.

Theory of Wealth in General Householding

For the Renaissance ‘economists’ the ability of money to measure commodities and to be exchanged (its exchangeability) rested upon its intrinsic value: fine metal was in itself a mark of wealth. It had a price because its intrinsic character was an indication of the wealth of the world: it was precious above all other things because it was itself wealth. For this reason it could be used as a measure of all prices and for this reason it could be exchanged (used as a substitution) for anything that had a price.

The ‘theory of wealth’ contained in eighteenth century general householding broke down this circle of preciousness. The objective of general householding was to increase the power of the state. One of the most important aspects of this power was wealth and its main sources were thought of as the colonies, the conquest and the surplus on the balance of trade. But wealth was not, as often claimed, simply equated with specie. Wealth – the one pole constituting the happiness of the state – was rather split into elements (objects of needs and desire marked by necessity, utility, pleasure or rarity) that can be substituted for one another by the interplay of the coinage that signifies them. In other words, the analysis is turned upside down: money can be used as a measure of wealth, and it receives a price because it could be exchanged (used as a substitution): gold is precious because it is money and money has value because it has properties (physical, not economic) that render it adequate for the task of representing wealth. Its ability to measure wealth and its capacity to receive a price were qualities that derived from its exchanging function.¹⁵

Money became now the instrument of the representation of wealth and wealth a content represented by money: wealth became now whatever was the object of needs and desires (marked by necessity, utility, pleasure or rarity), and money gained the power of representing all possible wealth. All wealth was coinable – by the means of which it entered circulation. Money was, in other words, that which permitted wealth to be represented, and without it wealth would remain immobile, useless or, as it were, ‘silent’. The value of things will therefore no longer proceed from the metal itself, but establishes itself according to the criteria of utility, pleasure or rarity which combines the forms of wealth (objects of needs and desire) one with another while money permits their real exchange.

14 In their topology Deleuze and Guattari (1972: 270) add here also Freud who had determined the essence or nature of desire no longer in a relation to objects, aims, or even sources but as an abstract subjective essence, that is, libido or sexuality.

15 For a detailed analysis of the mercantilist conception of wealth, see Foucault (1974: 166-200).

The mercantilist theory of value made it possible to explain how certain objects can be introduced into a system of exchanges, but value was based on a total system of equivalency and the ability of things to represent one and another. This allows Foucault to conclude that for the mercantilists value was a sign. Therefore the emphasis in general householding is on the positive balance of trade: money is needed to represent wealth, that is, to attract it, to bring it in from abroad or manufacture it at home, and it is needed to make wealth pass from hand to hand in the process of exchange. It is important to import money and trade alone is able of producing this effect. The money accumulated is not intended to sleep and grow fat, but it is attracted into a state only so that it may be consumed by the process of exchange. Money became wealth only in so far as it fulfilled its representative function (in replacing commodities). The relations between wealth and money were now based on circulation and exchange and no longer on the preciousness of metal.¹⁶

Production of Value in Political Economy

Political economy displaces the notion of wealth from this orbit of exchange and circulation – where wealth represented objects of desire, money represented wealth, and exchange was the source of fine metal/money – by breaking wealth down according to the units of *labour* that have in reality produced it.

Smith and Ricardo did not invent labour as an economic concept, but they revealed it to possess a power to establish a constant measure between the values of things. We can find the concept of labour already, for example, in Cantillon (utilitarian psychological theory) and Quesnay (physiocrats) connected in the same way to the subjective essence of wealth and used as a means of analyzing exchangeable wealth ('value in exchange' of things).¹⁷ But even if the distinction between 'value in use' and 'value in exchange' of things had already been made and the quantity of labour had been already used as a measurement of the latter, the quantity of labour inscribed in the price of things had been only a relative measure. A man's labour was in the end equal to the value of the quantity of the nourishment necessary to maintain him and his family for as long as a given task lasted (Cantillon, 1755: 17-18). In other words, a need (for food, clothing, housing) still defined the measure of the price: necessity was the measure of equivalences.¹⁸

Smith and Ricardo revealed labour to possess a power to establish a constant measure between the values of things. For the wealth represented no longer the objects of need and desire but labour. *Labour* as the measure that established equalities and differences was of a different nature from *need*. It was no longer linked to individual desires,

16 Herein lies also the economic sense of general householding: the amount and happiness of inhabitants must grow for there to be an abundance of workers for the manufacturing industry to draw on. This way the wages or prices will not increase at a greater rate than wealth and there will be a positive balance of trade. Yet the amount of specie must grow for the products of land and industry to be remunerated, wages to be sufficient and the population not to remain in poverty: hence measures to encourage foreign trade and maintain a positive balance are needed.

17 See, for example, Cantillon (1755) and Quesnay (1758).

18 The privilege accorded to agricultural production, wheat and land by the physiocrats was based on the measure of the prices thought of basically as food; see Foucault (1974: 222)

modified by them or variable like them: it was an *absolute measure*, not dependent upon men's desires and appetites. Although Smith still understood wealth as the objects of need representing themselves in the movements and methods of exchange, he formulated a principle of order based on the *working day* that at once patterns and uses up man's life. The equivalence of the objects of need and desire is no longer established in the intermediary of other objects and other desires, but by a transition to that which is radically heterogeneous to them: life's subjection to time (Smith, 1937: Book I). Smith distinguishes between the reason for exchange (we have needs) and the measurement of that which is exchangeable (by labour that went into its making), between the nature of what is exchanged and the units that enable it to be broken down (units of labour that have been invested in the objects in question). Even if men experience that what they exchange as 'indispensable, commodious or pleasurable', for Smith what actually circulates in the form of things is labour – not objects of needs representing one another, but worker's time and toil, transformed, concealed, forgotten. This invention made it possible to achieve an equivalence in the exchange of objects of need whose standardization would have otherwise been exposed to change and relativity.

But whereas Smith still tended to equate labour as productive activity with labour as commodity that can be bought and sold, Ricardo finally exploded this unity by distinguishing clearly the activity of production in general, the *worker's capacity to labour* that is bought and sold and the *labour actually done* (the actual activity of extracting metal, producing commodities, manufacturing objects, transporting merchandise, etc.). For Ricardo, the quantity of labour makes it possible to determine the value of a thing not because the thing is representable in units of work but because labour is the 'source of all value'. Value, in other words, ceases to be a sign and becomes a product (Ricardo, 1821: Ch. 1; see also Foucault, 1974: 254).

Ricardo does not locate the *source of wealth* in exchange or in the positive balance of trade as in the case of general householding (or in a specific type of labour as the physiocrats did with agricultural labour), but *in the capacity for subjective productive activity in general*. For Ricardo, value is determined by the cost of abstract productive activity in general. The common element that makes exchange values commensurable, i.e. which is expressed by exchange value, is labour. The quantity of labour determines the quantity of each exchange value. But as all labour is different – concrete, material, particular, incommensurable – the only labour that can be viewed purely quantitatively is abstract labour, "the human labour-power expended without regard to the form of its expenditure" (Marx, 1887: Part I, Ch. 1, Section 1).

The essence of the question of the relationship between man and wealth is, in other words, not in the productivity of actual labour but in the *exchangeability of the potential to work in general*. This potential to work, that is, human labour power (as the activity of production in general) which is indifferent to its means and objects and capable of being employed anywhere, becomes now articulated as the basis of the production of wealth in capitalism.

What is Labour Power?

According to Marx, labour power means the general potential to produce, "the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the

living personality, of a human being” (Marx, 1887: Part II, Ch. 6). In other words, it refers to a general human ability or capacity without regard to any specific task or assignment. It is potentiality for anything: anything may be expected from it. Labour power refers to the general human potential to produce which must be distinguished from the effectual production just like the capacity for digestion must be distinguished from actual digestion.¹⁹ Labour power’s mode of being could in this sense said to be that of potentiality, *dynamis*, the fundamental category of philosophical thought which is, according to Aristotle, the mode in which human beings exist in so far as they know and produce (1933: 1045b-1046a). With the question of labour power we are, in other words, confronted with human being as a purely potential being – without any function, *ergon*, not engaged in actual activity, *energeia*.²⁰

Potentiality as the ontological condition, the species-being of human animal is always distinct from its particular acts, from the mediation of some use or justification (that is, history). It is always something non-present but yet real, characterized by *adynamia*, impotentiality, the power not to pass into actuality.²¹ What characterizes potentiality is its dwelling outside of any function – its opposition to *energeia*, actuality – its dwelling outside ‘history’: it tends towards surpassing its own time, its own historical situation in which it is never fully translated. It is always in a way outside history, withdrawn from historical time in which it is never fully exhausted. This means that this power cannot be completely actualized in a particular task, a single man or in any particular community of men. It is as if it resides in a multitude of mankind; it is the sociality of the ‘social individual’. The experience of this potential character of life is always an experience of a common power, a general power. Multitude and the potential character of life identify with one another without a residue because the indwelling of commonness to any power is a function of the necessarily potential nature of any community. In multitude there is always something which remains potential and impotent, non-actualized and non-mediated. This impotentiality is its power which makes it general, unfailing and absolute. Or to put it sociologically: the social is included potentially in the individual, but it is expressed from the point of view of the particular (singular). It is always a multiplicity (contains all the relations) and a singularity (expresses a part of those relations).

The foundation of ‘labour power’ cannot therefore be said to be in any particular technological invention or in any particular technique like for example large-scale industry or division of work. As Marx writes, “to discover the various uses of things is

19 “When we speak of capacity for labour, we do not speak of labour, any more than when we speak of capacity for digestion, we speak of digestion. The latter process requires something more than a good stomach” (Marx, 1887: Part II, Ch. 6).

20 Aristotle derives *energeia* from *ergon* (function, task, work). *En-ergeia* is the state of being in work, functioning (*Metaphysics*: 1050a). Aristotle ties here in also the related notion of *telos* (end, completion, purpose). Because *ergon* is the completed, *energeia* is related to *entelecheia* (being in the state of completion): *energeia* is the functioning of a *dynamis* (potentiality, capacity), its fulfillment and actualization, normally accompanied with pleasure. From this follows that potentiality is contrary to pleasure, that what is never enacted, what never achieves its end. If pleasure, according to Aristotle’s definition, never takes place in time, potentiality is then essentially *duration*.

21 The essence of potentiality is the relation it has with its own privation, *steresis*, its non-being. See Agamben (1999) for a discussion of potentiality in exceptional clarity. See also Kirkeby (1999).

the work of history. So also is the establishment of socially-recognized standards of measure for the quantities of these useful objects” (Marx, 1887: Part I, Ch. 1, Sect. 1). In other words, history is made of carrying into effect, or actualising, different ways of use. Labour power is above all the category in which the potential and common mode of existence of human beings as such – freed from any particular form of employment and all traditional codes – *enters history*; that is, in which it is articulated into ‘use’, into the historical order of knowledge and power that constitutes capitalism.²² Capital is in other words a social relation based upon history ‘in itself’.

The Commodity Form of the Production of Value

The capitalistic society is the first to place in its centre the a-historical, untimely potentiality which must be distinguished from history. This ‘nonhistorical core’ is without a place or function within society but without it there would be no change.²³ But productive activity in general enters economy only in a specific form, or, more precisely, it acquires its particular historical function (production of surplus value) only enclosed in a particular form, the commodity form, the form in which it can be sold and purchased.

In being measured by its actual use (articulated as a proportion of time, an hour or a day of its expenditure) labour power, as something potential and incommensurable, becomes commensurable (a homogenous temporal substance, common as abstract labour), a thing, a commodity among others which may be bought and sold. Yet labour power cannot be reduced to its particular value: it is at once the form of equivalence and the form of productive power. In other words, it is a special commodity because it can surpass its own limits: what is essential is its power not to pass into actuality, its ability to overstep its own limits, its ability to create surplus value. Herein lies the mystery of the origin of capitalist accumulation, the origin of surplus value: labour power seems like a commodity among others; it can be bought and sold and its existence and use seem in no way to break the rules of commodity exchange. In being purchased it seems that what is purchased is actual labour, fulfilled action, but the use of labour power to a task, its process of consumption, is always at the same time the production process of

22 Paolo Virno (2004: 84) has underlined that to understand the rational core of the concept biopolitics we should indeed start with labour power. The potential as such is at the core of the exchange between capitalist and the worker. The commodity for sale (the generic ability to work) is something which, in and of itself, does not have an autonomous spatio-temporal existence. But when something which exists only as possibility is sold, this something is not separable from the living person of the seller: “the use value the worker has to offer (to the capitalist) for others in general is not materialized in a product, it does not exist apart from him at all, thus exists not really, but only in potentiality, as his capacity” (Marx, 1973: 267). In other words, the living body becomes now the object of organization, not for its intrinsic value or for the purpose of increasing its strengths and happiness, but because it embodies labour power as the aggregate of the diverse human faculties. The living body is the material container of a yet unrealized potential or as Marx puts it: ‘labour as subjectivity’. Life becomes managed and controlled as such because it acts as the embodiment of the bare faculty to produce which takes on the form of a commodity. In other words, labour power is the original category in which life in general, life without any particular task, enters economy. Biopower means this coming of the potential dimension of human existence into immediate experience.

23 On the difference between history and change, see Deleuze (1990: 170; 1993: 116). Deleuze calls the untimely also *dehors temporal*, the ‘temporal outside’, outside as a vital, recurring element. The vitalism is here not organic but temporal; see Deleuze (1998: 96).

surplus value: in the consumption process the produced value is greater than the value of labour power (price by which it is purchased). In the *commodity form* the activity of production in general and its organization into history – the power that ties it to the system of commodity exchange and division of labour (certain historical structures) – are intertwined: “The process of production, considered on the one hand as the unity of the labour-process and the process of creating value, is production of commodities; considered on the other hand as the unity of the labour-process and the process of producing surplus-value, it is the capitalist process of production, or capitalist production of commodities” (Marx, 1887: Part III, Ch. 7, Sect. 2).

As Agamben notices, and as Guy Debord also realises, for Marx, the key to understanding the spellbound of capitalism is the commodity form: the commodity, in so far as it is a commodity, actualizes a social relation. In the commodity form the social constituent of labour power (mutual relations between people) acquires a concrete existence as a thing. Commodity “is a sensuous thing which is at the same time suprasensible or social”: it contains or commodifies something in common (Marx, 1887, Part I, Section I, Ch. 1; see also Agamben, 2000: 75; Debord, 1990). That which makes different use values or useful articles exchangeable is *value*: the ‘secret’ or ‘soul’ of the commodity. It is that something ‘in common’; the exchangeability, social character, mutual relations contained in it. The communicativeness or exchangeability of the commodity as such does not concern the particular use of the commodity (of a coat, for example), and neither does it concern the actual, concrete labour (designing, cutting, sawing etc.) that went into its making. Above all value is to do with the relation between commodities (their exchangeability) and hence with the relation between people. Value embodies and makes real something abstract, something suprasensible.

But in order for value – this something suprasensible or social – to acquire concrete existence, it must acquire a corporeal form in the use value of another commodity which Marx calls the ‘value form’: it is the concrete form of its (suprasensible) value behind which sociality, the exchangeability in itself (the social character and mutual relations), now becomes hidden. The commodity, in so far as it is a commodity, actualizes in this double form a social relation (something in common): it is a sensuous thing which is at the same time suprasensible or social. This means that the suprasensible social constituent of a commodity, the relation where it contains general social labour (cooperation, mutual relations between people, the social form of work) manifests itself now in a thing-form, in the use value of another commodity. In production based on exchange value, that is, in the commodity form of the production of value, the social relation takes in this way the form of the relation between things. In the world of commodity exchange people do not enter into direct relation with one another, but only through the indirect mediation of commodities, things or information. The direct presence, immediate being and cooperation of people as such must be mediated or actualized by things (meanings etc.) to have value and to be ‘productive’. It is only by this precondition, by a mediation which can be distinguished from actual cooperation, that cooperation between people is productive and has value within the realm of the production of value in the commodity form. It is this arrangement of mediation that is now in crisis.

The Entrance of Multitude into Production

Today firms are laying off employees, shutting production plants, transferring production to subcontractors and to countries where the production costs are low – in short, they are turning into *firms without factories*. What is this change about? It is not about pleasing the shareholders by increasing the dividends or raising the market price of the firm. Nor is the question here of an attempt to save the welfare state and the jobs at its foundation by decreasing the price of work, by prolonging the working hours or by eliminating the non-incentive qualities of employment.

Rather, the logic of the production of value has changed: work in the traditional sense of the word, and the factory as the corresponding model of production, have converted into mere costs which must be eliminated from the system. In turning into firms without factories companies do not bring down their entire operations but rather concentrate on those which produce more profit more quickly in comparison to the production of thing-form commodities within the factory model (see Lazzarato in this issue). At the same time work, in its traditional sense, has lost its position as an important generator of social cohesion. And there is no return. The defenders of ‘wagework’ and the ones building their society on the institutions based on it are the Don Quixotes of today.

In the ‘Fragment on Machines’, which is the logical culmination and the highpoint of the antagonistic dialectic used in the *Grundrisse* (between synchronic construction and historical determination), Marx (1973) thinks about this displacement of manufacturing labour in the production of wealth as a ‘natural development’ of capital.²⁴ The development of capital proceeds to its ‘last phase’ because it itself begets a change in the nature of the production of value which causes the collapse of production based on exchange value. According to Marx, the reason for this displacement is that at a point of this development it is likely that thinking and abstract knowledge will replace manufacturing labour as the most important force of production: knowledge replaces partitioned and repetitive labour, that is, industrial society and the society based on the division of labour in its traditional form. As a consequence of this transformation, it is neither direct human labour the worker performs (shaping materials of nature, production of new objects etc.) nor the time during which she or he works (the unit of this), but rather “the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body – it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth” (Marx, 1973: 705). In other words, the mere existence of human being as a human being and not as a performer of a particular task or as a member of a particular community (that is, man as such, man without any content) becomes now the foundation-stone of wealth. This is not to say that direct labour and factory production disappear but for the production of value they have become, as Marx puts it, a ‘miserable base’.²⁵

24 The fragment is written at the end of February 1858 and it covers the last pages of Notebook VI and the beginning of Notebook VII. See also Piironen in this issue.

25 In describing this transformation and the emerging ‘new foundation of value’ Marx uses the term *general intellect* (Marx 1973: 706). The concept of general intellect or *understanding in general*, as

Man without Content

Knowledge and communicative abilities of human being have become an important force of production. At least in the financial economy *collective opinion*, or what Keynes called the convention, is decisive with regard to individual beliefs and opinions. According to studies on investment behaviour, what is important in the functioning of collective opinion is not so much that what is communicated (the information content), but the way in which that what is regarded as a wise investment decision by 'others' is communicated (the communication 'in itself') (e.g. Marazzi, 2002 and this issue; Orlean, 1999; Schiller, 2000; Shefrin, 2001; Keynes, 1973). It is the nature of financial markets to function on the basis of *imitation*: to function properly the financial economy depends on the mass behaviour whose point of origin is in the deficit of information. Imitation begins where information ends: imitation is not about any specific information or activity but about the absence of information or specific activity. According to Jussi Vähämäki, imitation seems to indicate the specific mental 'place' where value is today created: typical imitative or mimetic behaviour takes place when people run in the same direction where the others are running not knowing why they are running and where the others are going. They trust that the others know as the others trust that they know. Such trust does not have any positive content as information: it is based on *general expectations* of how people in general act or think. The deficit of information constrains people to navigate in the world with the help of these most elementary human faculties – 'instincts', as it were – which do not contain or transmit any specific information (see Vähämäki in this issue).

Herein lies the reason why today's financial techniques, derivatives, stock trend analyses and the attempts to calculate and feel the market sentiment seem to have very little to do with modern economics and its conception of value. The new financial techniques are statistical techniques but these statistics try to translate into time series corporeal measures (to buy, to sell) and intensities (desires and beliefs): they try to express social relations as tendencies and variations which is the only way to seize and regulate the unforeseeable character of the social in itself diffused by imitation, contagion and reproduction beyond any physical intercourse.²⁶ In other words, these techniques do not perform any specific act of communication or exchange of information but try rather to repeat and imitate a relation to the world. They seek an

elaborated for example in *Luogo Comune* (e.g. no. 4, 1993), points to an ensemble of productive powers that constitutes the new centre of social production and organizes its vital dimensions a priori. It points at those general human abilities which are necessary to any act of production. General intellect and those general conditions of being a human being characterizing it organize not only the process of life but come now to organize also the production process directly. In other words, man 'as such', his or her entire personality and essential potentiality ('to do anything') becomes a means of production, a machine that replaces fixed capital and displaces into margins the knowledge that has materialized into machinery systems or automation (knowledge objectified in fixed capital).

- 26 Because of their nature and number, these 'market acts', intensities and tendencies are not in any way 'disciplinable'. They cannot be organized or controlled in space – only a probabilistic treatment can ensure their regulation and appropriation: they take place in time not in space, they can be determined only in time, not in space. Lazzarato (1997) suggests that here it is not enough to talk about drawing a cartograph of society but rather a courbograph (a graph of curves) because a map gives always a static image of what occurs while here we are talking about the description of dynamic temporality of the tendencies, of intensities, of seizing the social as an event.

absolute identification with the social. Such identification requires a technique or a man 'without content', a kind of general ability imitate, to perform any task or any role.

But these general abilities, or the *man without content*, plays a central role also in the transformations of the organization of the production process: knowledge and communication have an increasingly central and direct role also there.²⁷ Today's production is not mute or silent. Language and the means of communication are the tools in common to every productive act: the labourer is and must be talkative. Indeed, the organization of production may today be described empirically as a complex of communication and linguistic acts. It no longer consists in the silent and solitary accomplishment of a particular task, product or objective, but rather in the continuous modulation, variation and intensification of social cooperation that occurs through interaction and linguistic performances which, far from giving rise to a final product, exhaust themselves in the communicative interaction that their own 'performance' brings about. As Paolo Virno has demonstrated, 'communicative action' does not hold any privileged or even exclusive place in politics or in the struggle for 'mutual recognition'. On the contrary, the dialogic word is installed at the very heart of capitalist production: labour *is* interaction (Virno, 2001).

On the other hand, work is becoming more and more independent and personal in the sense that the personal character and capabilities of the worker – not what she or he does, but what she or he *is* – are becoming increasingly decisive to the production process: the distinctions between the worker and the working assignment, between working time and free time have begun to blur. Compared to 'old work', where personality was a handicap, which the division of work and organization tried to demolish, today's work is rather a subjective attitude, the worker's skills indistinguishable from his or her personality and habits, aptitudes and experience. Indeed, it is difficult to distinguish what somebody does today at the level of external traits of work. Yet, even if the external or visible characteristics of work look similar (a writer, a manager, a social worker, an architect, a factory worker all seem to be doing the same things with the same tools), the know-how and experience are not at all equal: the work is intellectually different, it requires different education, upbringing, experience. It requires differences in all the things that make one a distinct person, but that do not show at the level of the external characters of work. The worker can no longer just mechanically perform a particular task, but he or she must rather put to work his or her feelings, senses and perception: it is impossible to say which part of such immaterial (e.g. managerial or caring) labour is part of production and which an expression of personality. It is also difficult to say where the actual act of production is being carried out: when is it time to work and when time to rest; when and where does one work and when and where not? The specific places and times of production have

27 The division between the *real economy* where material and immaterial commodities are produced and sold and the *financial economy* where speculation directs investment decisions must be completely rethought. In general economy language and communication rather penetrate structurally and at the same time both the financial sector and the production and distribution of commodities and services. The recent changes in the nature of work and the explosion of the global stock markets in the end of 1990's are two sides of the same phenomenon: the communicative turn of economy. For an elegant refusal to interpret the recent extreme volatility of the stock markets as an evidence of the growing independence of financial capital from the real processes of economy, see Marazzi (2002).

disappeared and production has instead become *spatially boundless and temporally endless* (Vähämäki, 2003).

Together the communicative nature and independence of work seem to have transformed production into the worker's self-expression, into the creation of her or his self and transmitting it to others which shifts the centre of production from material production into relationships and contexts. Cooperation and interaction are in themselves part of production, no longer something imposed from the outside: it is not the same thing to be coordinated 'externally' and to invent and produce cooperative relations oneself. When the relationship with others becomes the driving, essential element and not something accessory, and thus the solitary and restricted character (exclusion of communication from the production process) of labour dies away, production necessarily needs a *publicly organized space*.

A 'publicly organized space' means the necessity of a presence of others and a relationship with the presence of others (the ability to relate to the presence of others, the ability to communicate, cooperate etc.). It means the sharing of communicative and cognitive abilities, a linguistic organization whose essence is in the communication not of something commensurable (information) but of the ability to communicate itself, of the communicativity itself. In short, what has always been thought to be the condition of political life now also becomes the condition of economic production: the boundaries between the economic and the political, poesis and praxis, life and politics begin to dissolve. Rather than 'the economy colonializing the life world', the characteristics that have always been thought to belong to the 'outside' of economy, to the sphere of art and politics (as in classical philosophy), or to the sphere of ideology and superstructure (as in political economy and its critique), turn out as the essence of economy.

The Immediately Social Nature of Value

According to Paolo Virno, the distinction between the spheres of politics (political life, good life, action whose origin and purpose is in itself) and economy (labour, the sphere of instrumental action and the necessities of life) begins to blur precisely when the elementary human faculties (the general conditions of being a human being) as a primary productive force cease to be 'private' and inconspicuous and become publicly organized, a matter of organization in general (Virno, 2004: 64). This change in the nature of the means of production is maybe best characterized as a change in the nature of *real abstraction*. For Marx, money or an act of exchange of labour power is a 'real abstraction': it makes real an abstract thought, the idea of equivalency. An actual act (the sale and purchase of labour power) expresses and makes real a structure of a bare thought. It has the validity, the value only of a thought. This is what a real abstraction is: a thought becoming actualized, a thought becoming a thing (see Virno, 1996: 23; 2004: 64).

The directly social nature of value or the *Vergesellschaftung* of labour and production, however, changes the relation: it indicates no longer that a certain reality (a sale and purchase of labour power, for example) had the value and validity of a thought, but that it is now our thoughts in themselves that acquire the value of 'actual' or 'material' facts without the necessity of any mediation or a corporeal form in the value form. Our thoughts, understanding in general, or 'the development of the social individual' as

such, presents itself now with the weight and incidence typical of the production that had as its precondition the mediation and unity of measurement. Intellect, the general human faculties (communicative interaction, abstraction, self-reflection) are now, in themselves, immediately – that is, without the mediation or incarnation into a thing – productive. They are no longer abstractions becoming real through an incarnation into things, products, meanings, objectives or common aims, but ‘ideals’ that are real in themselves without any such mediation. Rather than abstract and actual they are ideal and real: rather than real abstractions they are *ideal reals*. This means a radical reformulation of the constitution of value. Cooperation and mutual relations between people as such do not need any mediation in the use value of another commodity in order to have value and be productive. Value, in other words, needs no longer ‘deduction’ from the mediating conditions assumed abstractly as the element of unity of calculus. Its sense changes from deduction to *induction*, or from affect to value, as a line of its construction. This revaluation of value means that value is no longer commensurable, the time of its creation is no longer homogeneous, measurable and abstract labour time but time as real potentiality.

Modern capitalism is a historical society where the a-historical human ability to produce in general, the mere humanness of human beings, steps forward from behind an actual meaning, an actual product, an actual mode of production, an actual use, that is, *from behind history* to our immediate experience. For the first time the common mode of existence of human beings, the potential dimension of human existence as the *power to do anything* appears to us without the mediation of a meaning, product or common cause.²⁸ This is an event where the historicity of our experience, its relationship with doing something particular can be experienced historically, that is, as beginning and as deceasing, or in general as changing. Because of this we are able to see ourselves without the mediation of any particular action, meaning or use, as bare potentiality and capacity to do anything without the actualization into a particular action or community, without the need of turning into a Nation, a People or a Community. This is the same thing as to say that multitude enters production, a multitude of productive singularities, singularities whose productivity cannot be reduced to actual production, whose activity does not solidify into machinery or products but rather remains immanent in its performances.

As Deleuze points out, the question here is not of an adjective or an attribute. Multitude is not put together of many, it is not composed of individuals. It is rather an element in which something happens and which cannot be reduced to spatial distinctions. It cannot be reduced to one and it cannot be represented. It is absolutely missing any transcendent common denominator: it consists of countless subjects, boundless amount of ‘points’ of absolutely differentiated constellation. It concerns being together, being in common –

28 These forms of actualization (a meaning, product, mode of production, common cause) are exactly those through which the earlier historical periods have been able to be studied, yet we can’t reach through them any longer to that what is essential for example in economy. The talk about the arbitrariness of the sign, object or a product is an expression of this lost of faith to an external referent or reason that would determine action. Those who wish to deny this arbitrariness and restore the rules that govern the relation between the meaning and reality wish to make us believe in the transcendence of meaning, to the un-historical nature of a mode of production – they wish us to deny our *experience*.

not the common as abstract labour, that ensemble of products and energies of labour accumulated, commodified and thus created by capitalism, the common of exploitation – but common (life of the mind) which is not actual in its mode of being.²⁹ In other words, multitude does not take place in space, through a particular common cause that could be communicated (it does not have a content or a particular task). It does not actualize in particular actions by which it can be determined what is productive and what is not. Yet it is real. It is ideal but not abstract, real but not actual, heterogeneous but continuous, undividable without changing a nature. This is how Deleuze defines the category of virtual which is multitude's mode of being, the tense form of production today. We must understand that "the foundation of productivity is no longer in the capitalistic investment but in the investment of the social brains. Or in other words: the maximal amount of freedom and the breaking of the disciplinary relations becomes the absolute foundation of creating wealth" (Negri, 1998: 139-140).

Mad Power

It seems to me that only a theory of multitude as the inescapable consequence of an attempt to rethink economy as general may explain the changes in the forms of organization and exercise of power we are confronting (like the permanently temporary war). I would therefore like to end in a remark on how the reconceptualization of economy as general leads also to a necessary rearticulation of its starting point, the very idea of biopolitics. I would like to stress here two points: in general economy (1) power no longer focuses on *life* in the same sense as in biopower; and (2) the exercise of power no longer acquires its function, reason or its justification from a particular institution or from a 'normal state' (it does not operate by the logic of the state of exception), as biopower always does.

To say that economy has become general is to say that multitude has entered production. It means that economy is able to become general only by disqualifying itself, by de-economizing itself, by abandoning its transcendent boundary in the idea of its confined sphere. To become general economy has to, in other words, give up itself and transgress its reason of value. I find it hard to think any other reason why economics for example has turned to terrains like conventions of exchange and of communicative relations and organization (institutions, rules, tacit knowledge, culture, intellectual and social capital, etc.), where the 'places of production' would now seem to reside. Economics has accepted the directly social nature of value or its 'immeasurableness', the loss of coherence of any of its objective measure. But even if these 'places of production' cannot be measured, they can be organized and modulated. It is in this sense that the two hundred years of an odyssey of establishing economy as a distinct and self-contained sphere of reality is over and economy has again returned to

29 Here we find the limit of Marx: in Marx there isn't a conception of a productive common that is pre-capitalist. Abstract, accumulated, consolidated labour is never merely a quantity, an economic quantity, but an ensemble of relations, social relations that are relations of command and exploitation. The question here is of the importance of thinking a 'common' liberated from exploitation, a common that can no longer enter the relation of exploitation. See Negri and Virno (2003).

its roots as political economy in the original sense of the syntagma: economy understood as *general economy*, the general organization of life.

Yet, unlike biopower which formed man into a body that can be handled, managed and used in space (*discipline*) or which addressed a multiplicity of the man-species touched by illness, unemployment, the old age, rates of fertility and death (*biopolitics*), the new political economy does not any more concern the man-body or the man-species, the physical or biological life of a man or a population. The life at the centre of general economy is no longer the *organic bio-life* but rather the non-organic or *a-organic life*, the life without organs, where there are no external organs or vital functions by which it could be organized: the multiplicity of irreducible experiences cannot be organized in terms of individual bodies or as mere biological life of a population.

Whereas the disciplinary techniques dealt with the man-body in a closed space and biopolitics with the man-species in an open space and both tried to coordinate and organize time pre-eminently through space, the organizational problem in general economy centres no longer on the individual body but rather on the man in general, the general premises of being a human being, that is, on life that has become unfastened from the man-body and the man-species. This life is not the actual life in space but life-time independent of any particular spaces or forms, the time due to which beings are not reducible to their corporeal manifestation in space or to their positions in the chronological continuum of time (to their spatial conditions). In other words, we are no longer dealing with *power over biolife* as in biopower, but rather with *power over life of the mind*, which does not so much create physical, spatial or biological boundaries (inscription of habits onto the body) but moods, sentiments and mentalities (inscription habits onto the mind). The organization of immaterial production is possible only through the management of the general conditions of human action and communication, through organizing the general conditions of organizing. This *organization of organization* does not operate at the level of actual action or plain intimidation but on that of anxiety and inadequacy; not by confinement or demanding obedience to the rules and being afraid of their violation, but by setting expectations, moods, opinion climates, standards of communication and cooperation. It is the only way to control and organize labour power as an immaterial power, that is, not at the level of actual acts or products but on the level of potentiality and possibilities of life.

This exercise of power over life of the mind might best be defined as *noo-political* (Lazzarato, 2004).³⁰ Deleuze gives us an important indication of how to define the change from *bio-politics* to *noo-politics* by saying that in disciplinary society what is isolated or confined is the 'outside' (Deleuze, 1988). Disciplinary techniques constrain any conduct or behaviour to the production of useful effects as long as the multiplicity is limited and the space is well defined. Biopolitical techniques govern life of any multiplicity when the multiplicity is numerous (the population as a whole) and the space open (the nation state defines the limits of the population). In both cases biopower is surely productive. Yet it is repressive not because it works upon a human nature already there, but because in both cases it isolates and confines the forces of change: it separates and neutralizes the potential forces of the outside. To confine the outside, to isolate the

30 The term is derived from the Greek *nous* meaning intelligence, intellect, mind.

virtual, means to neutralize its potential power (impotentiality) and to codify repetition to remove all power of variation – to reduce production to simple reproduction.

Maurizio Lazzarato (2004) has correctly pointed out that disciplinary society does not know change: its institutions organize by the temporality of chronological time. In disciplinary society the temporality of the event, the time due to which beings are not reducible to their manifestation in space (to their spatial conditions) is always the *exception*, the outside which must be confined and neutralized by rigorous procedures of organization. In other words, whereas disciplinary societies were societies of reproduction that, by isolating and confining the ‘outside’, managed inventions, ruptures of habits, rules or norms as exceptions, in general economy the crisis is no longer an exception but the permanent foundation of production which must now be continuously organized and modulated. Unlike the modern logic of the state of exception (see Agamben, 2003) which always needs an institutional context and a normal state within which to justify itself (even if as an exception), power over mind avoids committing itself to any particular institution, it cannot be withheld or slowed down by any of them. It rather seeks legitimation from the public opinion and ethically right: ethics and obscure ‘public opinion’ replace now formal law and its institutions as the basis of legitimacy (proven by the permanent war on terrorism). In other words, power over mind does not have any external ‘reason’ to refer to, no fixed point of reference or legitimation (like formal law, normal state, or a specific task of an institution). There is rather ‘no sense’, ‘no reason’ in it (its logic and points of reference seem to change from day to day). Indeed, power over mind is mad. It does not have any specific task or specific boundaries; it is uncontrolled by fixed reason; it is lacking in restraint. But it has its own rules. There is method in madness.³¹

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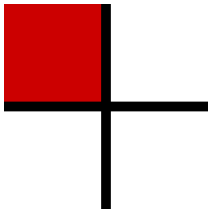
31 In Finnish, there is a specific word which maybe best combines both senses of the emerging power: *mielivalta*. It reads literally *mind-power* or *sense-power* – the meaning of the word *mieli* is etymologically in the German words *der Sinn* (sense), *das Gemüt* (mind), *die Launen* (mood), *die Lust* (desire), *der Verstand* (reason, understanding), *die Ansicht* (view, opinion), *die Absicht* (intent, mind), *die Erinnerung* (memory); and *valta* means power (in the sense of *Macht*, *pouvoir*, *potestas*) – but its first meaning is a use of power that is not based on ‘reason’ (law, rules, objective facts), that is *mindless* and *senseless*, that is *arbitrary* and *despotic*. *Mielivalta* is mad power over mind.

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Controlling the Multitude

Jussi Vähämäki

abstract

The constitutive political problem in the ‘knowledge society’ or ‘knowledge economy’ is basically the same as it was in the industrial capitalism: how to govern, organize and control the labour force. What has happened in the last decades is that the concept of labour force has lost more and more of its physical and biological aspects. It has detached from its specific uses or ends and become, paraphrasing the famous expression of Marx, a real abstraction. Today, the labour force is primarily a mental category. And it is impossible to organize, control and locate mind through the place it belongs to and thorough the deeds it does. The mental labour force does not have strict spatial and temporal (linear) coordinates. This forces contemporary capitalism to develop ‘new kinds of tools (that) characterize the digital era: tools of mind’ (John Zysman). These new tools focus directly on the elementary faculties of humans and not on their performances or products. New tools of mind are developed to increase the efficiency of the elementary faculties of the human mind and to control the use of these faculties. As tools of mind they have to respect the abstract reality of the human mind, its spatial boundlessness and its temporal endlessness (nonlinearity). They have to be abstract, but at the same time these new tools have to have real efficiency to guide and control action and reasoning. This article takes the concept of commonplace as a model to the new tools of mind and tries to unfold some of the basic aspects of this linguistic real abstraction in the ‘knowledge economy’ and the ‘mystical interconnection’ it has with the sensibly-concrete that counts only as the form of appearance of the abstractly general.

Introduction

The change in the concept of the labour force, its transformation from biological category to abstract mental category, has grave consequences to the fundamental political question of how to organize modern society. If the basic political problem during industrial capitalism and Fordist society was physical control of labour force in definite places like the factory and its (biological) protection in the Welfare State, in the ‘knowledge society’ this problem is how to govern and control a labour force that is mental, immaterial and communicative and exists only as knowledge in time. To control boundless, amorphous and restless mind, modern capitalism needs to occupy its whole environment. It is not enough to define the norm and exception or draw the line between what is included and what is excluded, because in the ‘knowledge economy’ and in the production of knowledge it is impossible to decide in anticipation what is essential and what is not. It is not enough to judge the mind as mindless, when it has become the creative and generative principle of production. The vagueness of knowledge

production means that the *arkhe* of organizing in contemporary economy is *deficit of information*. It is from this deficit of information that the new methods of organizing and controlling work and production grow in contemporary society. Using the expression of Gilles Deleuze, they do not mould action, but they model it. This means that new tools of the mind are basically mimetic or imitative in their nature. What characterizes mimetic behaviour or imitation? Above all: deficit of information. Imitation begins where information ends. Mimesis or imitation does not find its expression in any specific activity but in the absence of specific activity or information. If mimesis is defined as the deficit of information, then mimetic action and the mimetic methods to organize and control this action grow out of the crisis of transmitting information. In this sense we could even speak of 'mimetic tools' that are able to organize and model action and knowledge on the level where the action or knowledge have no specific information content.

The shift from the physical labour force to mental and immaterial labour force is above all important because it restructures our entire political system and its organization. But it is important also from the point of view of power. By opposing the traditional disciplinary concept of power and the concept of control, it is possible to say that power operates on a particular action and subject in space. Its target is the physical or biological human being. Power seeks its justification and its function from a particular institution (the factory produces, the hospital takes care of illness, research is done in the university). Control instead operates on the bare conditions of action. It targets the possibilities of life (both corporeal and incorporeal) in general. Control avoids committing to any particular institution and seeks its justification rather from public opinion and ethical right. That is why media and communication in general (and not the information content) are in such a central position in control societies. As a consequence ethics or the morally right replace formal law and its institutions, which functioned as the corner stones of modern democratic societies. Control is power which withdraws from the institutions and unfolds onto society. In other words, the crisis of the institutional legitimacy does not mean the end of the exercise of power but the multiplication of its forms and its penetration of the entirety of life. Control is exercise of power as a 'mental attitude' which has become public opinion. It is not at all necessarily disciplinary or, as Gilles Deleuze says: "Highway is not a means to hold anyone in place, but by building more highways the means of control become multiplied. I am not saying that this is the only purpose of highways, but they may be driven endlessly and 'freely' without never becoming held up, and still you are all the time in total control" (Deleuze, 1989). In juridical terms the distinction between power and control is this: whereas power operates within the juridical order in a normal state, control operates in a permanent state of exception without institutional legitimacy and without determined and recognizable task or limit.¹

The new division of labour and the emerging new technologies and organizational forms of production that originate from the transition (from physical to the mental labour force) has to be found in the parting of two general lines of research. The first developed in the horizon that Foucault (1979) called 'biopolitics'. From the

1 This seems to be one, almost self-evident result of Agamben's books on *Homo Sacer*, see Agamben (2003).

biopolitical conflicts of the last two centuries emerged a new form of power over life and its technologies to govern living as such. The second concentrates on the human being as 'rational' being, as a knowledge creature and a linguistic animal, who is able to produce and create meanings without any pre-established commission or order. From the basic organizational principles of modern societies described by Foucault, that is, controlling and governing the labour force as a productive physical body in a definite space (factory, office) through discipline (disciplinary power) and guarding its reproduction in the welfare state (biopower), we are moving towards new organizational principles that try to govern and control the *labour force as mental entity*. Instead of creating physical or biological boundaries the new form of power emerging from actual 'mental politics' tries to create mental boundaries and mentalities. New technologies and sciences that focus on humans as rational beings move into the terrain of the politics of mind or the politics of sense. They focus on the institution of sense, on the cooperation between minds and on the creation of subjectivity (or performativity). The conflicts proper to this boundless home-ground give rise to new forms of power over mind ('mental power'/power over intellect). This new form of power is arbitrary, contingent and devoid of norms and rules. It does not substitute biopower but rather deregulates it.

Breaking the 'genetic code of mind' and creating a potentially more docile or flexible and less expensive – amortizing the body with the help of the new biotechnology – human mind is one of the main promises of the new knowledge technologies. Industrial capitalism paid little attention to the psychological well-being of the worker, because it did not have any use for mental energies. Depression, lack of ambition, uncommunicativeness or timidity was not a problem as long as a worker was able to fulfill his assignments. Now the living human body is moving from the centre of production and creation into its periphery. It is substituted – apparently – by the disembodied immaterial mind, human being as a mind able to create sense, cooperate with other minds and create new meanings and forms without any preconditions. At the same time we are witnessing a kind of a forgetting of the productive body, or to be more exact: the human body that was at stake in the politics of industrial capitalism and in its greatest biopolitical conflicts is becoming depoliticized. In other words, in the 'knowledge society' or in knowledge capitalism, the human body is deprived of all the political rights that industrial capitalism was forced to concede to it. Human body, like machines, is only a cost that is to be amortized as fast as possible. When the body is denuded of all those rights that it gained because of its productive/creative power, it is now naked and armless, free to be exploited and manipulated in every imaginable way and without any juridical or medical protection. It is used as a mere living organism on a world scale.

When mind or spirit turns out to be the main target of governance use and user instead of production and producer seem to dictate the future of society. The passage from society of producers to the production of society has its echoes on different levels of contemporary society. It is possible to discern symptoms almost everywhere. Cynicism, greediness and opportunism are prevailing emotions and transform other people and the world into mere objects for use. The new middle class and society of services save us from class-conflicts. In philosophy and cultural studies critique of metaphysics and ontology dominates at the same time as people live one of the biggest revolutions in

their everyday life, in their habits, and are in desperate need of depth and perspective to orientate themselves in the world. Not to speak about critique of 'productivism' in the name of benevolent humanism, or political theory in which reigns a return to the models of classical antiquity (as a 'user friendly society', where it is the user, not the producer (technician) who decides whether a thing is good or not) and almost hysterical need to separate the political from society and economy (Arendt, Strauss). This turns it into pure decision making that is founded on 'universal values' or universal morality and not on an analysis of society.

Mental power tries to govern and control the immaterial and mental labour force by creating mentalities, attitudes and moods; or, in the philosophical terms, it operates on the level of being as such, on the level of what the person is, not what she does or says or what she represents. The new form of power does not need (political) action, meaning, information or representation to function. To fight against it with concepts like originality, authenticity or information seems to be in some ways a futile (and politically safe) enterprise. Mimetic or mass behaviour has been a kind of pain barrier to the critical theory of the twentieth century. Every time it has confronted imitation, or action that does not have any other sense than imitation, it has judged the action as mindless or negated it as impossible or considered it merely as a threshold that divides nature and culture/history, necessary and possible, life and politics, natural and human sciences.

An undifferentiated argument without any identity, an argument that is only a copy and that is precisely for this reason impassable and impossible, has appeared under different guises. To mention but a few: Freud (1914) and his writings on narcissism, Arendt (1952) and the problem of banality of evil or the problem of totalitarianism, or to take one example from contemporary philosophy: the writings of Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy (1990). Not to speak of modern sociology or political science (Balibar, 1997). The best formulation of this impasse of critical thinking we find in Karl Kraus. Speaking of why he had not written anything about Hitler, he said: 'from Hitler nothing comes to my mind'. Hitler was so normal, so banal that even the most acute of minds could not find anything worth saying or writing about him. The challenge to critical theory confronted in narcissism, in banality and in irrational identification to myth is that of mass society and mimetic behaviour typical to it. Imitation is thought to be irrational because of blind identification (to myth, to image) for which it is impossible to find any rational reason, any common cause that would be possible to isolate from it. It is repetitious and childish and without origin. It is pure imitation, mimesis, and it does not give existence to a people in a political sense; it is an identification that remains outside rational communication. In other words, it could be said that the challenge comes from the presence of *multitude* in the sphere of social action. Multitude is completely differentiated and at the same time without differences/undifferentiated.² It

2 On this, see Deleuze (1973). On the concept of the multitude, see Hardt and Negri (2001). In this book the concept remains somewhat unclear; see also Negri (1999). For the clearest political definition of the concept, see Virno (2002). Virno's little book is one the best analyses of the significance of the concept and the clearest summing up of its different aspects. Negri says in his interview book *Il ritorno* that the concept of multitude has different meanings: "First a philosophical and positive: The multitude is a multiplicity of subjects...The multitude is an indivisible multiplicity, an infinite quantity of points, a differentiated set, absolutely differentiated" (2003: 139). Secondly "the multitude is a class concept: the class of the productive singularities, the class of the workers of

does not have a common cause or specific community. However, it has a unity that is constituted in 'language as such', in the *commonplaces*, that form the nucleus of 'life of the mind', living and moving intellect (Virno, 2002: 27, 34).

The problem with mimetic or mass behaviour is fundamentally the deficit of information. It is impossible to control and guide mimetic behaviour with such traditional means as information or fear. What is needed is a 'persuasive technology' that can change what people believe and what they do in a way that no one knows exactly why she believes in this or behaves in that way. This is done by creating interactive machines, kind of cyber mothers that are tirelessly creating good habits.³ How does this 'persuasive technology' or 'captology' function? To analyse some aspects of these new 'ethical technologies' I will use as an example the linguistic 'real abstraction' called commonplace and some of its negative or at least ambivalent aspects as fundamental nucleus of 'the life of the mind' and as the epicentre of that linguistic animal that is human being (Virno, 2002: 27).

Commonplace as a Model for Mental Power

A commonplace, like a self-evident argument or deed from which nothing comes to mind, does not transmit any information. It is a platitude, a banality without anything interesting in it. It is a totally explicated or unfolded fact. It does not add anything specific to a discussion or an action, but it is not necessarily mindless. On the contrary it manifests the basic structures of mind or intellect. A commonplace is without identity and without source. We accept it without discussing it, without asking any questions about its relevance or value, or we do not even notice it and tend to ignore it as such. It is something that 'everybody knows...' or nobody knows exactly its content. In this sense a commonplace is undeniable. The commonplace as undeniable has an important function in ordinary discussion. If you do not agree with the other discussants on some basic categories, if you do not have a common language, the discussion would never start. Without commonplaces a discussion would be a kind of meta-discussion about discussion, about the preconditions of discussion. This sort of meta-discussion takes place usually with children who want to know why something is said like this or why it is called like that. It reveals an infantile attitude. The discussion about discussion ends only when people who are discussing find an argument that is self-evident to both of them (They find the undeniable truth, the ground etc.). It is paradoxical that discussion and dialogue find their end precisely at the point where they should start as well as truth itself being something that is self-evident and obvious. In this sense a commonplace is a

the immaterial labour. A class that has no unity, but that despite of that is the ensemble of the creative powers of labour"... "Third aspect: the multitude is a ontological power. It incarnates a dispositive that has a capacity to potentialise the desire and transform the world. Or better still: it wants to create the world as its own image" (2003: 140-141).

- 3 There is a new science called 'captology' that uses 'persuasive technology' to guide people towards good, for example when a customer scans his supermarket club card, there is a program compares purchase data with a database of recommended daily nutritional intake. The system then mails out coupons to encourage customers to fill the gaps in their diet. If I'm not getting enough selenium, for example, I might receive a coupon to save half a buck on a can of Brazil nuts (Fogg, 2002).

starting point for every discussion. It is something that we already know and to which we are not able to add anything. It is common to all and starting from this *something in common* we can develop specific arguments and we can argue with others. However, the something in common does not have anything to do with shared values, common cause or common language. Quite the contrary, it refers to that which can only be repeated, and as repetition it demonstrates the crisis of meaningful communication: repetition is necessary only in its relation to that which cannot be substituted, it deals with irreplaceable singularity (cf. Deleuze, 1968: 7).⁴ What is common in commonplace is the irreparable difference or non-communicability in the agreement.⁵

In classical rhetoric the general preconditions of discussion or argumentation are called 'commonplaces' (*topoi koinoi*). Common (or general) places are, according to Aristotle, points of view that are generally accepted. It is possible to apply them to different kinds of arguments (in physics, politics, law, etc.) and utilize them in any field of knowledge. As Aristotle says:

I mean that the proper subjects of dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms are the things with which we say the regular or *universal Lines of Argument* (*topoi koinoi*) are concerned, that is to say those lines of argument that apply equally to questions of right conduct, natural science, politics, and many other things that have nothing to do with one another. Take, for instance, the line of argument concerned with 'the more or less'. On this line of argument it is equally easy to base a syllogism or enthymeme about any of what nevertheless are essentially disconnected subjects—right conduct, natural science, or anything else whatever.... The general Lines of Argument have no special subject-matter, and therefore will not increase our understanding of any particular class of things.... By special Lines of Argument (*topoi idioi*) I mean the propositions peculiar to each several class of things, by general those common to all classes alike.⁶

However, no one becomes an expert in any field with the help of them, because these commonplaces or self-evidences have nothing to do with any specific argument. They are the most general logical and linguistic schemes or preconditions necessary for the possibility of every single speech act. Specific places (*topoi idioi*), on the contrary, are idiomatic or proper to every single discipline and to each genre of rhetoric. We use them when we talk with our friends, parents or colleagues. In these idiomatic phrases or places the ethos of the community in which we belong finds its expression. Contrary to the idiomatic expression commonplaces do not have any community. The common places we use in discourse are the place of more or less, the place of contrariness, the place of reciprocal relations and of proportional relationship between the terms.⁷ Commonplaces or categories never manifest themselves as such. We do not speak about more or less in general, but always about more or less of something. Common places constitute the foundation of our reasoning, but as such they do not have any specific meaning. These places are common or public because everybody needs them in order to

4 Paolo Virno refers to the connexion that Benjamin saw existing between children's eagerness to imitate and the technical reproduction of art and new modes of perception (2002: 31).

5 In the introductory part to his *Communitas*, 'Nothing in common', Roberto Esposito tries to show this paradoxical nature of the word community meaning of the word 'community' uncoiling its etymology.

6 <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.html>

7 See Virno (2002: 25-31), Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), and Mortara Cavalli (1988: 78-79). On the general importance of rhetoric in contemporary society, see Meyer (1993).

construct a meaningful discourse. However, today the popularity of expressions like 'learning to learn' seem to prove that commonplaces can also manifest these categories as such on the level of discourse and we seem to understand their (abstract) meaning.

Why does Aristotle call them 'places' (*topoi*)? The reason is that, according to him, to remember a thing or a human being it is enough to remember the place where we can find it. It is not necessary to remember a person, to remember a place (a context) where she belongs is enough. Place is an instrument for associating ideas. It is a memory device, a device to control and guide memory. Without this device we get lost into the labyrinth of memory, where memories are mixed and stand without any order (in space). To remember the place where one belongs saves time from discussion and conflicts. The idea that Aristotle has is this: the one who controls memory controls time (life). It is clear that we accept common places or arguments that are obvious to avoid regression *ad infinitum*. The reason is that the regression *ad infinitum*, the endless discussion about the general terms of discussion *takes time* and it does not produce anything special. Discussion about discussion is pure waste of time. This means that we accept self-evidences in order to *save time* and in order to have serious discussion and real work that do produce meanings and things. The self-evident or obvious is in some ways also non-work and at the same time a precondition to work and to production.

To summarize some aspects of a commonplace, we can say that:

1. It is without *identity*.
2. It is *undeniable*.
3. It is *something in common*.
4. It is necessary for every discourse.
5. It orders discourse on a level that is not manifest.
6. It *saves time* for real discussion or production.

Besides these, a self-evident argument, a commonplace has other interesting features. Firstly, it does not *transmit any information*. It does not add anything to a discussion/conversation. It does not have any (information) value. When we accept a self-evident argument, we receive something that we do not need. It does not have any value to us. This brings self-evidence (or the idea of common or public places) near to the idea of *gift*. Secondly, a commonplace argument says only that which we already know. It repeats or copies that which is already known. It is *imitation*.

Making things Easy

The idea of saving time is one of the most important premises on which modern technology is constructed. The technology we use tries to imitate that which is common to us all in order to control time. It forces us to work and produce something using that which is common to us all, turning most generic and common human qualities to instruments of production. At first glance there is not much room for commonplaces, obvious, banal, repetition and imitation in contemporary society. They are like ghosts or shadows that everybody tries to chase away from discourse and from production to win some attention. However, production of self-evidences or obvious is not a marginal

thing in our society. Commonplace is not only an occasion from which discussion begins. It is not limited to the sphere of television talk-shows or to politics or commercials. It has nothing to do with the media in its popular and limited sense. It is something that has to do with social (and economic) production in general, and it is intentionally produced.

The slogan of modern technology is 'make things easy'; people have to have easy access to modern technology. They have to use it without noticing why they do this or that. The message is that people do not want to waste time, they do not want to read huge manuals before they start to play computer games or to watch a film from their DVD player. They want their food already semi-cooked as well as they want their lives already lived. The idea is that a good product is consumer-friendly, meaning it does not take time and thought, hesitation or frustration to consume it. A good product is easy to accept without discussion and without contestation. It must be familiar, natural, commonplace and self-evident. When you take the thing in your hand you seem to know how to use it, even if you are seeing the item for the first time in your life. Production process has to create self-evidences, commonplaces and anticipated items, products that in a way contain already the experience of the user/consumer. This means that 'to make things easy' the modern production system has to create customs and habits, slogans and phrases, styles and ideas (it does not create concepts, even though commonplaces do look like concepts and smell like concepts, they are only copies of concepts. They lack the contradictory or paradoxical character of a concept). In short, the modern production process is basically production of (Aristotelian) *ethics*. To be more exact: *It is production of ethics as imitation*. (In this production of ethics the production process imitates philosophy and its power to create concepts). This means that commonplaces or 'public space' has become a product, something that is at the end and not at the beginning of production process (and something where repetition is copying). It is something that is present and manifest at the level of discourse and that can be separated from it as if it had a (information) value. From the necessary starting point of every discussion, to every interaction, it transforms into a goal and end as such.

Or to be more exact, production of commonplaces (production of ethics) is production of *general preconditions* to every discourse, action and knowledge. These general preconditions do not transmit any significant or meaningful information. It is impossible to learn them or teach them through their content. There is no sense in discussing their relevance or to contest them. It is only possible to copy, imitate and follow them. As commonplaces they constitute the grammar of all new modes of power, of all new systems of control and their focus is on time and on memory. What does this change, a kind of rhetorical turn in production and economy imply? Or, what actually happens when we accept a commonplace as if it were a relevant argument, as if it could transmit valuable information even though we already know its content and it does not add anything new to discussion? What do we actually accept?

1. We accept (or receive) the *person as such*. Not because of what is said but because of *who says something, who speaks*. In philosophical terms: we accept that something is, or being as such. We take the person into the discussion even though she has nothing to say. This is a kind of *communication of singularities* so dear to contemporary philosophy. The production of commonplaces (making things easy) is

production of personalities (brands) and personalization of production. And in the conditions of production of personalities and personalization of production the contradictions of the production process take a personal form: either as conflicts between persons or as conflicts within a person. In both cases conflicts do not have any communicative content. (It is not possible to argue about their content; and in the end they increase the importance of decision as a pure act of will).

2. We accept the person as one who has authority. A person whose intervention is accepted as if it were a relevant comment in a discussion, even though the intervention adds nothing new, has authority. Authority is a capacity to enter into communication and into a community without saying or doing anything special. In this sense 'making things easy', production of commonplaces, is production of authority. (It is not the death of an author we are witnessing, but the rebirth of an author and authority that does not say or produce anything, but is using, leasing and recycling things whose producers cannot be seen).
3. The commonplace or self-evident, as is said above, is undeniable. It is impossible to open it up and discuss or contest its axiomatic assumptions. It is *structured like a command* or an order. And a command is effective if it contains nothing to discuss about. A good command contains no information. If it raises objections or if it is 'unclear' it does not fulfil its function. A command is more effective the shorter it *takes time* (to understand it); in command the difference is between language and physical force, language and will disappears. A command that saves time or a command within which there is no time is strictly opposite to intuition that contains nothing else but time (and intuition is the 'form of communication' between singularities in multitude). This is where commonplace reveals its hidden kinship with banality (ban) and command (imperium).

'Making things easy', production of commonplaces, is production of goods or products that are structured like commands. It is production of 'you have to', production of a kind of Kantian moral imperative. This means that it tries to produce a sort of atmosphere in which you speak and work even if you have nothing to say or you are without a work. It creates humble and flexible personalities who are willing to learn and use every possible device, and who are always present for use. (Maybe the interest in Kant, basically in the concept of the sublime – in previous years also in the field of radical philosophy – has roots in the real changes in the production process. At least it is easy to see the affiliation between the notion of sublime and the Marxian notion of labour force as pure potentiality; sublime being here a sort of moral response or a moralistic reaction to the revolutionary potentiality of the labour force that has the virtual capacity to do 'anything whatever').⁸

8 See Virno's beautiful summing up of the concept of '*erhaben*' in *Grammatica* (2002: 19-20). Freeman (1987) connects the Kantian notion of the sublime and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The monster does not fit in to its skin, to its context and tries constantly to break out from it. This monster, wrapped up in a thin film that barely can resist its boundless force, that arises in the spectator mixed feelings of fear and enjoyment, becomes a central figure of virtue and generosity in 'the age of the masses'. To paraphrase Marx, in the concept of the sublime do find their expression all

4. A person who wants to be accepted as such, without anything to say, is counting on the good will of the others, on the belonging self. He or she wants to belong to the community even if there seems no reason for that. This means that production of commonplaces is also production of belonging, production of the societal or production of friendship or complicity that does not have any external reasons or internal differences. It is production of community as platitude or completely unfolded community.

To summarize: What is at stake in the production of commonplaces is production of general preconditions or places (schemes) for social cooperation, for speech, action and knowledge. These general preconditions direct and control action and speech as undeniable and authoritarian commands. They intermingle directly in the 'life of mind'. The general preconditions do not transmit any information (and they do not have any value as such, but only as 'options' or as 'mentalities' to control action). It is impossible to learn them on the basis of their content. It is only possible to imitate them, follow them. And you 'have to' (they are structured like moral imperatives) follow and imitate them if you want to survive. These general preconditions or commonplaces are the foundation on which new systems of control are constructed.

Conclusion: A Note on Imitation and Intuition

How to create something new if in contemporary society the most important thing is to follow and to be aware of what and how the others are doing and saying?

Since the end of the nineteenth century it has been quite clear that the dualistic solution that separates authentic and unauthentic, mind (language) and body is not a real solution but an expression of a problem. To philosophers like Nietzsche and Bergson the question was not to separate human sciences from natural sciences. They tried to overcome the dualism and to develop a vocabulary that could be used to describe both historical and natural phenomena. This had almost nothing to do with biologism or vitalism in the traditional sense because giving up the dualism between biological and historical life led also to the disappearance of the clear cut borders between them.

One central concept that surpasses the separation between nature and culture is imitation. And it is the concept of imitation that seems to have a special role in contemporary society. In imitation concepts like 'authentic', 'proper'/'property' or 'original' crash against a wall that they are not able to get through, because the imitator does not necessarily imitate something definite, but creates an appearance of the whole. Essential in imitation is the will to follow and anticipate the actions of the others according to a format or to an ethos/character. Imitation lies behind the vast scale of both theoretical and practical problems in contemporary society: from the irrational exuberance in the stock markets to artificial intelligence and fabrication of robots, from property rights and copyrights to genetic manipulation and cloning. The difficulty in

the forces that the capitalistic mode of production and the ascending bourgeoisie liberated, the forces that do not fit in the context or skin of this production.

deciding what has value and what has not, what is real or authentic and what is only fabrication or rhetoric, what is information and what only looks like information, what is innovation and what is plain imitation, haunts science and scientists, lawyers and economists, business people and ordinary people, not to speak of political scientists, professional politicians and people working in the media. In fact, the modern media system or 'knowledge society' grows from *the crisis of transmitting information* (and not from the information glut). It is forced towards imitation because production of information is too expensive. This seems to lead towards a kind of outsourcing of the production of information and production of inventions.

However, the problem is not that of imitation versus originality or authenticity, or that of real information versus non-information or sense versus non sense. This kind of juxtaposition leads easily to a kind of a moral juxtaposition between imitation/use (intellect) and originality/production (body). It is just this cutting of the human mind from the human body that is going on in contemporary capitalism (the debate and confusion around 'intellectual property rights' reflect this tendency). To defend the rights of the human body against the new modes of oppression and exploitation it is necessary to glue the head back into the body. In other words, it is necessary to find tools that in some way help us to think beyond the classical modern concepts of meaningful information/action.

The notion of intuition helps at least to clarify the problem. It tries to conceptualise, in the modern context, the classical idea of experience: a doctor who has experience has the skill to see differences between two maladies whose symptoms or images are identical. Imitation (mimesis) is unification only on the basis of image (what something looks like) without any understanding and experience (without any contact). It is based solely on that which *we have in common* and it does not transmit any information. Intuition could then be defined as experience that does not have *anything in common*. It does not, like imitation, transmit any information and it has no place or it does not take place.⁹ If imitation is something that saves time, in a sense imitation does not take time, then intuition is nothing else but time, as Bergson and Deleuze have insisted. It is a kind of a pure intellect without unification/unity, or an intellect completely 'distracted' (absent-minded) and completely dispersed. Intuition is a method to understand, to feel time, when imitation is a method to cut up or dispense with time. In short, intuition is the method to understand communication (unification) in the era of multitude (multiplicity), when imitation is the method to hinder (immunicate) communication.¹⁰ Multitude does not have any spatial existence and it is without a common cause. Its relationship to the world is direct and corporeal, even though its body is language. This means that as a concept multitude surpasses the modern separation between body and

9 On the problem, see also W. Benjamin's (2004) important essay on destiny and character.

10 Deleuze begins *Le Bergsonisme* with the chapter 'Intuition as method'. Intuition is a method whose rigorous rules constitute that what Bergson calls precision in philosophy. The precision is achieved through determination of the conditions of the problems and through finding the variables according to which a given problem must be posed just in that way and not in other. One of the most important articles Deleuze has written on the communication between singularities may be 'A quoi reconnait-on le structuralisme' (1972). On the community/immunity, see Esposito (2002).

mind, nature and history, necessary and possible.¹¹ It is a concept that gives a voice to the real forces that work inside contemporary society but could not be grasped according to these separations.

We are not far away from commonplaces. If imitation is a kind of passive side of commonplaces, multitude ordered in space or straightened (explicated/unfolded) in time and turned into history, and if it marks the end of the process of differentiation and movement, intuition is the active side of commonplaces, folded time outside of history or the side from where the differentiation and movement begins (Simondon, 1992).¹² However, both imitation and intuition work without any reference to authenticity or meaningful information.

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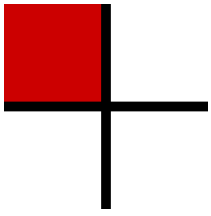
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On the Valorization of Informatic Labour^{*}

Katie Vann

abstract

The historical emergence and global proliferation of computer-mediated labour has been understood by some contemporary Marxian theorists to provide a unique milieu for the valorization process, and therefore to constitute fresh political possibilities for labouring subjects. This essay reads Hardt and Negri's *Empire* with respect to such a view, and locates a technicist model of valorization at its heart. That model is problematic in that it assumes that the distinctiveness of pre-informatic production consisted in the control of labouring action by management through specifically modernist practices of transcendental ordering, and that the waning of managerial control imperatives therefore represents a historical shift in the character of valorization. The essay then considers an alternative, value-form theoretic model of valorization, and offers a non-representationalist proposal about the role of managerial practices of inscribing informatic labour in the process of its valorization. Contrary to the historical claim in *Empire* that specifically modernist practices of transcendental ordering have waned in the passage to flexible informatic labour, the essay argues that managerial inscription practices enable the historical continuity of modernist transcendental ordering – a continuity that is obscured by the technicist model of valorization. Managerial inscription practices are best understood as technologies of *accounting for* rather than of *controlling* labouring action

Introduction

Political theorists of valorization operate in a head-spinning environment due to the convergence of multiple kinds of historical transformation. Multiple, not just at the level of the social phenomena that we seek to comprehend, but also at the level of the conceptual resources – historical events in their own right – that we use as we work. In such a situation, historical continuity can, like the past itself, recede from view. The topic of valorization brings with it all kinds of philosophical puzzles, but the concerns of this Special Issue are also filled with political implications. Because, if the valorization process is historically specific, this implies that regimes of worth, social investment, and care are culturally contingent affairs that are, as such, realized through the choices that people make about how life should be organized. If an understanding of the logic of those choices has implications for how we orient to the political possibilities of the present, a discussion about valorization is itself a political affair.

* Thanks to Sisse Finken, Geert Reuten, two anonymous reviewers, and the editors for helpful comments on an earlier draft.

I have chosen to consider a line of reasoning that is offered in Hardt and Negri's *Empire*. This book contributes a potential orientation for labour valorization theory in the historical context of global, networked production, and carves a distinctive place for the proliferation of information and communication technologies in capitalist production *as* a site of valorization. Valorization within informatic production, they propose, provides the conditions for emergent, and preferable, political social forms. So, in addition to linking emergent political possibilities to a purported historical shift in the technologies and social organization of capitalist production regimes, Hardt and Negri read that very shift through Marxian value theory.

My objectives neither begin nor end in an assessment of *Empire*, and I do agree with many of Hardt and Negri's claims and normative impulses. And I would like to orient to some of the specific proposals of the book as a point of departure for exploring an alternative way of thinking about the valorization of labour – an alternative that tends to be obscured in a contemporary habit of thinking of which I take *Empire* to be an instance. I am working toward articulating an alternative proposal about the potential political-economic role of standardized inscriptions of formally free labour, in the constitution of value-formed labour as a historically specific category that is intrinsically bound with the social relations of capitalism. I understand capitalism to be a process of generalized market exchange mediated by the money form, and an exploitative process in which the unequal distribution of social wealth is embedded in the production of goods and services. As far as I have been able to deduce from *Empire*, the role of standard inscriptions of formally free labouring action has not been questioned in the claims that are made about the self-valorizing capacities of informatic labour.

I will work through three loosely structured stages in this paper. The first presents a puzzle of valorization theory – the constitution of homogeneity and heterogeneity within and as the commodity form – and I will show how this puzzle is dealt with in *Empire*, specifically their treatment of 'immaterial labour' as the category which accounts for the origination of homogeneity and heterogeneity. The second looks more closely at some of the presuppositions of that approach and their relationship to Hardt and Negri's contention that the transcendental ordering practices of modernity are waning in the context of informatic capitalism – a claim that is associated with their scepticism regarding the critical-political relevance of postmodernist and postcolonial theory with respect to contemporary managerialism. The third stage of the paper identifies the logic of Hardt and Negri's approach as technicist, and indicates an associated lacuna with respect to contemporary managerialist practice. I then sketch an alternative line of reasoning that could be drawn on as a resource for theorizing the valorization of informatic labour: that standardized inscriptions of formally free, informatic labouring action have a constitutive role in its social construction *qua* commodity form, and thus are central to a theorization of the capitalist valorization process. Contrary to the claim in *Empire* – that informatic labour is self-valorizing – I suggest the possibility that such practices of inscription are a constitutive moment in the commodification process and are therefore relevant to valorization theory. Inscription might best be understood as an instance of what Hardt and Negri understand to be a specifically modernist practice of 'transcendental ordering'; their persistence in the

organization of labour would therefore provide a continuity across the passage to Empire as a historical milieu for the valorization of informatic labour.

A Puzzle for Valorization Theory

Although the point tends to be neglected by mainstream economic theory, Marxist economists generally accept that commodities have a two-fold use-value/exchange-value structure. They may serve particular uses, however their capacity to participate in relations of generalized market exchange with other commodities is not thereby established. Insofar as use-values participate in generalized commodity exchange with other use-values, they must also have exchange-value. As use-values, commodities are qualitatively particular, which works against their comparability in the process of generalized exchange since the latter works through a logic of quantitative differentiation. In order to differentiate use values *quantitatively*, their *qualitative* particularity must be translated - perhaps we can say transcended - as/into a qualitative *homogeneity*. My favorite example of this phenomenon, taught to me by my students in California is: in order to reckon the real difference between a BigMac and a salad, you've got to see them both as calories! (See also Reuten, 1999: 93-95).

Marx was unambiguous on this point in his discussions of the commodity form, maintaining the centrality of *homogeneity across difference* as an irreducible aspect of the objects of generalized commodity exchange.¹ It was, for him, perhaps the marker of capitalism and reflected the historically specific social relations of which it consisted. The constitutive matrix, *qualitative homogeneity across qualitative heterogeneity*, obtains both for the commodities that labour creates and for labour itself qua commodity; that is, the double form (use-value / value) characterizes both commodified products and the labour that creates them (Reuten, 1988: 54; Reed, 2003: 68). A long-standing puzzle for Marxian theory has been to discern on what basis the exchangeability of qualitatively particular labours is possible: what is it that constitutes the generality, the qualitative equivalence, across differences? It is often referred to as 'abstract labour' in the sense that whatever this 'it' is, is going to turn out to be what is *common* to all the qualitatively particular labours qua use-values. The crux of the debate between traditional and value-form theoretic Marxists concerns the social foundation – the historicity – of this abstract homogeneity. Hardt and Negri's treatment of the valorization of informatized production is best seen through the eyes of this question of origination, for in their treatment of the historical shift to Empire they also posit a shift in the genealogy of abstract homogeneity across difference.

Empire's treatment of the emerging historical shift doubts neither the continuity of capitalism, nor generalized commodity exchange. As such, the historical shift that is being proposed in *Empire* is one in which both the qualitative heterogeneity and qualitative homogeneity of labouring actions is realized. And yet, although they

1 For treatments of the centrality of this problem to the analysis of capital, and of the basic distinctions between traditional Ricardian Marxism and post-Rubinean value theory, see for example, Postone (1993); and Reuten (1988, 2003).

acknowledge the historical persistence of capitalism as a distinctive milieu in which valorization occurs, Hardt and Negri also posit a historical shift away from industrial production as a distinctive process *for* that occurrence. Industrial valorization is an antiquated, modernist process that is being superseded by informatized production, which gives rise to its own, unique conditions through which capitalist valorization can be realized. This is an extremely interesting proposal, for it entails both a historical treatment of a distinction between industrial and informatized production, and a threading of these forms back through Marx's treatment of the distinctiveness of capitalist valorization.

Although Hardt and Negri maintain Marx's central point on the simultaneous qualitative particularity and qualitative sameness as a structural feature of the labour-commodity form, they maintain that the historical transition from industrial to informatized production involves a transition in how this structure comes about. Here is an example of their proposal:

One consequence of the informatization of production and the emergence of immaterial labour has been a real homogenisation of labouring processes. From Marx's perspective in the nineteenth century, *the concrete practices of various labouring activities were radically heterogeneous: tailoring and weaving involved incommensurable concrete actions. Only when abstracted from their concrete practices could different labouring activities be brought together and seen in a homogeneous way, no longer as tailoring and weaving but as the expenditure of human labour power in general, as abstract labour.* [²] With the computerization of production today, however, the heterogeneity of concrete labour has tended to be reduced, and the worker is increasingly further removed from the object of his or her labour. The labour of computerized tailoring and the labour of computerized weaving may involve exactly the same concrete practices – that is, manipulation of symbols and information. Tools, of course, have always abstracted labour power from the object of labour to a certain degree. In previous periods, however, the tools generally were related in a relatively inflexible way to certain tasks or certain groups of tasks; *different tools corresponded to different activities* – the tailor's tools, the weaver's tools, or later a sewing machine and a power loom. *The computer proposes itself, in contrast, as the universal tool, or rather as the central tool, through which all activities might pass. Through the computerization of production, then, labour tends toward the position of abstract labour.* (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 292-293, emphases added)

The claim regarding the distinctiveness of the present of capitalist valorization, then, is that the use of computers in the production process brings with it a change in the process through which the homogenization of labour is realized. A central theme in *Empire's* conceptualization of informatic production is that of 'immaterial labour' or computer-mediated service labour. *Empire* acknowledges that there might remain a division of social labour between occupations that become truly immaterial and those that continue to be engaged in only 'routine symbol manipulation'. But in those occupations in which computer-mediated service work reigns, the idea seems to be that we can begin to talk about a transition in the logic of the valorization process itself.

Whereas the tools used prior to the computer lead to a differentiation in types of labouring action, when everyone uses the computer, tool-use becomes a homogenizing force. The distinctiveness of valorization today, in other words, is predicated on the distinctiveness of information and communication technologies qua means of

2 The footnote in the original text refers the reader to Vol. 1 of *Capital*, pp. 131-137.

production: labour is immaterial insofar as it is an emergent property of informatized production. The valorization of immaterial labour is reducible to its informatic character.

The Homogeneity and Heterogeneity of Informatic Labour

At the same time that *Empire* maintains the continuity of capitalism as the milieu for the valorization of informatic labour, it denies the continuity of the requirement for concrete labouring activities to be abstracted and “seen in a homogeneous way as the expenditure of human labour power in general” (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 292), or abstract labour. Such an abstraction process is no longer necessary, Hardt and Negri propose, because the computer – the tool that all qualitatively particular labours commonly utilize – provides a kind of qualitative equalization, or homogeneity, across them. However, the claim is not only that the computer affords this homogenization process. There is also the claim that the externally imposed abstraction process that characterized pre-informatic capitalism wanes in the historical passage to Empire. We find a crucial discussion of this particular historical proposal in the context of Hardt and Negri’s criticism of the analytical and political orientation of two research communities that they call postmodernist and postcolonial theory (traced chiefly to Lyotard’s critique of modernist master narratives and Derrida’s critique of western metaphysics.) What I want to focus on in their critique is the way in which they deduce the contemporary impotence of those theoretical resources on the basis of a particular aspect of contemporary managerialism: its embrace of difference.

According to Hardt and Negri, postmodernist and postcolonial theory are efforts to interrogate and seek liberation from what are now past forms of rule, the lingering influences of the enlightenment, as the source of domination in the present (2000: 137-139). The charge is two-fold: (i) that the analytic and political affordance of these works consist and culminate in the recognition and celebration of difference; and, (ii) that the critique of Enlightenment practiced in these works is misguided because contemporary managerialism embraces a difference that modernity did not. Both points read as follows:

When we begin to consider the ideologies of corporate capital and the world market, it certainly appears that postmodernist and postcolonialist theorists who advocate a politics of difference, fluidity, and hybridity in order to challenge the binaries and essentialism of modern sovereignty have been outflanked by the strategies of power. Power has evacuated the bastion they are attacking and has circled around them to join them in the assault in the name of difference. These theorists thus find themselves pushing against an open door. (*ibid.*, 138)

When postmodernists propose their opposition to a modernity and an Enlightenment that exalt the universality of reason only to sustain white male European supremacy, it should be clear that they are really attacking the second tradition of our schema (and unfortunately ignoring or eclipsing the first). It would be more accurate, in other words, to pose postmodernist theory as a challenge neither to the Enlightenment nor to modernity in toto but specifically to the tradition of modern sovereignty. (*ibid.*, 140)

Hardt and Negri’s proposal in this regard stems from a particular understanding of modernity as a historically specific economic form, and as a particular milieu for the

valorization of labour. The distinctive process of that historical moment seems to be what they call ‘transcendental ordering’ – an externally imposed process of abstraction – as a condition of its possibility. Allusions to transcendental ordering are central to modern sovereignty as a mediating political form.

Empire refers to a dramatic conflict, in circa 1220s-1600s, in which “the immanent forces of desire and association, the love of community,” are confronted by “the strong hand of an overarching authority that imposes and enforces an order on the social field” (ibid., 69). The immanent forces of desire and association had emerged as a revolutionary response to the metaphysical dichotomies of the ancien regime, and consisted in humanity's discovery and affirmation of its power in this world; and “knowledge shifted from the transcendent plane to the immanent and, consequently, that human knowledge became a doing, a practice of transforming nature” (ibid., 72). The political structure of the immanent revolutionary forces was distinctive, according to Hardt and Negri, in that “the plane of immanence is the one on which the powers of singularity are realized and the one on which the truth of the humanity is determined historically, technically, and politically. For this very fact, because there cannot be any external mediation, the singular is presented as the multitude” (ibid., 70-73).

This tradition entered into a conflict on account of the impulses of another tradition, “which arose within the Renaissance revolution to divert its direction, transplant the new image of humanity to a transcendent plane” and pose “a transcendent constituted power against the immanent constitute power, order against desire” (ibid., 74). The conflict provided the organizing frame for the Thirty Years War. A mediation of the conflict came about, ultimately but provisionally, through a political form called ‘modern sovereignty’: “The primary task of this Enlightenment was to dominate the idea of immanence without producing the absolute dualism of medieval culture by constructing a transcendental apparatus capable of disciplining a multitude of formally free subjects. The ontological dualism of the culture of the ancien regime had to be replaced by a functional dualism, and the crisis of modernity had to be resolved by means of adequate mechanisms of mediation” (ibid., 78).

What is so fascinating about this historical moment is its production of a cultural process – what Hardt and Negri refer to as ‘transcendental ordering’ – that could mediate the struggle of the two traditions, in a way that realizes the second tradition’s imperative to control without resorting to the metaphysics that had been troubled by the revolutionary immanent forces that rose against it. Modern sovereignty absorbs within itself the second tradition’s impulse to control the immanent forces, but achieves that control through a kind of earthly instantiation of the transcendental apparatus. As *Empire* specifies: Hobbes’s figure of a ‘God on earth’ provides the model for the transcendental apparatus that distinguishes modern sovereignty as a mediating, political form: “On the one hand, the transcendence of the sovereign is founded not on an external theological support but only on the immanent logic of human relations. On the other hand, the representation that functions to legitimate this sovereign power also alienates it completely from the multitude of subjects” (ibid., 84).

According to Hardt and Negri, Hobbes’s ‘earthly God’ paves the way for monarchic absolutism, but also provides the political schema amenable to the realization of

democracy. However, even with this schema at its base, the sovereign authority had to be sustained by a content that fills it; and in sovereignty's democratic guise, the Hobbesian schematic is supplemented by "the affirmation of the market as the foundation of values of social reproduction" (ibid., 85), Adam Smith being the principle locutor of that union. When Smith's synthesis was fully realized, "sovereignty becomes a political machine that rules across the entire society (...) a police power. It must continually and extensively accomplish the miracle of the subsumption of the singularities in the totality, of the will of all into the general will. Modern bureaucracy is the essential organ of the transcendental – Hegel *dixit*" (ibid., 87-88).³

Hardt and Negri rightly suggest that transcendental ordering – or modern bureaucracy – is a contingent cultural practice that is central both to modern sovereignty as a political form and to capitalism as an economic form. However, the important issue is that they also propose that the world is in the midst of a historical shift in which that contingent cultural practice is being superseded in/as the passage to Empire. Also, it is this shift that constitutes the historical frame for the valorization of informatic labour. They suggest that computer-mediated labour is intrinsically homogenous and therefore requires no abstraction from its concrete particularity. Hardt and Negri also argue that the transcendental ordering that would have once provided a mechanism for that very abstraction is, in the passage to Empire, no longer effectively available to perform such function.

The double suggestion rests in the implicit equivalence that they draw between the 'transcendental ordering' of modernity, on one hand, and modernist 'master narratives' and 'binary divisions', on the other. And with that parallel drawn, the alleged ends of postmodernist and postcolonial critique – the recognition and celebration of difference – is *no longer* an effective political strategy, because, in the shift to Empire, it is precisely the difference these political works purportedly celebrate in their critique of Enlightenment that power has adapted to thrive upon. Put differently, the political relevance of postmodernist and postcolonial critique is called into question on the count that transcendental ordering, the distinctive marker of modern sovereignty, is no longer the appropriate object of political economic critique – precisely because the managerialist practices that target the labours of Empire have shunned transcendental ordering. Thus, ask Hardt and Negri, "what if the form of power these critics (and we ourselves) have taken such pains to describe and contest no longer hold sway in our society?" (ibid., 137-138).

The Politics of Flexibility

Now, there are two things that seem to be being said here: First, the transcendental ordering practices which characterized modern sovereignty as a political form no longer hold sway in our society; and second, difference, which is the object of a fervent managerial embrace, is alive and well at the site of contemporary labouring activities.

3 Hardt and Negri locate Weberian bureaucracy and Foucault's 'governmentality' and 'disciplinary society' within the paradigm of modern sovereignty.

The suggestion is that contrary to modern sovereignty, which did not embrace difference but rather deployed an earthly transcendental apparatus to order an existing, heterogeneous social field, the new form of managerialist power entails no such transcendental ordering. Difference is no longer the object of an ordering impulse, and therefore, deconstructivist critiques of representational practices/master signifiers – qua modes of transcendental ordering – are no longer relevant to a critique of capitalist power in the era of Empire. Transcendental ordering, modern bureaucracy – the marker of modern sovereignty – was by implication a practice of *not* embracing difference; it is now the *absent* enemy of postmodernist/and postcolonial critique.

But that is not all. We know from Hardt and Negri's description of pre-informatic labour (as seen from Marx's perspective in the nineteenth century) *that the differentiated technological base of production gave rise to* a heterogeneity at the site of labour, which, as commodified labour, was therefore what *required* an abstraction process that could ground the homogenization required for generalized commodity exchange. It is clearly not *this* 'difference' which the new managerialists claim to embrace, since the pre-informatic labour as seen from Marx's perspective in the 19th century is now (at least for informatic labour) *displaced by a universalizing technological base*. Precisely because the historical shift to Empire does not entail the waning of generalized commodity exchange (but only transcendental ordering), *both* the qualitative homogeneity and qualitative heterogeneity of labouring actions is realized. That is, informatic labour, qua valorized object, must be a process in which both difference and homogeneity are located. So the question becomes, if it is not the heterogeneity that was predicated on the differentiated technological base, what heterogeneities, what forms of difference, are the managerialists now embracing? Whither originates the difference that they celebrate? Whither comes this difference that emerges on the basis of a *universalizing* technical base, and therefore no longer needs to be homogenized through a process of transcendental ordering?

Here is the puzzle stated differently. Hardt and Negri propose that the homogenization of labour is achieved through (and within) the symbolic contents of concrete labouring activity, and that this occurs *without* any need for the transcendental ordering functions that are germane to the politics of modern sovereignty. However, it is also the case that such homogenization ultimately must be reconciled with the necessity of difference or qualitative particularity within informatized labour as a commodity form. It is as if the conflict of the two traditions of modernity persists, but must be reconciled in the *absence* of transcendental ordering. Homogeneity across difference persists in the figure of global corporate capital, but it does so in the *absence* of both the ordering impulses and abstractive, homogenizing capacities that mark the cultural uniqueness of modern sovereignty *and* the forms of difference that the differentiated production technologies grounded. That is, in addition to being a field of homogeneity, informatized labour must also be a field of difference that is not predicated on the differentiated technological base that characterized pre-informatic production.

I have already considered how Hardt and Negri account for the emergence of homogeneity, an achievement that they ascribe to the use of the computer, the universalizing technological base. *Empire* accounts for the emergence of heterogeneity through a tandem claim that computer-mediated service work gives rise to a

heterogeneity at the site of labouring action as well. This seems to be the conceptual function of the notion of what they call the ‘second face of immaterial labour’, or affective labour. This ‘second face’, they propose, is

better understood from what feminist analyses of ‘women’s work’ have called ‘labour in the bodily mode.’ Caring labour is certainly entirely immersed in the corporeal, the somatic, but the effects it produces are nonetheless immaterial. What affective labour produces are social networks, forms of community, biopower. Here one might recognize once again that the instrumental action of economic production has been united with the communicative action of human relations; in this case, however, communication has not been impoverished, but production has been enriched to the level of complexity of human interaction. (*ibid.*, 293)

However, there is more in the claim about the social affordances of immaterial labour; for the proposal is not only that immaterial labour is both intrinsically symbolic and corporeal, but also that it constitutes a form of cooperative activity that differs from that which we encountered in the discussion of labour carried out in the context of the differentiated technological base. That is, the labour that is both symbolic and corporeal is differentiated in a peculiar way that affords it to be self-valorizing. Hardt and Negri propose, in other words, that “cooperation is completely immanent to the labouring activity itself,” and that this “affords labour the possibility of valorizing itself” (*ibid.*, 294).

Brains and bodies still need others to produce value, but the others they need are not necessarily provided by capital and its capacities to orchestrate production. Today, productivity, wealth, and the creation of social surpluses take the form of cooperative interactivity through linguistic, communicational, and affective networks. In the expression of its own creative energies, immaterial labour thus seems to provide the potential for a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism. (*ibid.*, 294)

The point seems to be that there is a kind of *intrinsic* heterogeneity that characterizes immaterial labour, qua informatic labour – a kind of heterogeneity that could be contrasted with that which, qua pre-informatic labour, was structured by a differentiated technological base. The cooperative activity that marks informatic labour presupposes this difference and is set into motion across social subjects and the communicative actions in which they engage. However, the heterogeneity is not an emergent property of a differentiated, but rather of a universalizing technological base. And if we reconsider the passage above about the abstraction process that was required to homogenize the labours predicated on the differentiated technological base, we will recall that the contrast between pre-informatic and informatic universality is that, for the former, “the tools generally were related in a relatively inflexible way to certain tasks or certain groups of tasks” (*ibid.*, 292, as quoted earlier) – a claim which is supposed to explain both the specificity of pre-informatic heterogeneity and the possibility for the 19th century technological base not to have been capable in, and of, itself to realize the universalization process.

Of course, this all reads like a scholastic hair-splitting exercise. But I feel that it is important to point out that the specific heterogeneity that is being proposed with respect to immaterial or affective labour, is predicated not centrally on the computer (the universalizing tool), but rather (and apropos the comment about inflexibility above) on its character as a tool that must be used in a relatively *flexible* manner. So it seems that what the managerialists must be embracing in their adoption of heterogeneity is a

flexibility that is necessarily associated with the communicative social interaction that is mediated by computer technology, which also provides the universality across such heterogeneity.

The claim thus emerges in *Empire* that the distinctiveness of valorization in the field of informatic production is predicated on the distinctiveness of the labouring actions that are required when computers are the means of production and when informational/communicative services are the products to which those actions give rise. The distinctiveness consists in the potential of computer-mediated service work in, and of, itself to realize *both* homogeneity and heterogeneity, which, again, is a condition of its commodity status, within the site of labouring action. The content of managerialist ideology would then be a crucial factor in the (self-)valorization process, because it must entail the imperative to support – rather than to order – the flexibility that is intrinsic to informatic labour in its process of becoming the flexible social space that technology enables it to be.

A Technician Model of Labour

The historical shift dealt with in *Empire* thus refers to two models of production that could provide the conditions for the generalized market exchange of labours. Each of the models entails a relational matrix of qualitative homogeneity across qualitative heterogeneity. The crucial contrast between them rests not in the relative presence or degree of homogeneity or difference, but rather in the process through which the relation homogeneity/difference originates in each. The homogeneity/heterogeneity matrix of industrial production is said to originate in the differentiation of labouring activities by a heterogeneous technological base. That differentiation requires that an abstraction process that comes from outside the site of labouring actions be imposed on them, such that homogeneity can be manifest. There is a difference immanent to labouring actions as structured by a differentiated technological base, and a homogeneity that is produced from a transcendental ordering that, albeit earthly, can be imposed to constitute the universality of labouring actions qua commodities.

By contrast, Hardt and Negri seem to be arguing that the distinctiveness of commodified informatic labour rests in the way in which both homogeneity and heterogeneity are *immanent* to the production process – they originate from the same act – informatic labour qua computer-mediated social interaction. This seems to be the force of the concept of ‘self-valorization’: informatic labour intrinsically realizes both conditions of the commodity form, *from the inside out*, so to speak. Informatic managerialism simply allows, indeed embraces, that inside-outward movement.

Here it is important to keep in mind the difference between traditional labour theories and post-Rubinean approaches to theorizing value. As Postone has suggested, traditional Marxism shares Ricardo’s standpoint on labour as “a goal-directed activity that mediates between humans and nature, creating specific products in order to satisfy determinate human needs” (1993: 7-8). That is, the idea that value is created by wealth creating activities, where wealth is conceived to be the goods needed to satisfy human

needs. The problem with this model of labour as value-creating activity is that it obscures the historical specificity of wealth in capitalism. Although need satisfying activity may in some historical epoch have been considered to be predicated on such tool-mediated creation of products to satisfy human needs, one of the specificities of capitalism is the centrality of money mediated value as the form of wealth. Thus, products are wealth-creating only insofar as they are value-creating, where value-creation and need-satisfying product creation become interchangeable terms only via the money form.

Reuten has characterized the Ricardian approach as technicist:

A crucial characteristic of capitalism is that it is organized around money. Useful objects and labour are socially recognized as useful only by assuming the form of value: money. Thus they are socially recognized by taking a social form distinct from their natural physical makeup. Useful objects thus take the social form of commodities (use-value and value), whence labour also takes this double form of particular (use-value producing) labour and abstract (value producing) labour...Exclusive focus on the use-value aspect leads to a technicist approach. Production is then considered only as a process of production of use-values (as in neo-classical theory) or of embodied labour values (as in neo-Ricardian theory). These approaches may be appropriate for theorizing communal societies, but not for capitalism. Capitalist social relations appear as monetary relations in the first place. Because in these physical-technical theories money is incorporated only – if at all – as an afterthought...they are forced to theorize exchange as a hypothetical construct within the terms of the theory. (Reuten, 1988: 42-43)

Empire's proposals resonate with these technicist and labour-embodied approaches to labour as a source of value. That is, they situate the abstraction process within the concrete actions of the informatic-labouring body – labour in its use value dimension – via an appeal to the symbolic character of those actions. This is very different from a generalization process that is predicated on money-mediated market exchange, because it does not require that the money form play any constitutive role in the process through which valorization occurs.

Now, Hardt and Negri seem to be comfortable with a technicist approach to the valorization process, precisely insofar it enables them to interpret the increasing necessity of informatic labour to capitalism to be a demand for a uniquely communal social activity. Indeed, immaterial labour seems to have become so powerful a concept, because it is coded both in the language of Marx's 'general intellect' *and* in the language of managerialist-establishment knowledge society pundits like Robert Reich, the labour secretary under the Clinton-Gore Administration. As far as *Empire* is concerned, both Lazzarato's 'immaterial labour' and Reich's 'symbolic-analytic services' are invoked as the interchangeable codes for Marx's 'general intellect'⁴ as the social ground through which generalization across difference will emerge. The harmony of Marx and capitalist managerialists stems, it seems, from the specific claim that is proposed about the political potentialities of immaterial labour, conceived on technicist lines. It is as if Clinton-Gore had provided the technical and ideological conditions for the teleological unfolding of millennial communism.

4 Jason Read has recently interpreted the self-valorizing labour described by Hardt and Negri as Marx's 'living labor' (Read, 2003: 80-83).

Taking the postmodern managerialists' embrace of difference as an indicator of historical changes in the technologies of capitalist power is an interesting methodological move, reminiscent of Marx's "critical ethnography of capitalist society undertaken from within" (Postone, 1993: 18). And our response to this should be not, 'well, yes, they *say* they embrace difference, but do they *really*?', but rather, 'how do we read this embrace of difference back through to its relations with the categories such as value, abstract, labour, the commodity, and capital?'. In order to comprehend the politics of this embrace as an expression of the specificity of capitalism as a contingent cultural form, it seems to me that it is necessary to read through and beyond this embrace of difference to see what kinds of valorization practices it joins.

In this regard, what is not considered in Hardt and Negri's treatment of the new managerialist embrace of difference, is a line of research that emerged quite separately from the claims about the communicative social interaction demanded by the use of computer technologies that could enable flexible, global production.⁵ For at least the past 25 years there has been a different line of research going on among sociologists of work in the phenomenological traditions (such as symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology). They have problematized precisely the claim that labour process technologies – even those associated with 'old-school' industrial production – have a coercive, determinate capacity to control the bodies and minds of labouring subjects. To name only a few, we could draw a clear genealogical line on precisely this point, for example, through Kusterer's *Know-how on the Job* (1978), Suchman's *Plans and Situated Actions* (1987), and Ciborra's *From Control to Drift* (2000). These books share a constructionist theory of human action that eschews a realist and deterministic assumption that underlay critical Marxian sociologies of work such as Braverman's – namely, that the instructions produced in such regimes as scientific management could in advance fully specify and secure the social actions to which they referred.⁶

Contrary to such a realism, constructionist work research emphasizes that all sorts of communicative social (inter)action that is *not* specified in such instructions goes on, indeed must go on, as a means to achieving the concrete *outcomes* for which managerial instructions are initially produced. Such action is intrinsically flexible, and its deviation from specified instructions is not exceptional; rather, it is to be expected from human action, even when managerial regimes attempt to preclude it.

5 The expression of this we could find at least as early as Daniel Bell's *The Coming of Postindustrial Society* (1973) and Piore and Sabel's *The Second Industrial Divide* (1984).

6 An exemplary instance of such realism and determinism in Braverman is, for example: "(C)onception and execution must be rendered separate spheres of work, and for this purpose the study of work processes must be reserved to management and kept from the workers, to whom its results are communicated only in the form of simplified job tasks governed by simplified instructions which it is henceforth their duty to follow unthinkingly and without comprehension of the underlying technical reasoning or data" (Braverman, 1974: 118).

The (Banal) Persistence of Modernity?

I will not delve into an adequate discussion of the constructionist work research traditions and their contemporary handshake with post-industrialists who maintain that capitalist production requires historically unique forms of flexible and communicative social interaction. But I will offer two observations. The first is that constructionist work research and post-industrial theorists share a common disavowal of what traditional Marxian critics of the capitalist labour process used to emphasize as the distinctive marker of the political problematic of capitalist labour: the control of labour by management. However, the refutation is argued on different grounds in each case. Constructionists appeal to a *socio-psychological* claim about the irreducibly creative, social, and communicative character of all human action. Post-industrialists appeal to a *historical* claim about the distinctive techno-organizational demands of global capitalism. In spite of these differences in argumentative foundation, however, each suggests that indeterminate, or '*flexible*' social action at the site of labour is a mainstay of the contemporary capitalist production process.

My second observation is that managerialists who frame their own practices with the discursive resources of either constructionists or post-industrial theorists *continue to maintain the necessity of standardized representations of the labour process for the organization of the capitalist labour process*. No longer wedded to the control imperatives that were once a marker of scientific management, contemporary managerialists continue to uphold the existence of the representational technologies⁷ that characterized it. And we have to ask what it can possibly mean that those who embrace – and who tout both the inevitability and need for – flexibility and social heterogeneity in the enactment of the contemporary labour process, continue to go about building and institutionalizing representations of the labour process *as though* it were a standardized and predictable social process? (Vann and Bowker, 2001/2004).⁸ While disavowing what used to be the central reason for representing the labour process in advance as a predictable field of action – that is, while disavowing that representations could pre-specify, determine, or standardize the content of labouring action – contemporary managerialists continue to insist on representing labouring action *as though* it were pre-specified. This is interesting, because it suggests that such representational practices may have a political-economic function *other* than pre-specifying and determining labouring action, which capital cannot do without. In other words, perhaps the continued maintenance of what we might understand as 'modern bureaucracy' has a completely different political-economic efficacy than the ordering of human action. Our question now becomes: If standard representations of the labour process continue to proliferate in contemporary organizations of work, but their capacity

7 In place of the Bravermanian vocabulary of 'instructions' or 'conception' as distinguished from 'execution,' we rather see the vocabularies of, 'schema', 'plan', 'procedural standard', etc.)

8 We have looked at aspects of this dynamics with respect to managerialists who promote the idea of 'communities of practice'.

to pre-specify and determine labouring action is denied,⁹ what sort of justification is their continued deployment in the production process supposed to be based upon?

At this juncture I want to turn to two kinds of efficacy¹⁰ that a variety of social studies of science researchers are learning to ascribe to standard representations of human action. The first kind of efficacy is that they can be used as resources that could be used to help *guide* (but not determine or control) the actions of human subjects. That is, they have a power that is contingent upon the subject who could use them and subordinate them to his or her own local concerns. Metaphors such as ‘appropriation’ – as in, ‘the subject appropriates the plan as a heuristic to help coordinate his future action’ – are often used in this sense. The second kind of efficacy is that they can *provide nomenclatural resources* for *describing* what occurs. That is, they provide statements that could be used in the production of *accounts* or *data* of what action will take or has taken place. In this latter sense, standard representations of labouring action are best understood as *inscriptions* of the labour process. They are nomenclatural technologies whose presumptive referents are the identities, actions, and time that constitute the process through which products are created. Inscriptions can *act in place* of those referents.¹¹

Having each of these potential efficacies, managerial conceptions are extremely peculiar organizational technologies, because they can inhabit two very different spaces of production at once – the spaces of action to which they refer, and the spaces of reading that can be far away from such action. That is, they can be used *within the space of action* as a *tool* for the labouring subject, rather like a set of driving directions can help one find her way through an intricate terrain.¹² And they can be used *outside* that space as a representation or *proxy* for the actions to which the directions were ostensibly written to give rise; as such they can *speak as* and *in the place of* their ostensive referents. Managerialists who refute the action-determinative capacities of inscriptions of labour while continuing to maintain their centrality in the production process tend to draw on the delicate language of *guidance* and emphasize only one of their efficacies: the one which is predicated on the centrality of the subject who would use them as resources, appropriate them, subordinate them to her own concerns in the space of labouring action. That is, their capacity to speak as and for labouring subjects tends to be eclipsed by their capacity to be a *resource* used by those subjects. This is important, because the social space that is emphasized by managerialists in this sense has noteworthy affinities with the social space to which the technician model of labour reduces the valorization process: each is focused on labour solely as a space of action, or labour in its use-value dimension.

I am concerned about these affinities because they entail an understatement of the political implications of the nomenclatural technologies that continue to be maintained in the face of widespread disavowal that they are deployed as a means of controlling,

9 Again, constructionists deny that pre-specification *could* happen, and post-industrialists deny that it *should*.

10 By ‘efficacy’ I mean ‘power to do’, which I prefer over ‘function’.

11 See, e.g., Latour (1987).

12 See, e.g., Suchman (1987).

de-flexibilizing, standardizing the actions of labouring subjects. The point to uphold here is that the capacity of such inscriptions to speak for/as the labouring subject is not cancelled just because they may *also* be used by the labouring subject as a *tool* in the space of labouring *action*. Critical theory of valorization should take seriously that standard representations of labour continue to exist in contemporary work organizations and that they have the power to shape data and accounts about labouring action.

It seems to me that *Empire* does not explore this, although there are moments in the book that would have been ideal for it. Hardt and Negri state, for example, that “the structure and management of communication networks are essential conditions for production in the informational economy,” and that “they must be constructed and policed in such a way as to guarantee order and profits” (2000: 297-298). Politically, these production technologies take on a dual form:

In political terms, the global information infrastructure might be characterized as the hybrid of a democratic mechanism and an oligopolistic mechanism, which operate along different models of network systems. The democratic network is a completely horizontal and deterritorialized model. (...) what Deleuze and Guattari call a rhizome, a non-hierarchical and non-centered network structure. (*ibid.*, 298-299)

Coupled with this model, embedded in the new information infrastructures, is a second model that is

characterized by a broadcast system. (...) not a rhizome but a tree structure that subordinates all of the branches to the central root. (*ibid.*, 299-300)

And we have to ask: Why is it not suggested in *Empire* that such a global information infrastructure could function as a contemporary venue for transcendental ordering – a global medium for the persistence of modern sovereignty – as a mechanism through which qualitative homogeneity across qualitative difference for purposes of quantitative differentiation might occur? Why is it not suggested that the global information infrastructure mediates the valorization of informatic labour? Their gesture to postcolonial and postmodern critics’ absent object requires avoiding precisely these questions. Indeed, the theoretical reconciliation of the corporate embrace of difference with the spectre of the global commodification of labour nevertheless enables the avoidance of these questions, because the substantive content of informatized labour can itself supply the social ground from which such ordering and homogenization can emerge. The technicist model of labour valorization does a lot of conceptual work in this sense, because it enables Hardt and Negri to position the global information infrastructure as a labour process technology in the sense of being a means of production wielded by labouring subjects; that is, the infrastructure is located as a tool for the labouring subject, where ‘labour’ is conceived along purely technicist lines.

What has not been interrogated fully enough with respect to such information infrastructures, is that they are media for the inscriptions that provide accounts of the actions that labouring subjects (supposedly) undertake. Because the catch, of course, is that getting through the terrain may require all sorts of actions that the directions do not specify. Inscriptions of labour neither necessarily reflect, nor are necessarily reflected in, the actions to which they refer. Indeed, such inscriptions attain an infrastructural stability precisely in that both of their social functions require no such correspondence.

As Bowker and Star (1999) have discussed at length, in providing a medium for accounts of what action will and has occurred, by whom, and for how long, such infrastructures can do the important work of clearance¹³ and erasure.¹⁴

The technician model may bring with it an unfortunate casualty in that it obscures the practice of inscribing the actions, identities, and time of 'living labour' involved in the labour process for purposes of accounting. Perhaps such practices are a constitutive moment in the valorization process – both in the so-called modernist and postmodernist production regimes – whose continuity is obscured, paradoxically, precisely because the technician model of labour leads to a mistaken understanding of the modernist 'abstraction' process as one which finds its efficacy in and as the control of labouring bodies – that is, in and as the antiquated 'other' of 'flexible' labour. The implications of this argument for Marxian valorization theory could be significant.

An Economics of Anticipation?

Empire maintains that with the proliferation of informatic labour the process of generalization required for the production of qualitative equivalence is realized within the labour process conceived along technician lines. This emphasizes labour in its use-value dimension. *Empire's* reading of valorization is one which locates the realization of homogeneity within use-value creating labour, regardless of the specificity of the social relations of exchange for which such use-value creating labour is carried out. Although social interaction and communication that are endogenous to the techniques of the production process are certainly instances of 'social relations', they are not the type of social relations to which relations of production for generalized commodity exchange – social exchange mediated by the money form – can be reduced. That is, the forms of social interaction and communication required by the use of information technologies in the production process are not themselves the kinds of exchange that are necessary for the production of the material wealth whose distinct historical form is money-mediated value. In this sense, although forms of both heterogeneity and homogeneity are accounted for by appealing to the techniques of production, what seems to be unaccounted for is how the quantitative differentiation of the (now) qualitatively homogeneous labours can be socially grounded, so that informatic labour can manifest as a tradable good in money-mediated markets. The notion of self-valorization proposed in *Empire* seems to me to deny the centrality of that quantitative process because it does not embed the problematic of measuring informatic labour into its model of valorization. The problematic of measure, it seems to me, must be an aspect of money mediated market exchange. If this is so, then a reading of the political possibilities for troubling valorization specific to money-mediated market exchange must identify the contingent cultural processes which enable the persistence of measure as a political-economic practice. The central puzzle for valorization theory may thus be to discern, not what technical forms might require more social interaction and communication in

13 'Clearance' is described as the erection of a barrier in the past so that no information or knowledge can leak through to the present.

14 'Erasure' is described as the ongoing destruction of selective traces in the present.

the concrete labour process, but what contingent cultural practices enable the homogenization of qualitatively particular labours for the specific purpose of quantitative differentiation.

I would like to propose that a line of inquiry regarding the valorization of informatic labour could be built by bringing insights from science and technology studies research on the politics and cultural practices of inscription into dialogue with a question that has been articulated by Arthur (2001) regarding the emergence of the 'social substance' of value:

On the one hand, commodities must enter the exchange process as objectified universal labour time, on the other hand, the labour time of individuals becomes objectified universal labour time only as a result of the exchange process. (Marx, 1987: 286)

This statement of the problem comes from Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859). There he solved it to his own satisfaction by the introduction of money (Marx, 1987: 288-89, 307). But it might be thought that although money certainly posits the labour it represents, and hence by reflection the labour represented by all commodities, as abstract universal labour, the abstraction is still not posited *prior* to exchange. While abstract labour is no longer considered merely 'our abstraction' (Marx, 1987: 285) but one really posited in and through the exchange of commodities for money, it may yet be true that this abstraction cannot be read back *into production*. It may still be the case that labour becomes 'abstract' only when products are priced. If this is so, it might be thought that the counting of labour only as an abstraction of itself is a social illusion, a 'shadow form' cast by monetary circulation... Rubin addressed the same 'contradiction' (Rubin, 1972: 147) and rightly pointed out that, if what happens prior to exchange is the capitalist production of commodities *for* exchange, this leaves its imprint on the process of production itself (Rubin, 1972: 149). This is what was demonstrated above when it was shown that if production is value-formed, that is, undertaken by self-positing capital, then living labour is treated as abstract *prior* to exchange precisely because it is treated as abstract *in* exchange. (Arthur, 2001: 23-24, emphasis added)

Our question is now, how might this *imprinting* occur and how does it achieve its position as that which links the abstractness of exchange with an abstractness within production. How might a *treatment* of labour as abstract be concretely brought about? Like Arthur, Postone (1993) maintains the importance of *time* in the process of valorization. He argues that, rather than measuring some concrete expenditure that is *antecedent to it*, the representation of time becomes an active process in the *constitution* of the activities that are purportedly being measured. Such a representation of time is the medium through which both the qualitative equivalence and the quantitative differentiation of qualitatively particular labours becomes possible. We might think of such represented time as a measure that *comes before and outlives* what would seem to be its referent.

Let me try to say it another way. Postone describes how, for Marx, value is a form of wealth that is expressed by its measure, which is an objectification of abstract labour. As that which constitutes a general, 'objective' social mediation, abstract labour is neither expressed in terms of the objectifications of particular concrete labours nor measured by their quantity. Its objectification is value – a form separable from that of objectified concrete labour, that is, particular products. Similarly, the magnitude of value, the quantitative measure of the objectification of abstract labour, differs from the various physical quantities of the various commodities produced and exchanged. Value, then, is measured not in terms of the particular objectifications of various labours, but in

terms of what they all have in common regardless of their specificity – the expenditure of labour. The measure of the expenditure of human labour that is not a function of the quantity and nature of its products is, in Marx's analysis, time:

Although value is constituted by the production of particular commodities, the magnitude of value of a particular commodity is, reflexively, a function of a constituted general social norm. The value of a commodity, in other words, is an individuated moment of a general social mediation; its magnitude is a function not of the labour time actually required to produce that particular commodity but of the general social mediation expressed by the category of socially necessary labour time. Unlike the measure of material wealth, which is a function of the quality and quantity of particular goods, then, the measure of value expresses a determinate *relation* – namely, a relation between the particular and the abstract-general that has the form of a relation between moment and totality. (Postone, 1993: 191-192)

Postone has emphasized that Marx defines socially necessary labour time as the labour-time required to produce any use-value under the prevailing socially normal conditions of production and with the prevalent socially average degree of skill and intensity of labour. Our question becomes: How might we understand these 'prevailing socially normal conditions' and the 'prevalent socially average degrees' that constitute the 'socially necessary labour time'? How are we to construe the development of this peculiar norm, which obtains over all particulars, and, neither derivative nor expressive of any of them in their concrete, use-value creating dimension, is necessary for them to participate in the social interdependence that they enable? It is a question of how such a norm might be translated both from and into the particular labours in relation to which it obtains. Marx implies that the norms must differ from those conditions and degrees attending any concrete, particular time that is required to produce use-values (labour in its corresponding use-value dimension.) Instead, the time of magnitude, which reflects upon a social norm and social average, is an artifact that is otherwise constituted and that confronts the individual moments in which concrete labour is carried through.

As we have seen, phenomenologists work researchers and managerialists who embrace social heterogeneity both urge us to doubt that labour conceived along technicist lines could possibly be the basis upon which such norms are established. Rather, there must be something besides concrete, use-value creating labour (again, labour as understood in the technicist model) that could be constituting such norms. As Arthur maintains, "as abstract, it is a matter of how labours are counted, and not how they are concretely" (2001: 22-23).

Reuten has offered an important insight that is extremely relevant to this point, and to the possible role of managerial conceptions – qua technologies of transcendental ordering – in the valorization of informatic labour:

Because exchange in the market is not accidental but systemic, the abstraction of the equation of a product to some definite amount of money can be anticipated in production. Production is production for exchange and useful objects are produced as commodities. So production is considered a potential money expansion, as valorization (money → production → more money). Before the actual exchange this is an anticipation. Nevertheless commodities produced do ideally represent an amount of value, ideal money. In this sense the actual abstraction in the market is anticipated by an ideal abstraction and the actual commensuration in the market is anticipated by the ideal precommensuration... This anticipation further crucially determines the bourgeois process of production in that it becomes itself form determined. The ideal precommensuration of the commodity gives rise to a further ideal abstraction concerning the labour process: the labour

process is ideally precommensurated in terms of ideal abstract labour or ideal value. (Reuten, 1988: 53-54)

What I like about the analytical category of ideal precommensuration is the emphasis that it places on anticipation – an anticipation that is embedded in the production process as a reflection of the particular forms of exchange *for which* that production is carried out. It is not so much that the process of valorization requires that future events be anticipated in any realist sense; anticipation need not be action-determinative. Rather, the very expression of such anticipation could be seen to have a performative function that turns on the capacity of language through which the anticipation is brought to life. Perhaps in such a performative manner the anticipation can function *as* the value chain event itself. That could be the force of the ‘ideal’. In some strange way, this anticipation straddles labour as a technical space of creating use-values, and labour as a process that has already been mediated by the money form. A point made by Bowker and Star is relevant here; that humans

subvert the formal schemes with informal work-arounds. Indeed, the various approaches are often so seamlessly pasted together they become impossible to distinguish in the historical record. For instance, a physician decides to diagnose a patient using the categories that the insurance company will accept. The patient then self-describes, using that label to get consistent help from the next practitioner seen. The next practitioner accepts this as part of the patient’s history of illness. As many of the examples in this book will show, this convergence may then be converted into data and at the aggregate level, and seemingly disappear to leave the record as a collection of natural facts. (1999: 54-55)

What I target in this excerpt is the process through which formalized nomenclatures are drawn on as a way of *constituting* the patient as an ill and fund-worthy subject – two identity constructs that seem only incidentally to be grounded in the bodily conditions of the patient herself. And my proposal is to carry the logic of accounting as described here to the problem of valorization. Rather than the formalized nomenclatures deployed in the inscription of illness, we are dealing with those that are deployed in the inscription of labour. This involves the inscription of the identities, actions, and time that constitute the labour process qua technical event. One of the acknowledged challenges for value form theory is to specify the category of ideal precommensuration in empirical terms, and to describe the cultural process through which it is concretely achieved. And what I want to suggest is that inscriptions of the labour process find their political-economic efficacy precisely as the medium through which anticipation (we might call it the prospective account of a value chain) is locally achieved and stabilized, and through which the labour process acquires its ideal value. I want to suggest that inscriptions play an important role in the valorization process, a role that stems from their capacity to speak for and as the time of the concrete, living labour to which they presumptively refer, even when the flexibility of that labour is too heterogeneous to be heard. Inscriptions of labour may have the efficacy to constitute valorized labour as a wholly virtual event, in other words, an event manifest through prospective and retrospective accounts.

Concluding Remarks

The late twentieth century corporate embrace of difference – indeed the purported necessity of this embrace of difference to the sustainability of capital – is commonly read as a counter-industrial form. Hardt and Negri deduce from this counter-industrial form the dissolution of the political economic technologies of ordering germane to modern sovereignty – transcendental ordering. They are unambiguous on this point, as it provides the conceptual backdrop from which their criticism of the utility of postmodernist and postcolonialist analyses is mounted. However, that conclusion rests on the assumption that transcendental ordering cannot be maintained by the very people who embrace the heterogeneity of communicative social interaction. Hardt and Negri deduce quite a lot from the managerialists' embrace of difference, and do not ask whether there are ways in which transcendental ordering can persist fully in the face of such an embrace. What is overlooked in taking the global corporate managerialists' embrace of difference as an indicator of the 'ceasing to be' of transcendental ordering, is that this difference-embracing regime also embraces something else: the standardized inscription of labouring action.

The potential political-economic efficacy of these infrastructures is obscured if it is assumed that transcendental ordering must mean the *control* of labouring bodies. The embrace of difference necessarily emerges as the giving up of control and thus the counter-image of industrial production. Control, here, is conceived to be the definitive mark of industrial production, and in its absence there is no longer any transcendental ordering. Such control is presumed to be a distinctive marker of industrial production, which provides the backdrop from which a counter-image can be thrown into relief. But crucial to an understanding of the valorization of informatic labour is to question the postmodern managerialists' celebration of flexibility and social heterogeneity *in its conjunction with* continued practices of standardized inscription.

In light of this, it may be precisely the broad recognition and embrace of difference that makes the critical interrogation of transcendental ordering of the sort honed by postmodernist/postcolonialist theory increasingly relevant. For the emergence of the managerialist embrace of difference suggests that what capital has adapted to thrive upon is a disavowal of its own practices of transcendental ordering.

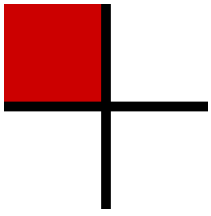
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The Right to Escape

Sandro Mezzadra

translated from the Italian by Taina Rajanti

abstract

Escape, as a political category, has always been suspicious. It seems to have close connections with betrayal, opportunism and cowardice, all categories that are both antipatriotic and foreign to the traditional virtues of political action. However, desertion, as a figure of civil disobedience, has had some success in the peace and environmental movements since the 1970s; and the massive exodus from the former German Democratic Republic that marked the end of Real Socialism was certainly a political movement. If escape has been almost an antipolitical category, it has had other connotations, like that of adventure, journey of exploration, thirst and hunger of life. It is always tied with the concept of movement and restlessness. It has been one of the basic tools to refuse banality and repetitiveness of everyday life and its suffocating restrictions. In that way escape has been almost a privileged way to subjectivity, a road to freedom and independence.

I

The days are gone when in Italy one could speak of the presence of foreign immigrants as a new factor in the history of a country that had lived in a painful manner an experience of mass emigration. Now that presence has established itself and it represents a structural element of the demographic make-up – and, a fact that has not been sufficiently stressed, of the make-up of the labour force. The moment has therefore come to make a first assessment of the way in which immigrants have been confronted in recent years. By this I do not mean so much the way in which dominant public discourse, strung between the obsession with security and the following of new nationalisms and racisms, has represented the ‘foreigner’ and the ‘immigrant’, legitimating the stigmatisation and exclusion brought about by governmental politics and legislation.¹ Beyond this, it is also necessary to come to terms with the image of the immigrant as a weak subject, hollowed by hunger and misery and needing above all *care* and *help*, which has been diffused beginning from the late 1980s, especially among those who have regarded migrants with greater benevolence. Without a doubt, around this image there have grown, among lay and catholic voluntary workers, the noblest

¹ On this point, evidently relevant, there exists a vast literature. I’ll refer here only to the work of Dal Lago, A. (1999) *Non-persone. L’esclusione dei migranti in una società globale*. Milano: Feltrinelli.

experiences of solidarity with migrants. They have often played an essential role in offering points of reference within a social texture deserted by the crisis of other 'agencies of socialization' – above all the Welfare State and the traditional organizations of the labour movement. In more general terms, however, it is necessary to note that this image lends itself easily to the reproduction of 'paternalistic' logics which renew an order of discourse and a complex of practices that demote migrants to an inferior position, denying them all *chance* of becoming subjects. Likewise, on a different yet adjoining level, the emphasis on the 'right to difference', which characterises the 'multicultural' understanding shared by most of the political and social Left, often ends up (to the vantage of a stereotyped representation of migrants in which 'culture' is often understood as an element of 'folklore') removing a substantial part of the plurality of positions and problems that define the figure of the migrant in contemporary society.²

II

The requirements for overcoming this image of migrants, and the consequent impacts, are today *politically* given. In Italy, for example, and in relation to the development of the 'movement of the movements', the demonstration on 19 July 2001, which opened the protests against the G8 meeting in Genoa with the slogan 'Freedom of movement – freedom without boundaries', has put the issues of migrants before the 'global movement' born in Seattle for the first time. During the following autumn and winter – from Brescia to Genoa, from Treviso to Mestre, from Naples to Caserta, from Marche to Sicily – we have witnessed an intensification of initiatives against the Bossi-Fini law,³ which concluded in the extraordinary Roman demonstration of 19 January 2002, when

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- 2 On the subject of multiculturalism, see the provocative works by Hage, G. (1998) *White Nation. Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*. Annandale: Pluto Press Australia; and Hage, G. (2003) *Against Paranoid Nationalism. Searching for Hope in a Shrinking Society*. Annandale: Pluto Press Australia, esp. pp.108-119. Although Hage's analysis is focused on the Australian experience, he also offers a more general interpretative framework of the ambiguities of multiculturalism in the age of what he terms 'transcendental' global capitalism.
 - 3 The Bossi-Fini Law – law number 189 (30 July 2002) – together with the so-called Turco-Napolitano Law (25 July 1998, law number 286) modify "the norms in the matter of immigration and asylum". It weakens the juridical situation of migrants in various ways: Italian consulates can deny tourist visas on the basis of public order and national security; in order to receive a permit to stay in the country it is obligatory to provide fingerprints; to get a permit to stay it is obligatory to have a working contract. It also increases the number of migrants detained in jails, since it provides for the enlargement of crimes for which migrants can be jailed. Migrants commit crimes in order to have documents; they simply fake their names. The law easily turns migrants into a clandestine state: losing the job and not finding a new one within six months is enough. Once sentenced to jail, migrants should be expelled and they no longer are allowed to hold papers. If a non-EU citizen not in possession of a permit to stay is expelled by administrative order, the expulsion must be effected by the police accompanying them to the border, except in the case where the foreigner has remained on Italian national territory after his/her permit to stay has lapsed for more than sixty days and has not applied for its renewal (in this case the expulsion order comprises an injunction to leave the national territory within fifteen days). The Bossi-Fini law forbids re-entry into Italy for a period of twelve years, and expelled foreigners who re-enter Italy without a permit to stay commit an offence. The Bossi-Fini Law also restricts the possibility for immigrants to be joined in Italy by their parents and children.

more than 100,000 people marched without the support of the major unions and parties of the 'Left'. From that day up to the present, despite the approval of the Bossi-Fini law, the mobilisation against this law has continued to shape Italy's political landscape, resulting in a series of actions against detention centres, struggles for housing and labour rights of migrants, and eventually involving a significant part of the traditional organizations of the labour movement (most notably the unions). A characteristic element of all these initiatives has been the exceptional, leading role of migrants who have closely followed the movement of 'Social Forums' compelling them in fact to make the question of immigrants as one of the central fields of their political activity. It is this subjective, leading role of migrants that puts the struggles of these last three years objectively beyond the defensive, especially antiracist, character of the migration-initiatives that had been produced during the 1990s. From this point of view it is quite significant that within 'Social Forums' there has been a strengthening climate of debate and organization about these themes, which aims at the political development of the *paradigmatic* capacities of the condition of migrants. This debate unites the struggles against 'temporary detention centres' with the slogan 'strike of migrant labour', which is emerging with force precisely there where the establishment of migrants in industry and their penetration of the dynamics of trade unions is more consistent. And indeed in May 2002 the first strike of migrant labour took place in the province of Vicenza, in the north-east of the country, involving more than 30,000 migrant workers.⁴

III

In this context it becomes urgent, also in the field of research and theoretical debate, to perform a substantial revision of the way with which migrations are regarded: the subjectivity of migrants must be placed at the centre of attention. This operation becomes even more necessary the more it is formulated as a countertendency against a certain contemporary understanding within the 'critical Left', as well as against the way migrations are represented in dominant public discourse and how they have historically been studied by the *mainstream* of social sciences. Regarding the view of the 'critical Left', one can note, for example, that in the writings on 'neo-liberalism' the bodies of migrants are mostly represented as simple objects, dragged along and overwhelmed by the 'global mobilisation' of capital. Regarding the dominant public discourse, let us think of the media's obsessive use of naturalistic metaphors ('waves of migration', 'flood-gates of migration', 'migratory floods', etc.) and interpretative schemes derived from demography – which present migrations as a necessary outcome, modelled after a mechanism borrowed from the workings of channels of communication and the imbalances of the development of populations in various adjacent geographical areas – to understand how deeply it is conditioned by an image of migrations as 'objective' processes, which are determined completely independently of the actions of subjects. Social sciences, for their part, have been characterised during the 20th century by a substantial predominance of 'hydraulic' models, which too completely reduce migrations to 'objective' causes, looking for the factors of 'push out' and 'pull up', and

4 For an analysis of this strike, see Raimondi, F. and M. Ricciardi (eds.) (2004) *Lavoro migrante. Esperienze e prospettive*. Roma: DeriveApprodi, esp. pp.62-73.

putting a particular emphasis on the naturalised imbalances of the international division of labour.⁵ Also, when the behaviour of migrants has actually been the focus of sociological research, as in the case of the Chicago School since the 1920s, it has still been carried out from the unilateral assumption of the 'receiving society'.⁶ This is shown especially by the predominance, even if very innovative and original, of the preoccupation of these works with the 'integration' and 'assimilation' of migrants.

IV

Among the theoretical approaches that have questioned the dominant paradigm within the social sciences – as well as within many of the 'neo-Marxist' analyses – with regard to migration, especially feminist research comes to my mind.⁷ By concentrating in particular on the specific structure of the gender relations prevailing in migrants' societies of origin as well as countries of destination, they have placed an emphasis precisely on the decisive role of those factors determining female migrations that are not simply 'economic'. But at the same time, contesting precisely the implicit assumption of mainstream research on migratory processes – according to which the only migrant of any importance is the man, and the woman is considered only in her position inside the family – feminist studies have put the subjectivity of the migrant women into ever sharper focus: they have, above all, underlined how the migration of women outside family dynamics not simply represents a compulsory response to conditions of economic needs by single women, widowed or divorced, but stems more often than we imagine from a conscious decision to leave behind the long shadows of societies dominated by patriarchy. It is elaborating these and other suggestions that I have recently proposed to utilize the concept of the 'right to escape'.⁸ It is to highlight the elements of subjectivity which permeate the migratory movements and which must be kept in mind if one wants to produce an image of these movements as *social* movements in the full sense. I want to stress that this is not to claim the irrelevance of the 'objective causes' at the origin of contemporary migrations: wars and misery, environmental catastrophes and political and social tyrannies prevailing in vast areas of the planet. The point is to underline the fact that for migrations to exist, there must be an individual motion (made concretely by a concrete woman or man, embedded in family and social 'networks', but nonetheless capable of *agency*) of desertion from the field where those 'objective causes' operate, a reclaiming precisely of a 'right to escape', which, even if most of the time unconsciously, constitutes a material critique of the international division of labour and marks profoundly the subjectivity of the migrant also in the country where she/he chooses to settle down.

5 For a criticism of this approach, see the important work by Papastergiadis, N. (2000) *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization and Hybridity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

6 For an excellent historical account, see. Rauty, R. (1999) *Il sogno infranto. La limitazione dell'immigrazione negli Stati Uniti e le scienze sociali*. Roma: Manifestolibri.

7 A useful synthesis is Kofman E. et al., (2000) *Gender and International Migration in Europe. Employment, Welfare and Politics*. London: Routledge, pp.21-43.

8 See Mezzadra, S. (2001) *Diritto di Fuga. Migrazioni, cittadinanza, globalizzazione*. Verona: Ombre corte.

V

It must be specified that the concept of ‘right to escape’, applied to the analysis of contemporary migratory movements and constitution labour forces, functions of course in different ways depending on the diverse figures of migrants and refugees on which the attention is focused. If we look, for example, at the destabilisations of entire populations caused by various ‘local’ and ‘global’ wars of recent years, we confront a situation of mobility where the degree of subjective ‘voluntariness’ of migration is quite limited, if not nonexistent. A different case is that of ‘illegal’ migrations, where too often, also and especially within the Left, there is a tendency to focus the attention only on the role of the criminal organizations that are running it. The rhetoric of ‘merchants of human beings’, of ‘new slave trade’ and ‘new slavery’ cannot hide the fact that, even if there are undoubtedly elements of coercion within the organization of the ‘travels of hope’, the majority of their participants, unlike the slaves of all times, set out on their voyages *of their own will*.⁹ But more generally, the ‘average’ experience of contemporary migrants (as is shown, for example, by the research done on the conditions of the *Latinos* in the United States, or those of Moroccans and Senegalese in Italy) clearly shows how the migration is often undertaken purposefully. It thus represents a proper strategy of organization from ‘down-up’ in a ‘transnational’ dimension of the social reproduction of vast ‘subaltern’ sectors in countries which the capitalistic command continues to confine to the periphery of the global system. And finally, to put the emphasis on the subjectivity of migrants and on the elements of the ‘riches’ of which they are carriers does not mean to assume the theoretical attitude of Anglo-Saxon ‘cultural studies’, which considers the migrant as a paradigmatic figure of the rootless and ‘hybrid’ character of the postmodern subject, no more bound to any kind of roots and free to cross nomadically the boundaries between cultures and identities. The paradigmatic characteristics of the condition of migrants are instances of transformations which do not regard only migrants. Rather, these instances emerge there where the *ambivalence* that distinguishes the condition becomes underlined, strained as it is between reclaiming a radical instance of liberty and the functioning of old and new mechanisms of domination and exploitation.

VI

But the light that a political interpretation of contemporary migrations sheds on the very processes of *globalisation* is ambivalent. First of all, it leads to putting into focus a main characteristic of these processes: the tendency to sweep away every obstacle of free circulation of goods and capitals, while the free circulation of labour – of women and men who are the carriers of labour – is upheld by the multiplication and strengthening of borders. We are facing a truly global tendency, which manifests itself from the ‘outer

9 For an excellent illustration of this point with reference to the rhetoric of ‘trafficking’ women in prostitution, see Andrijasevic, R. (2003) ‘The Difference Borders Make: (Il)legality, Migration, and Trafficking in Italy among “Eastern” European Women in Prostitution’, in S. Ahmed, C. Castaneda, A. Fortier and M. Sheller (eds.) *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*. New York: Oxford University Press.

borders' of the European Union to the border between United States and Mexico, passing by the new walls against the mobility of labour erected around Hong Kong, to southern China and the countries of South-East Asia assailed by the crisis of 1997. For years a proper *war* has been going on around these and other 'global borders', which has caused (and continues to cause) the death of thousands of refugees and migrants in their attempt at bypassing them. Taking up the thesis presented in an important work by Yann Moulier Boutang¹⁰, one can claim that the intensity of such struggles is determined by the violence with which the freedom – cosmopolitan in the objective sense – there is in migrations crashes with the imperative of control over the movements of labour. Today, this imperative – ever central to the capitalistic mode of production – finds itself challenged on a global scale by various elements of unpredictability and 'turbulence', which mark migratory movements.¹¹ It is indeed on this unstable terrain that the 'neo-liberalist' apology of the market, as well as the 'fluid' and flexible character of social relations it promotes, meets and co-exists without particular difficulties with the rhetoric of 'small homelands' and with the defence, often openly xenophobic and racist, of the presumed purity of cultures on a varied scale, from the 'Padanian' to the 'Occidental'. At the same time, nevertheless, the analysis of migrations allows to bring to light an *other globalisation*, or rather an unspoken genealogy of contemporary processes of globalisation. Recently it has been claimed, in a quite convincing way, that the above mentioned processes characterise a historical phase in which the command of capital is compelled to extend itself on a planetary scale by the necessity of following the very rhythm of the proletarian and anti-imperialist struggles of the twentieth century.¹² Communist internationalism, anti-colonialist rebellions and the *global uprising* of 1968 all constitute in this sense fundamental passages in the 'secret history' of globalisation. They picture at the same time a prospect of unifying the planet in a radically different way from the hegemony of capital, which has guided its progress during the last two hundred years. Analogously, even if on a rather different level, the new migratory movements represent a formidable laboratory of that which we can call 'globalisation from below', and this has been going on and strengthening since Seattle and Genoa. In an absolutely elementary sense, it is through the migrations that millions of women and men have materially organized their own existence, their own social relations, their own production and reproduction, giving no thought to the boundaries between states and constructing new 'transnational social spaces'.¹³

10 Moulier Boutang, Y. (1998) *De l'esclavage au salariat. Économie historique du salariat bride*. Paris: Puf.

11 On the concept of 'turbulence' applied to an analysis of the movements of contemporary migrants, see again Papastergiadis's *The Turbulence of Migration*.

12 Cf. Hardt, M. and A. Negri (2000) *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

13 The prospect of study suggested by this concept is one of the most interesting followed by the international research on migrations: for an introduction to the theme, see Faist, Th. (2000) *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; and the report 'Emigrare, immigrare, transmigrare', in *Afriche e Orientali*, II (2000), 3/4 (with articles from F. Calvanese, R.D. Grillo, B. Riccio, R. Salih and K. Koser).

VII

The condition of migrants reveals itself as paradigmatic, again in its ambivalence, with regard to the transformations that have influenced the dimension of *citizenship*. It tells us of a rupture of universalism and of a crisis of the inclusive and integrative model of social citizenship that has been asserted in the ‘Occident’ after the World Wars – especially in the context of the construction of the *Welfare State*.¹⁴ This model of social citizenship was no earthly paradise, and has indeed been dismantled and criticised – long before neo-liberal politics – by the workers’ struggles and movements of the 1960s and 1970s, which, from a multiplicity of perspectives, have exposed its tendency to domination and social discipline. But without doubt it incorporated a material credit, truly democratic, that translated into specific conquests and found its approval in the acknowledgement of a series of rights.¹⁵ That credit has been equally attacked materially by the capitalist offensive during the last two decades. The re-appearance of the problematic of *exclusion*, not limited to migrants, is a symptom for how profoundly it has affected the redesign of the contemporary profile of citizenship. The ghost of ‘clandestine’, the radical denial of the very ‘right to have rights’ (H. Arendt), is indeed exemplified in a dramatic way by the condition of migrants and finds its most disturbing incarnation in the scandal of what an Italian law, which has been promoted by a centre-left government in 1998, calls ‘Centres of temporary stay and help’ (proper concentration camps where subjects who haven’t committed any crime are imprisoned).¹⁶ But it also insinuates itself within the formal space of citizenship, shattered by the politics which have ‘performed’ the crisis of the Welfare State. Under this profile, then, the condition of migrants can be defined as *paradigmatic* since it exposes in full light a series of ‘negative’ processes of the de-structuring of citizenship and social stigmatisation. But this is not all: migrants also tell us of an attitude of ‘suspension of identity’ and of a problematic relation with the, nevertheless, defined belonging they experience, which, if investigated appropriately, is collocated in resonance with a series of movements and social behaviour that bear the ‘positive’ mark of ambivalence. Consider for instance the distrust with which many migrants, even though quite determined to reclaim specific rights of citizenship, regard the prospect of ‘integration’. It is true that this distrust transforms itself – in the conditions of rigid social and political exclusion in which migrants are condemned to live in the ‘receiving society’ – into a ‘communitarian’ turn (which must be studied in the complexity and ambivalence of its significations). But it is also true that it introduces again the positively problematic nature of the relation between the individual and collective dimensions of experience, which has expressed itself, among other things, in the fortune

14 For an analysis of the transformations of citizenship in the last two decades, see the several seminal studies devoted to the subject by Balibar: e.g. Balibar, E. (2001) *Nous citoyens d'Europe? Le frontières, l'État, le peuple*. Paris: La Découverte; or Balibar, E. (2003) *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

15 On This point, see Mezzadra, S. (2002) ‘Diritti di cittadinanza e Welfare State. Citizenship and Social Class di Tom Marshall cinquant’anni dopo’, Introduction to T.H. Marshall, *Cittadinanza e classe sociale*. Roma and Bari: Laterza, pp.v-xxxiv.

16 See Regazzoni, S. (2002) ‘La nuova frontiera dei campi di detenzione per migranti’, in *DeriveApprodi*, 21: 23-26; and Sossi, F. (2002) *Autobigrafie negate. Immigrati nei lager del presente*. Roma: Manifestolibri.

that the concept of 'multitude'¹⁷ has had. And it also introduces itself, for example, even if at a very abstract level, in a line of continuity of the refusal of a specific model of 'integration' – that is based on the patriarchal family – which the feminist movement has criticised as one of the unexpressed presuppositions of the very social politics of *welfare*.

VIII

An analogous discourse can be made regarding *labour*.¹⁸ Migrant labour, in fact, charges itself with 'paradigmatic' forces in as much as it exemplifies the radical condition of stripping off rights which involves the whole problematic of social labour. From this perspective, the purpose of the Bossi-Fini law is – even if it puts itself in many regards in a continuum with the Turco-Napolitano law and with a model of government of migrants' flows defined by the Schengen pact at the level of the European Union – to produce a relevant leap of quality. The figure of the 'contract of residence' in particular, the very strict link presupposed in the proposed law between employment contract and residence permit, shows how the initiative of the right-wing government turns against migrants in general. It succeeds in calling into question the very distinction between 'the regular' and 'the clandestine': bound to the power of personal mood of the private entrepreneur with whom he signs the employment contract, the 'regular' migrant is daily and *explicitly* exposed to the *instability* of his condition, to the threat of falling back to 'clandestinity' and thus becoming 'expellable' at any moment. It is evident how here opens the space of an objective convergence between the condition of migrants defined by the proposed Bossi-Fini law and the complete redefinition of employment relationships foretold by the White Book of Maroni, which has been the base of the attempt undertaken by the government to dramatically change the structure of the labour market in the direction of further 'flexibilization'.¹⁹ Also for this reason the analysis cannot stop here. Instead, it must be confirmed how the mobility of migrant women and men is an expression of a series of subjective movements of escape from the rigidities of the international division of labour. These movements of escape constitute one of the eradicated and denied motors of the radical transformations which have influenced capitalist modes of production during the last two decades. It thus puts itself in a definite continuum with those refusals by workers that have played a leading role in putting materially in crisis the regime of accumulation defined as Fordist: the refusals of the specific model of organizational and 'biographical' rigidity of industrial labour within the very 'Occidental' countries, as the

17 For a development of this concept see Virno, P. (2002) *Grammatica della moltitudine*, Roma: DeriveApprodi; and Mezzadra, S. and F. Raimondi (2002) 'Oltre Genova, oltre New York. Tesi sul movimento globale', in AA.VV., *La guerra dei mondi. Scenari d'Occidente dopo le Twin Towers*, Roma: DeriveApprodi, pp.194-224.

18 For a first account of the several experiences of 'militant investigation' in the field undertaken in Italy, see again Ricciardi and Raimondi's *Lavoro migrante*.

19 The White Book of Maroni on Welfare is a dossier on the reform of the labour market. Marco Biagi, a professor of Law from Modena, was preparing the reform when the new 'red brigades' murdered him in Bologna in 2002. It practically liberates the use of every kind of 'atypical' working contract.

best informed sociology now recognises.²⁰ Discovering the power and the immanently political character of the mobility of migrant labour can in this sense be a decisive theoretical step for articulating a critique of capitalism truly capable of answering the challenges put forth by the composition of contemporary living labour.

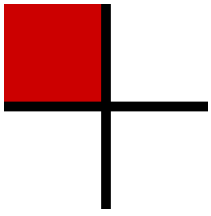
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20 See Boltanski, L. and É. Chiapello (1999) *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*. Paris: Gallimard.



But What Should We Do?

Pekka Piironen

abstract

This paper outlines the relation between economy and multitude. This relation is expressed in three forms of economy. In the first form of economy multitude appears as measurable. In the second form communication has entered into production. Communication shows that the potentiality of multitude is multiplied possible combinations. In the third form one understands that economy is exposed to multitude. Now multitude isn't measurable. Negri noted that the right point of time (kairos) produces multitude. And Agamben indicated that if one understands that Being and human beings belong together then one would grasp how potentiality is essentially impotentiality. Therefore, multitude is capable of producing the rupture in economy. This determines us to ask what we should do now. Heidegger and Benjamin suggested this, and Agamben repeated it. It wasn't enough for Agamben that he had shown a possible character of means but he wanted to indicate how we can think the essential political problem through Ereignis. Negri also noted that kairos is not enough. It produces the multitude but it doesn't ask what multitude should do or which way human activity takes place. To set up this problem for thinking is the essential political problem, and it is also the problem of the economy in its third form.

Introduction

What is economy today? We can no longer think that economy is something in which direct labour is measured by labour time. Neither is it the production of goods and services which is dominated by the firm's profit and consumer benefit. This form of economy is referred to by Marx as the limited bourgeois form.¹ But furthermore, economy is not production in which all social components are put together through social combination. The social combination means that capital is capable of transposing all social powers into its powers by all the means of arts and science. But these two forms give us only a limited picture of economy.

Marx was one of the first to try to grasp economy in which the limited bourgeois form is stripped away (1973: 488) or which doesn't remain a simple social combination (1973: 690-712). Perhaps he meant an economy in which an immeasurable *multitude* works. This multitude is never definable by some simple facts. It doesn't lose its character of a

1 Marx spoke of the limited bourgeois form of richness. We see the first form of economy as the limited bourgeois form, because multitude is analyzed as measurable.

possibility. What multitude does isn't already done or actualized but it remains its potentiality (Agamben, 2000: 4, 11; Virno, 2004: 21). But multitude is not only that which can do something. That is, if we think multitude as subjectivity we have to ask what produces this subjectivity (Virno, 2004).

Negri (2003: 173) answers that *kairos* produces that subjectivity. *Kairos* is the singular, right point of time, the moment or flash which is interpreted as the event of Being. It is never produced by subjectivity. The idea of this moment is also the basis of *Ereignis*, gift, 'compearance' and mean. Concepts like '*Ereignis*' (Heidegger), 'gift' (Derrida), 'compearance' or 'co-appearance' (Nancy), and 'means' (Agamben) imply that multitude contains impotentiality. And in economy this impotentiality produces the rupture which gives the multitude a reason to work. General intellect, which, according to Agamben (2000: 11), names the multitude, could be something which isn't measurable and from which it is never possible to isolate something like limited bourgeois form or social combination. However, Marx didn't complete his thinking on how economy is exposed to general intellect in that particular sense in which the gift, 'compearance' and means have made this rupture visible. Heidegger (1977a, b)² perceived economy through technology. His most important concept, *Ereignis*, indicates that economy is exposed to Being and its coming to presence which produces the rupture in economy. Contemporary discussion refers to that concept and comments it with different variations.

For Derrida (1997), the gift interrupts the circle of economy. He means that the intentional act is infected by something which leads this act away from its end. This is the event of gift and at this moment Being appears. In this event gift comments *Ereignis*. When *Ereignis* is appropriation and expropriation at the same time, gift gives itself without commitment to appropriation or expropriation. Gift as such cannot be appropriated immediately.

Nancy (1991) also comments on *Ereignis*. He sketches an arrangement in which singular beings as such come together and appear together ('compearance', *comparution* in French). And that what is shared in this community is the non-functioning of its organization, the unworking of work. Here Nancy's motif is to think of Being-with-others. Agamben (2000: 116-117) approaches this subject by potentiality. According to him, means contain potentiality. That is, means prove to be inadequate in the sense that they do not produce simple measurable facts or achievements of an end. Means are not subordinated to an end. Neither political experience has a higher end but this experience is 'being-into-a-mean'. In short, human beings are capable of using means, but at the same time they are capable of their own incapacity to appropriate means fully. I shall return to this later.

If one studies economy, then the gift, 'compearance' and means cannot be neglected. Even if these concepts are related to economy in different ways, they are tied up to the fact that economy is exposed to multitude. Understanding this multitude needs the gift, the 'compearance' and the means to indicate that potentiality of multitude is essentially

2 Heidegger didn't speak much about economy. But if one speaks of economy, he cannot neglect technology.

impotentiality.³ These concepts state the problem of economy correctly like Agamben stated ‘being-into-a-mean’ as the essential political problem.

In this article I firstly study how Marx thought economy and I outline its three forms. Strictly speaking, Marx spoke only about the limited bourgeois form and the last phase of capitalism. I will call the limited bourgeois form the first form of economy. This is the simplest form in which direct labour is measured by labour time. In this form multitude and its work is analyzed as measurable, actualized and done. The second form of economy is the last phase of capitalism which has been the object in the analysis of post-fordist production. This is the stage of ‘social combination’ where all social forces are put to capitalistic production. It is the last phase because that form of production turns against itself. The analysis of post-fordist production has made this stage more visible – it has tried to show why production in the last phase turns against capital itself. And what is crucial in this analysis is communication. Communication is the decisive factor which separates the second form from the first one. In the second form communication has entered into production. Yet the problem of economy is not clear in the second form. Even if the analysis of post-fordist production is perhaps the best description of contemporary economy, it has not been able to make the problem of economy clear. Therefore, we must try to find the place for that problem in the third form.

Social combination means that everything can be set as resource. This is similar to what Heidegger meant when he spoke of technology. For Heidegger, materialism is concealed in technology. In this sense technology is the second form of economy. Therefore after Marx, this *technology* will be considered in brief. But Heidegger suggested that *Ereignis* produces a rupture in technology. As such, *Ereignis* is the bridge to the third form of economy in which we find the actual problem of economy. Like *Ereignis*, the gift, ‘compearance’ and means, all define the problem of economy. If this problem is crucial to economy, then it means that the third form of economy is defined by multitude’s potentiality which is essentially impotentiality. The third form is, in other words, for making this multitude more visible.

Economy

In the simplest form of economy direct labour is measured by labour time. This is called the limited bourgeois form. The second form of economy is conceptualized as social combination. It means that capital is capable of transposing all social powers into powers of itself by all means of art and science.⁴ Then Marx thought about economy in which multitude with creative potentialities works or in which multitude works, a multitude whose creative potentialities are immeasurable (Marx, 1973: 488). This was a kind of preliminary idea of the third form of economy.

3 Agamben (1999a) wrote in his essay that potentiality is essentially impotentiality.

4 Marx described these forms of economy as “The theft of alien labour time, on which the present wealth is based, appears a miserable foundation in face of this new one, created by large-scale industry itself” (1973: 705).

Bataille (1988: 19-41) perceived economy as restricted and general. But this way of studying economy is just another way to express what Marx had already said and to experience economy wider than restricted. But general doesn't mean the expansion of capitalism. It implies that economy is in relation to a sort of multitude. So, we need to rethink Marx's (1973: 690-712) understanding about the ultimate development of capitalism and the forms of economy.

The first form of economy is the simplest form. Marx wrote in *Grundrisse* about "fixed capital and the development of the productive forces of society" (1973: 690). In this particular text Marx noted that in capitalistic production capital transforms means of labour to an automatic system of machinery. This system is put "in motion by an automaton, a moving power that moves itself" (*ibid.*, 692). By this transformation capital prevents interruptions in production process. Workers only supervise and guard machines against these interruptions. Therefore, the machine is no longer workers' means of labour, and the worker is no longer the principal factor of production. Instead he is thrown beside the machine. The production process is no longer dependent on workers' direct skilfulness and virtuosity. Labour does not appear any more as the primacy of the labour process. "The tendency of capital is to give production a scientific character" (*ibid.*, 699). This all means that production process is now understood as the technological application of science.

What governs production when labour is thrown beside it? This is the system of machinery. We have hints that labour is not located in a single place. Instead, it is spread over millions of points of this mechanical system. This refers to the composition of the production process which appears as the technological application of science. This composition is moved by communication which proves to be necessary in social combination. If we are to put social work, business, novel writing and portrait painting together in social combination, we have to create relations among them. And they have to communicate by some means or another. But "any communication is first of all communication not of something in common but of communicability itself" (Agamben, 2000: 10). If one follows Nancy, in communication all social forces (or singular beings) are exposed to each other, and this means that "communication is the unworking of work that is social, economic, technical and institutional" (1991: 31).

Labour is spread over numerous points that communicate with each other. When large-scale industry has developed to the point of social combination, then creation of wealth is less dependent on "the labour time employed on it" (Marx, 1973: 706). Instead, it depends on science and technology and the application of these to production (*ibid.*, 705). This capitalistic production appeared to Marx as the ultimate development of production resting on value. He conceived that direct labour ceases to be the spring of wealth and that labour time ceases to be the main measure. Therefore "exchange value ceases to be the measure of use-value" (*ibid.*, 704-706). Labour cannot be measured by labour time any more, because labour is fractured at numerous points in the variety of activities. Production based on exchange value collapses in the sense that it would be measured by predetermined yardstick.

Searching for this new form of production, capital "calls to life all powers of science and of nature, as of social combination and of social intercourse" (*ibid.*, 706). Capital

tends to create the relation to even insignificant social forces in order to communicate with them and to secure that they are interconnected to each other and to production. When capital appropriates resources through social combination, it reduces multitude to something calculable. But here capital faces a contradiction. In social combination multitude retains potentiality but capital reduces it to something measurable. This rises against capital itself. Capital has itself created material conditions to the instability of the limited foundation of production (*ibid.*, 706).

Nancy and Agamben have taught us that communication is the unworking of work. Perhaps Marx meant something similar when he spoke of general social knowledge (general intellect). He spoke of the development of fixed capital which “indicates to what degree general social knowledge has become a direct force of production, and to what degree, hence, the conditions of the process of social life itself have come under the control of the general intellect and been transformed in accordance with it” (*ibid.*, 706). If this general social knowledge has become a direct force of production, then wealth is measured by the development of the productive power of all individuals. Direct labour ceases to be the basis of production as “the combination of social activity appears as the producer” (Marx, 1973: 709).

In another context Marx continues to say that the development of all human powers is ‘real’ wealth.

In fact, however, when the limited bourgeois form is stripped away, what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity’s own nature? The absolute working-out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a predetermined yardstick? Where he does not reproduce himself in one specificity, but produces his totality? Strives not to remain something he has become, but is in the absolute movement of becoming? (1973: 488)

In the limited bourgeois economy human development appears as “a complete emptying-out”. Human being is totally alienated in universal objectification (*ibid.*, 488).

According to Agamben, communication is the material experience of being-generic. For him, this is the experience of general intellect: “The first consequence deriving from this experiment is the subverting of the false alternative between ends and means that paralyzes any ethics and any politics” (2000: 116). An end without means “is just as alienating as a mediality that makes sense only with respect to an end” (*ibid.*, 116). But in addition, there is the second consequence: “Above and beyond the concepts of appropriation and expropriation, we need to think, rather, the possibility and the modalities of a free use” (*ibid.*, 117). So, perhaps Agamben means that general intellect prepares the understanding of means and *Ereignis* (appropriation and expropriation) which make visible the previously concealed question. These concepts indicate more clearly how capitalistic production is exposed to rupture.

The last phase of capitalism doesn’t imply the simple end of capitalism. Its capability to widen its limits is infinite. Instead, in the last phase capitalism attains its extreme

manner. Being extreme is now the condition of capitalistic production⁵ like the state of exception is the presupposition of juridical reference (Agamben, 1998: 21). If this exception is permanent, then capital faces the fact that its struggle to combine social forces is unfinished. Capital tends to appropriate the potentiality of multitude, but in the end it is incapable of doing so. Therefore, the ultimate development of capitalism appears as the end because this struggle is unfinished in the structure of impossible intertwining. Capital is in the middle of ongoing exceptions.⁶

Did Marx grasp the third form of economy with the experience of general intellect? We can try to find the preliminary answer to this question in Heidegger's 'Letter on Humanism'. Writing about homelessness of modern human beings, Heidegger stated that the estrangement of the human being has its roots in this homelessness. If we think homelessness as 'the destiny of the world', "Marx by experiencing estrangement attains an essential dimension of history, the Marxist view of history is superior to that of other historical accounts" (1998b: 259). The essence of materialism is "in a metaphysical determination according to which every being appears as the material of labour" (*ibid.*, 259). The labour is "the self-establishing process of unconditioned production, which is the objectification of the actual through the human being, experienced as subjectivity" (*ibid.*, 259). For Heidegger, materialism is concealed in technology.

Now, we need to call to mind the forms of economy. In the first form direct labour is measured by labour time. Multitude is reduced to a limited bourgeois form. This means that multitude is analyzed as measurable, actualized, done. The second form appears as the social combination in which general intellect names the multitude. If one understands multitude this way, then one grasps multitude which never loses the character of a possibility. Whereas wealth is based on measurable acts in the first form, in the second form wealth is "the development of all human powers as such" (Marx 1973: 488). In the second form capital discovers, organizes and sets multitude to be a resource. Capital insists that all powers must be transposed into its powers by all the means of art and science. It doesn't accept the multitude in the limited bourgeois form. But in doing so capital would accept the limit for its own extension. Therefore, capital insists that multitude is capable of putting all potentiality into service.

Marx outlined the coming form of economy with the notion of general intellect. What might that form be? Perhaps one experiences this form in Heidegger's (1977a,b) *Ereignis*, Derrida's (1997) gift, Nancy's (1991) 'compearance' and Agamben's (2000) means. They are related to economy, which is circle, organization or technology. But although they are related to economy, they are never part of it. They are not measurable, but in a singular way they disturb economy, like *Ereignis* relates to technology even if it is never part of it. *Ereignis* is the 'lighting' of Being, which can produce rupture in

5 These two citations describe the way of capitalism as being in the manner of extreme: "How much flexibility there is in the axiomatic of capitalism, always ready to widen its own limits so as to add a new axiom to a previously saturated system!" "...on the differential relation of flows having no assignable exterior limit, and where capitalism reproduces its immanent limits on an ever widening and more comprehensive scale (Deleuze and Guattari, 1989: 238-239).

6 This can be deliberated through Nancy's (1991) thinking of community, which indicates that what is shared in the community is the unworking of works.

economy. In the same way gift disturbs the circle of economy, even if it won't be part of that. Likewise, in a community 'compearance' of beings takes place before any organization and produces rupture in organization. And finally, means contain potentiality and leave something not to be actualized. So, it seems that Marx, Heidegger, Derrida, Nancy and Agamben share the notion of the third form of economy. What I mean is something that Agamben has also noted. For him, "the new categories of political thought" (2000: 116-117) – e.g. 'compearance' or whatever singularity – have the potentiality to express the essential political problem.

Now, one understands that the third form of economy goes beyond the first two forms. Perhaps Marx realized this: Perhaps the experience of communication which is located in the second form could be the starting point to think the third form. But what rises from the premises of the second form (or technology) is *Ereignis*, while the thought of Marx remains half-finished. Heidegger (1977b: 2002) conceived that Being and man belong together and that it is in this combination that *Ereignis* can be perceived. This combination in which Being and man belong together is crucial for understanding *Ereignis* and this will prove to be the border between the second and the third form.

General intellect gives the starting point to outline the third form of economy. And the analysis of post-fordist production has taken this coming form seriously. It describes substantially how contemporary economy appears. Especially Virno (1996, 2004) and Lazzarato (1996) have worked with this analysis. What is important in post-fordist production, is not professional qualifications inside the factory and office but rather socialization that has its centre of gravity outside of the workplace. Through socialization human beings are connected to everything. They are always attainable and ready for every chance. Nothing important is ignored – and everything seems to be. Human beings confront a flux of interchangeable possibilities, keeping open as many as possible. But they don't know what to face in continuous change of contexts. Therefore, they confront continuous uncertainty (Virno, 1996: 14-18).

In the production process nothing unites human beings, but everything unites them regarding the form and content of socialization. When the 'work society' reaches its end, free time and full development of individual will increase and workers are thrown beside actual production. The criteria of productivity is derived now from the experience of non-work. This means that the general requirements for social communication will be in the very centre of analysis. And general intellect will set these requirements. General intellect won't produce commensurability of products, jobs and subjects like money does, but it rather destroys this commensurability: Models of social knowledge do not equate the various activities of labour, but rather present themselves as the 'immediate forces of production'. This abstract knowledge organizes social relations in production (Virno, 1996: 18-25).

The experience of work, production and social communication opens to us 'a possible world' in which all kinds of social activities supplant wage labour. In the 'totality of connections' abstract labour arranges possibilities, but not in the sense of exterior finality: Such a totality of connections is itself only a possibility. "A possible world, determined by non-work as activity, is not something that can ever resolve itself in factual reality". Even "completed facts" won't lose their character of a possibility

(Virno, 1996: 25-28). Virno (2004) deals with the 'possible world', which appears through the work of the multitude. He articulates the ultimate development of capitalism more precisely and outlines the coming economy, i.e. the third form. In this sense Virno steps forward from general intellect. But the 'possible world' and multitude are not the adequate analyses of the question with which the gift, 'compearance' and means are concerned with.

These concepts express more precisely the delivered notion of *Ereignis* in which Being and man belong together. They lead our studies more explicitly to that point where studies are materialized as the political problem. This political problem exists only, because these concepts have preliminary made it possible (Agamben, 2000: 116-117).⁷ And the 'possible world' becomes more understandable with the experience of these concepts. For instance, Nancy's (1991:31) community in which communication has the power to unwork the work, has stated the 'possible world' before. So, I think that these concepts are decisive in any analysis of the third form. In order to understand this problem, one needs to think it through technology and *Ereignis*.

Technology

According to Heidegger, technology is nothing technological. It isn't simple empirical findings on technology like machines, tools, governmental systems or what ever belongs to that. First of all, technology is the means to an end and a human activity. Human beings posit ends, gather means together and utilize them for ends. This complex of contrivances is technology. It is instrumental and this instrumentality conditions human beings' relation to technology. Human beings master by instrumentality, for instance some water falls provide electric power under the control of human beings. And "the will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control" (Heidegger, 1977a: 3-6).

If instrumental definition of technology is correct and if one considers the hydroelectric plant in a river as technology, then the essence of technology is understood in a narrow sense. This technological fixing doesn't need to uncover the essence of technology (Heidegger, 1977a: 6). To uncover this essence does eventually mean that this instrumentality contains potentiality, like Agamben (2000) has said. But what else is technology than means? It is instrumentality when something which is not yet present arrives into the present. One considers carefully (*legein*) what to bring forward into appearance.⁸ This is *poiesis*, bringing-forth, which is revealing something. If instrumentality is the fundamental character of technology and technology is means to ends, then we speak of revealing. "The possibility of all productive manufacturing lies in revealing" (*ibid.*, 12). When something is revealed it arrives at the sphere of economical calculation. Therefore, technology isn't mere means, but most of all a way of revealing. Even modern technology is a revealing, but not in the sense of *poiesis*. The

7 Agamben mentioned general intellect, 'compearance' and *Ereignis* in this context.

8 To consider carefully *legein* is rooted in *apophainesthai*.

revealing in modern technology is a challenge which demands that nature supplies energy that can be extracted and stored (*ibid.*, 6-15).

When the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, it is transformed, stored and distributed. These are all ways of revealing. Like social combination the revealing never comes to an end, because revealing reveals its own manifold interlocking paths which need to be regulated and secured. And human beings – who are claimed by a way of revealing that challenges them – approach nature as an object of research. Everything which now presences is worked on by the challenging revealing. Everything becomes a standing-reserve. But human beings never become mere standing-reserves, for they push technology forward and take part ‘in ordering as a way of revealing’. However, technology as an ordering revealing is never mere human handiwork. The essence of technology, enframing (*Ge-stell*),⁹ is the challenging demand to reveal. Enframing is “gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve” (Heidegger, 1977a: 16-20). Therefore, enframing is the way of revealing in modern technology.¹⁰

How should we understand this enframing? According to Heidegger, modern technology is identical with modern metaphysics (1977c: 116). Heidegger stated that in the modern era the world becomes a picture which is the same event as event of man’s becoming *subiectum* (1977c: 132). These events indicate together that “the world stands at man’s disposal as conquered” (1977c: 133). “What is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth” (1977c: 129-130). So, this means that human beings become subjects and set up beings in their representedness. Now Being appears through enframing.

The challenging enframing is a danger as such. It is the danger that all what presences and human beings themselves are only a standing-reserve. It banishes human beings into an ordering. This ordering throws away the other ways of revealing (Heidegger, 1977a: 26-27). If technology appears as danger, there is the ‘saving of power’ too. To clarify this sentence, Heidegger studied the essence of technology. What is decisive concerning the essence of technology is to grant it permanently. Heidegger said that “only what is granted endures. That which endures primally out of the earliest beginning is what grants”. Even if enframing sets upon human beings and puts them to reveal the real in the mode of ordering, one can experience through granting that revealed is not mere human handiwork. And granting the essence of technology prepares the rupture of technology. One can say that the essence of technology is ambiguous (cf. Radloff, 1989). Enframing challenges forth into ordering and closes every other way of revealing and therefore endangers the relation between Being and human beings. But now enframing comes to pass in the granting which lets human beings endure. “The arising of the saving power appears” (Heidegger, 1977a: 31-33).

9 Frame, ‘*Gestell*’, is more real than atomic energy, system of machinery, organization, communication and automation (Heidegger, 2002: 35).

10 “In the frame we witness a belonging together of man and Being in which the letting belong first determines the manner of the ‘together’ and its unity” (Heidegger, 2002: 38).

What is now the event which surmounts technology? This event comes to pass when enframing comes to pass in granting. Through granting human beings are opened to Being. In granting technology is not the oblivion of Being any more. "When the danger is as the danger, with the turning about of oblivion, the safekeeping of Being comes to pass; world comes to pass" (Heidegger, 1977b: 43). This turning happens suddenly and unexpectedly. In this event in-flashing comes to pass into enframing. According to Heidegger, in-flashing of the truth of Being comes into truthless Being: "In-flashing is the disclosing coming-to-pass within Being itself. Disclosing coming-to-pass (*Ereignis*) is bringing to sight that brings into its own" (1977b: 41, 43-45).

Surmounting of technology presupposes this disclosing event which is not logically or historiographically predicted, or metaphysically construed. It comes to pass suddenly and it's definitely not the work of a subject. But human beings are needed for the surmounting of technology. When human beings are open to technology, they realize the claim of enframing, but at the same time they become aware of possibilities. What is it that human beings are claimed to be a part of this? Studying enframing is to prepare the appearance of *Ereignis*. Even if this event is not predicted, one needs to deliberate it. This makes possible to think what is the appearance of *Ereignis* (Heidegger, 1977b: 37-41).

Ereignis indicates clearly how it produces the rupture in technology. But more important than to speak of the rupture is to think what produces the rupture as a whole and what is the relation of human beings to it? This means that one understands *Ereignis* and moves forward from this notion. In the third form of economy the important question is not the rupture or *Ereignis* itself but the singular event (like the gift and 'compearance'), which is at one with human beings and which is the matter of thinking. *Ereignis* indicates how Being and human beings belong together (Heidegger, 2002). But *Ereignis* alone remains an empty word if one can't think how it strives for a human activity.¹¹ When Being and human beings belong together then human beings are not at the mercy of rupture but are prepared for the appearance of rupture. If one perceives the rupture, then one should think of what it means for a human activity.

Like Heidegger, Benjamin (1972) wrote that it is important to perceive this kind of event and to prepare for it. According to Benjamin, the recognition of the past does not mean how things really have been. It means that one remembers the past as such as it flashes out in the middle of danger. It is important to take the past as such as it suddenly appears to the subject. What did he try to say with these words? Perhaps he noted that one remembers the past in the event which flashes out in danger. Secondly, he meant that the flash comes to pass suddenly. Thirdly, one needs to recognize the event. Fourthly, one has to think what are the consequences of this recognition – otherwise this recognition is not enough. Fifthly, the event which comes to pass suddenly, as the flash in danger, is not the work of a subject, but appears to subject. This means that human beings are thrown into the world by this event and the same time they are called to prepare for this event, to recognize it and to think how to strive a human activity.

11 For Negri (2003), *kairos* produces subjectivity. But this is not enough unless it leads to the meaningful human activity.

Agamben states the same question by asking, “how does one use a common?” (2000: 117). He addressed that it is unsatisfactory that “the idea of an *Ereignis*, of an ultimate event in which what is seized and delivered from historical destiny is the being-hidden itself of the historical principle” (2000: 111). Therefore Agamben meant that, instead of appropriation and expropriation,¹² we have to think the possibility of a free use. That would be something like the appropriation of an expropriation. That is, we no longer stress the dialectic of proper and improper “in which either the improper extends its own rule everywhere, thanks to an unrestrainable will to falsification and consumption (as it happens in industrialized democracies), or the proper demands the exclusion of any impropriety (as it happens in integralist and totalitarian states)” (Agamben, 2000: 117). Agamben calls this place of indifference between the proper and the improper ‘the common’, comprehended only as use. It is in this sense that the essential political problem is ‘how does one use a common?’

To summarize, communication is the decisive factor what separates the second form from the first one. In the second form communication has entered into production. This experience of communication is important when we outline the third form. What is still concealed in the second form, is made visible in the third one. In the third form we make visible the problem in which Being and human beings belong together. This is the heart of thinking if we try to reach the essential problem of economy: what is the appearance of Being and what is human activity with it? Heidegger made this visible and Agamben continued to the point where we may now ask: ‘how does one use a common?’

We shouldn’t forget Negri (2003) who grasped the multitude and understood the relation between Being (*kairos*) and subjectivity. Multitude isn’t measurable like in the first form, nor characterized as simple potentiality which is set as a resource like in the second form. In the third form the multitude appears where Being and human beings belong together and where this relation is a matter of thinking. Now multitude isn’t simple or mysterious potentiality. No longer we simply think that multitude can do something. Only then we may reach the experience of multitude, which works in the third form of economy.

The Third Form of Economy

Despite the definitions of multitude, one needs to think that multitude intends to achieve an end, i.e. profit or something earned in economy.¹³ Multitude is still measurable (at least in the perception of capital). But this intentionality doesn’t necessarily serve as a means towards an end. Perhaps we could grasp this like Derrida (1997) did. He wrote that something infects the intentional act which misses its end and disturbs economy.

12 Derrida has deliberated the constellation of appropriation and expropriation. He conditions the question of Being and *Ereignis* otherwise, one by the other, one with the other: “Being – which is not, which does not exist as being-present – is signaled on the basis of the gift” (1997: 134).

13 See Heidegger (1977a) and Agamben (2000).

This is the event of the gift, which indicates that Being has a relation to economy. The gift “seeks its place before any relation to the subject” (p.137).

Intentionality is a production which takes place in economy. Agamben (1999a: 186) talked about the problem of intentionality and referred to Heidegger’s (1998a: 63-81) last Marburg lectures. These lectures clarify how intentional relations between subject and object are diverse. The intentional act of subject doesn’t necessarily achieve a certain end. For Heidegger, this relation is not so original than Being-in-the-world by which *Dasein* opens itself to the world before all knowledge and subjectivity. Before this constitution of subject and object, “*Dasein* is already open to the world”: “Knowing is grounded beforehand in a Being-already-alongside-the-world” (Heidegger, 1996: 57). We must understand intentionality on this ground.

Agamben has already set this path of *intentionality* – *facticity* – *Dasein*. What is facticity? Facticity is something restless and the fact that *Dasein* is being-in-the-world. “Facticity is not the factuality of the *factum brutum* of something objectively present, but is a characteristic of the being of *Dasein* taken on in existence, although initially thrust aside” (Heidegger, 1996: 127). *Dasein* “is thrown in such a way that it is the there as being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1996: 127). Further, facticity is always connected to non-originality and making. In its openness, facticity remains something concealed. Therefore it is characterized by a constellation of concealment and unconcealment. Facticity is a sort of restlessness in being-in-the-world (Agamben, 1999a: 188-192).

Agamben states that the facticity is such that *Dasein* is sucked into the constellation of authenticity and inauthenticity. Being-in-the-world is so tempting. Even if *Dasein* is in the mode of inauthenticity, it is a question of our potentiality for being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1996: 167). The relation between authenticity and inauthenticity is so intimate, that the “authentic existence is nothing which hovers over entangled everydayness, but is existentially only a modified grasp of everydayness” (Heidegger, 1996: 167). Agamben (1999a: 197) pointed out that authentic existence is nothing else than inauthentic. The proper is to apprehend the improper. This is facticity which is never a simple primacy of the proper.¹⁴

Agamben (1999a: 199-201) thinks the constellation of authenticity and inauthenticity through Heidegger’s ‘Letter on Humanism’ (1998b: 241-242). In this text Heidegger spoke of *mögen* (to be able) and potentiality. Agamben stressed that *mögen* has a close relation to primacy of possibility. Here potentiality¹⁵ is primarily passive potentiality (*dynamis tou paskhein*), which has solidarity with active potentiality (*dynamis tou poiein*). All potentiality (*dynamis*) is impotentiality (*adynamia*) and all capacity (*dynamis*) is essentially passivity (*dekhesthai*). This powerlessness defines Being of *Dasein* as such. Passive potentiality and *mögen* is capable not only of potentiality, but capable of its impotentiality. Therefore, for Agamben, this is the most radical experience of possibility in *Dasein*.

14 One could criticize Heidegger by saying that he set the proper above the improper or neglected the categories of idle talk and curiosity. Then, according to Agamben, one would “fail to understand the intention of the analytic of *Dasein*” and “bar access to the thought of the Ereignis” (1999a: 197).

15 Here Agamben referred to Heidegger and Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* 1-3.

Now, we say that the most radical experience of possibility, impotentiality defines the multitude as such. Multitude with intentionality dwells in facticity where authenticity and inauthenticity are intertwined. Thinking about its element and technique “when thinking comes to an end by slipping out of its element” (Heidegger, 1998b: 241) are mixed. Now Agamben (1999a: 202-203) can say that the dialectic between the proper and the improper reaches its end. No longer one appropriates some foreign which becomes proper and illuminates something dark. What is appropriated is not taken to light but to lighting between dark and light. Therefore, *Ereignis* means the end of technology in its strict sense. But it means that *Ereignis* is in the middle of means, instrumentality, technology. For Agamben, it becomes possible to say that *Ereignis* is appropriation of an expropriation: What is appropriated is properly improper. In *Ereignis* facticity is appropriated in its distraction. In economy any acts which are means for an end are in distraction. *Dasein* who is capable of its own incapacity, acts in distraction, and as such surmounts the commensurability of economy.

What do the three forms of economy express? In the first form multitude appears as measurable. In the second form communication has entered into production. Communication shows that the potentiality of multitude is multiplied possible combinations. To the third form one brings the analysis where Being and human beings belong together and where we set the question what we should do now. Heidegger (1977a, b; 2002) made this visible by *Ereignis*. Negri (2003) wrote that the right point of time (*kairos*) produces subjectivity, the multitude. Agamben (1999a) indicated that if one understands that Being and human beings belong together then one would grasp how potentiality is essentially impotentiality. This means that the economy is exposed to impotentiality of multitude.

But we must think what all this means and ask what we should do now?¹⁶ Heidegger (1977b: 40) and Benjamin (1972) suggested this, and Agamben (2000: 117) repeated it. Especially Agamben has worked with this question. It wasn't enough for Agamben that he had shown a possible character of means but he wanted to indicate how we can think the essential political problem through *Ereignis*. Negri (2003: 173) also noted that *kairos* is not enough. It produces the multitude but it doesn't ask what multitude should do or which way human activity takes place. To set up this problem for thinking is the essential political problem, and it is also the problem of the economy in its third form.

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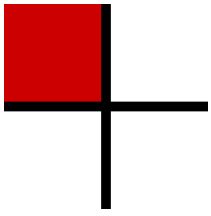
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16 Derrida (1997) and Nancy (1991) simply seem not so interested in what happens after the gift and 'compearance'. Agamben has made much more effort in this direction.

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Eventum Tantum: To Make the World Worthy of What Could Happen To It

Ole Fogh Kirkeby

abstract

In this article a theory of the event is presented which operates with three theoretical levels. The first level being beyond both ontology and epistemology, the other level presenting the internal tension between sense and non-sense, and the third level constructing an analytical figure of the zones of the event, the so-called 'pentagon of the event'. The article also presents the Stoic distinction between *pragma* and *tynchanon*, between the level of sense, and the level of material causes. Finally it presents a distinction between constellations and installations, which forms a quasi-normative approach to the event. The ideas can be seen as an interpretation of Deleuze's thoughts about the event, but also as an autonomous contribution to a systematic and detailed analysis of the event, transcending the thoughts of Deleuze.

Introduction

One can safely say, without a trace of exaggeration, that the event is the most important phenomenon, both to philosophy and to the social sciences today. However, not many modern philosophers, or *Denker*, besides Heidegger and Deleuze, both of whose opera has had an impact on the social sciences (Deleuze's by far the most, and it has not reached its climax yet), have treated the event as an autonomous subject. Even the thoughts in *The Logic of Sense*, or in *Leibniz and the Fold*, which among the books of Deleuze come closest to the monographic intention, have not got a systematic character, when seen from an epistemological or ontological point of view. Deleuze does not create a consistent and comprehensive theory of the event – whether he might have wanted it at all, I cannot know.

When thinking about the event, questions like the following spring to mind: Does an event exist materially? Is an event an ontological entity? To what a degree are we able to create the event at the level of sense? Are we able to negotiate the sense of the event? How many levels and dimensions are we able to attribute to the event? What is the relation between an event and a context? How do we differ between the sense of the event, and the event of sense? Or there are even more profound questions like: Is the event beyond ontology? Is the event of immanence similar to an immanence of the event, with which we are unable to cope epistemologically?

During the last few years I have tried to develop a theory of the event, in which these questions are answered. In some ways I perceive my work as a strengthening of the theoretical approaches by Deleuze, even if it – at the most important points – differs from them. This is also the way it is presented in this context. Of course, Deleuze suggested interpretation, not advocacy, of his own work, and the following text is in line with such an approach.

The *non-aliud*

There is an ontological and epistemological practise of immense importance to our lives, the capacity to say: ‘*This* has happened!’ However, neither this wording, nor the conceptualisation of the event nor the reflective understanding of the event in which eventing itself is articulated, can be the proper ‘this’. The ‘cascades of actualisations’ in *What is Philosophy*¹ might simply bounce off the event, be untimely, or – since we, so at least it seems at this point in history, are denied the predicates ‘false’ and ‘true’ – without sufficient relevance, pragmatic impact, certainty, or even intensity. The act of affecting by the manifold aspects of the immediately present, the eventing force might not ‘fit’ the event that receives this version of the process of eventing, and which must accept it. And it might not be properly received by the attempt of this process of eventing to reflect on itself. This is the fatal incompatibility, the delicate crack, between effectuating and being deposited, between that which happens, and its articulation in the games of truth. This crack is the fissure between ‘the sense of the event’ and ‘the event of sense’.

If this crack is taken as a proto-ontological phenomenon, it goes beyond the ontological difference, because it defies the predicate of Being. The core of Being (*ousia*, essence) can never be Being (*einai*, ‘esse’) itself, in so far as this core is the event. This is exactly what makes the famous distinction of Heidegger – which he borrowed from Middle Age philosopher Bonaventura – misleading. In order to understand this fact, I have used the beautiful phrase by Nicolas Cusanus from his little ‘trialogue’, *De li non aliud*: “*Non aliud non aliud est quam non aliud*”: “The not other is nothing other than the Not-Other.”² The event as a genuine phenomenon can in relation to time and place be conceived as *non-aliud*, as that which is beyond Sameness, and hence, beyond both the concept of identity, and beyond its negation. *Non-aliud* is a term in language, which defies any representational structure. It denotes that it can neither be defined by affirmation nor by negation.

Hence, the *non-aliud* could be a way to grasp the concept of an *absolute immanence*, a mode of existence, which implies no distinction between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’, between thinking and thought, and between subject and object in a process of time. The genuine event is a shape, which absorbs knowing into the known. From its absolute immanence follows the definition ‘that it has everything outside itself, except the knowledge of

1 Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (2000) *What is Philosophy?*, trans. H. Tomlinson and G. Burchill. London: Verso, p.156-160.

2 Cusanus, N. (1987) *De li non aliud*, trans P. Wilpert. Felix Meiner Verlag: Hamburg.

having everything outside itself.' The event is totally dependent and totally autonomous, at the same time. It excludes a subject of knowledge, and hence the possibility of an ontology.

The *eventum tantum*, a concept used both by Heidegger and Deleuze, means 'the great event' or 'so much of the event'. *Non-aliud* is the closest possible analogy, at an ontological and epistemological level, of the event, and of our relation to it. This concept transcends both ontology and epistemology. And this is, or 'must be', what Deleuze thinks about, when he writes that "the event is not what occurs (an accident), it is rather inside what occurs, the purely expressed. It signals and awaits us."³ Also:

Each component of the event is *articulated or effectuated* in an instant, and the event in the time that passes between these instants; but nothing happens within *the virtuality* that has only meanwhiles as components and an event as composite becoming. Nothing happens there, but everything becomes, so that the event has the privilege of beginning again when time is past.⁴

The *eventum tantum* is the prototype of the event, the event that, in the most radical sense of the words, Never was, the event, which was Never. It is actually rather consequent to think the event as 'Never', because the event cannot be defined as a *diastema*, as 'an in-between-in-time and space', as a *duration*, without being thought as the moment beyond time; or better, as the moment *in* time, which creates the experience of time. The alternative is the Heideggerean *ek-stasis*, where the moment, the duration, is either thought as a passage between the past and the present, or as a sort of privileged point of reflection on the very flux of time in which it is absorbed. Both versions would amount to betrayals of the event, because the event is nothing but a mere duration beyond time. The event is totally empty, nothing happens at the core of the event, because it is beyond the time-structures presupposed by language.

It is obvious that only through creating a level of ontological and epistemological approach to the *eventum tantum*, which presses at the limit of thought, it is possible to escape the two classical traps of thinking the event: the trap of naturalism (historically shaped) and the trap of negotiation/consensus/sense-creation. Both versions makes the concept of 'the other history' impossible, and hence, it makes impossible the rebellion against the fact expressed by Nietzsche as the 'law' that the naming of the event is the prerogative of the victors. So, the first level of approaching the event is of such an abstract character that it transcends philosophical reflection itself, in which it is conceptualised. This is level-1, *the eventum tantum as non-aliud*.

However, even the most radical philosophical approach has to be able to criticise, it must have an affirmative dimension – which the concept of *non-aliud* does not have. Further, we have to develop a concept, which can serve as an antidote of sense to the 'sense-making' strategies of all the small and great self-established 'event-makers', and 'event-certificationists' of society and history. We need another level, and this is, to my opinion, the level on which Deleuze operates. We need to be able to speak of the event as sense beyond sense, as an active, creative centre in the middle of our lives, which we carry with us, and to which we are only able to relate by 'guarding its secret' – or to re-

3 Deleuze, G. (1993) *The Logic of Sense*, trans. M. Lester. New York: Columbia University Press, 149.

4 *What is Philosophy?*, p.158.

phrase the Epictetus-Deleuzean maxim: 'To prove worthy to the event', or 'To be strong enough to identify with the event.' At that level there is a constant, hardly bearable tension, in the middle of our lives, between the sense of the event – hard to bear because it is forced on us, either by other people or, alas, by our own experience, and by our memories – and the event of sense.

Since, the event of sense always must be allocated to 'yet another event', there is an event of a immanent transcendent character, which is active in our life, but epistemologically inapproachable. It expresses a 'positive self-reference', it is not an 'never-ending regression', it is beyond time, and hence, not even the possible subject of a 'transcendental' reduction in the Kantian sense; but nevertheless it is certainly 'there' in some sense, not just as the quasi-object of a constructional effort. The *eventum tantum* at this level, level-2, I name the *alma-event*.

The alma-event is the 'non-place', the *ouk-topos*, of the event of sense. It is not a *noumenon*, not *ein Ding an sich*, because it is exactly not the silent and invisible guarantee of the possibility of the sense of the event. Rather, it is an 'active nothing', an echo of an endless 'Never' breaking into our lives. It is a thought without an object – as Hegel spoke about in *The Encyclopaedia*. Hence, it can only be thought *chiastically* (I shall evade the concept 'dialectical') in relation to the sense of the event, as its permanent negation, as its core and its background, at the very same time, as its imago in the realm of 'non-sense' – as Deleuze would say. The sense of the event would be called 'the *proto-event*'. It lives a life between the ambiguous sense of processes, and the total reification as occurring in the capacity of a thing: 'The second world war', 'a love affair', etc. The gliding on the surface of tension between the proto-event and the alma-event is expressed by Deleuze as the shift from substantive to verb, and in the verb itself, from the indicative to the infinitive. To Deleuze, the alma-event is already anticipated – *parascheuê* in the Stoic terminology of Epictetus – by the very transformation in phrasing from 'he dies' to 'to die'. That is why Deleuze is able to anticipate the alma-event by saying – these already famous words:

Every event is like death, double and impersonal in its double. "It is the abyss of the present, the time without present with which I have no relation, towards which I am unable to project myself. For in it I do not die. I forfeit the power of dying. In this abyss they ("on") die – they never cease to die, and they never succeed in dying."⁵

Hence, to transform the proto-event, the fireworks of sense, to the level of the alma-event, to the realm of productive non-sense, is the task of philosophy. This transformation includes an ethos of the event. This ethos is shaped by the Stoic concept of *parascheuê*, 'anticipation', the ability to assent to (*synkatathesis*) everything that happens. Epictetus phrased it with genial simplicity:

Do not seek to have everything that happens happen as you wish, but wish for everything to happen as it actually does happen, and your life will be serene.⁶

One could also say:

5 *The Logic of Sense*, p.152.

6 *Encheiridion*, Paragraph 8.

There is a dignity of the event that has always been inseparable from philosophy as *amor fati*: being equal to the event, or becoming the offspring of one's own events – "my wound existed before me, I was born to embody it".⁷

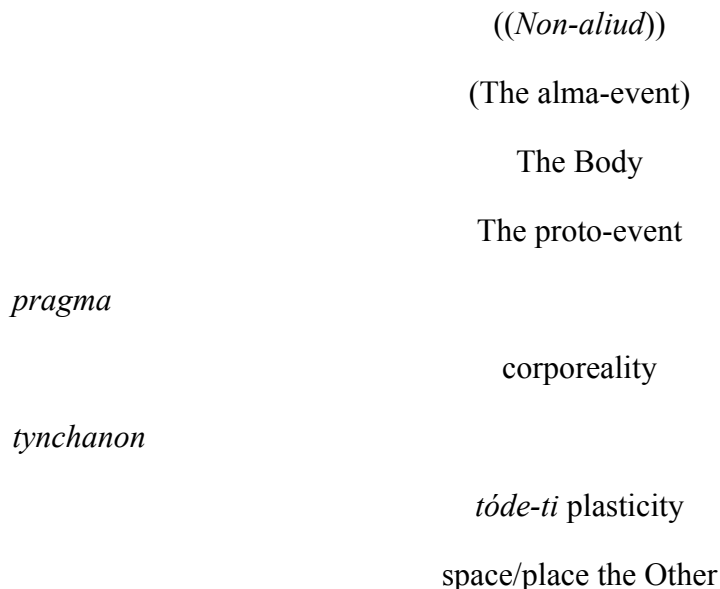
To summarise: There are two levels on which to approach the event:

Level-1: The *eventum tantum* as *non-aliud* is beyond the capacities of ontology and epistemology, we can only hint at it by analogy – being aware, of course, of the performative self-contradiction in the very use of language, since analogy presupposes both an ontology and epistemology.

Level-2 contains the tension between the sense of the event, the proto-event, and the event of sense, the alma-event. Since the alma-event is the core of every event, it is also the quasi-ontological *topos* or the *chora* of what Deleuze named 'the virtual'. The real and the potential, on the other hand, using his terminology, belong to the realm of the proto-event.

The Pentagon of the Event

Now, the proto-event can be analytically systemised through the 'elements' or 'zones of practise, experience and knowledge' which constitute it, and is constituted by it. Thus, we can construct the pentagon of the event:



7 *What is Philosophy?*, p.159

It is definitive that we are in the event only as bodies, whether through immediate experience, through memory, or through thinking. The body yields us to the event in the capacities of passionate things. However, the body is itself a transcendental immanence. As the media through which the event of sense takes place, we cannot 'get behind it', neither through perception, nor through thought. This is due to the fact that the space of the event is totally immersed into sense. We cannot get behind sense through sense. We are only able to approach sense in the capacity of a palpable substance through the word, and through the sentence, i.e., through 'the sense of the event', through the 'proto-event'. We are 'evented', so to speak, by the 'event of sense'. The body is the door between the alma-event and the sense of the event, the proto-event. But in this capacity we cannot ascribe material or physical character to the body; it is the invisible medium of experience. However, it is neither, strictly speaking, identical to a transcendental ego in Husserl's sense, nor to a 'pre-reflective cogito', in the sense of Merleau-Ponty. It is – so to speak – mere anonymity, an 'incorporated transcendence', i.e., 'condescendence', the point of intersection between immanence and transcendence. Hence, we have to speak about our body in another sense, too, namely as 'corporality'. This is the body in the capacity of 'sense-machine', 'a spiritual automaton' in the words of both Spinoza and Leibniz. The body as the acting thing, as that which is able to co-merge with matter, is a living thing belonging to us, but also experienced by us, as something different from us, which is the hostage of the event. Hence, through the door between the alma-event and the proto-event we are let by the body into our corporeal activeness, and in this capacity, as spiritual automata, we meet the other zones of the event:

The tóde-ti: the haecceitas, is the facticity of the material sphere. This mode of experience denotes the presentation of relations and processes as if they were things. Thus the *tóde-ti* expresses a form of experience, both the beginning of the experience of the event as a pre-personal/post-personal, semantic entity, because the event begins to become an identity by being experienced as 'some thing'; and it is the distinct phenomena appearing inside the event. The *tóde-ti*, in the young Aristotle, is that which cannot be predicated of anything else, and hence, that which is immune to a final predication. It is the basic logic and ontological matter, that which cannot be reduced to anything else. We can use this concept to designate the uniqueness of the event, and the uniqueness of its phenomena. However, when the sense of the event is raised to the level of the proto-event in the capacity of 'This has happened', then the uniqueness is destroyed, while its spontaneity disappears, and the alma-event is slowly opening its abyss beneath sense – in the beginning just by letting us be aware of the general, non-unique, character of predicates.

The plasticity: the zone of the still indiscernible. It is constantly reproduced in the shape of the relation between figure and background. It is the oscillations between the known and the unidentifiable, a movement conducted by the word, and by the word as something older, wiser, and richer than the concept. So there must be a kind of passage, a gliding, from the *tóde-ti*, into sense-making, which cannot itself as a process be the subject of sense. In the language of Husserl, this passage cannot be an 'intentional subject'. The *tóde-ti* passes into a constellation, but during this process there is a constant tension in relation to the zone of plasticity. At the level of this pre-conceptual passage the virtual and the actual are almost identical, i.e. there is a vast set of possible

worlds into which the *tóde-ti* seems to be able to be inscribed as its proper sense: “It is the virtual that is distinct from the actual, but a virtual that is no longer chaotic, that has become consistent or real on the plane of immanence that wrests it from the chaos”.⁸ It is the right way to describe the *tóde-ti* and the plasticity as simultaneous processes, because the experience of ‘this-ness’ always creates a new background of plasticity.

The space/place: this zone consists of the permanent tension between space – *chora*, as something constituting the content of experience, the lines of movement, the possibilities of being – and the *topos*, as the identified place, the familiar, that which we must leave all the time in order to become the ones, who we probably could become. The tension of the ethos of the event is allocated here, because *ethos* also means the place of origin, which we, in the form of values, intentions, passions, and dreams, are carrying with us all the time.

The Other person: the other individuals can be seen as possible worlds meeting us in the arena of the event, each individual corporeality presenting a secret to us – coming from his body, from his transcendental immanence, through his unique transformation into a sediment, cultural and historical otherness.

The five elements of the event can be said to form a constellation at any point of time in the development of the event, and at any point in time of its interpretation in further events – of an action or interpretative character, or both.

Pragma and Tynchanon

Now, there are two dimensions in the event, the first one is incorporeal, the other is corporeal. The idea was founded by Stoic philosophy in which one distinguished the *corporealia*, i.e., the body, the material world, imagination, thought, and speech, from the incorporeal, the empty space, the void, time *and sense*.

The Stoics named the material dimension as a sum of processes, the *corporealia*, *tynchanon*; and they named the incorporeal realm, which encompassed that of sense, *pragma*. *Tynchanon* also means ‘object’ in the Greek, but in this context of the event, it means the level of causes, whether they are conceived of as a chaos, or as a more mechanistic, causal flow. *Pragma* has got many important senses in the Greek. It generally means ‘act’, ‘action’, or ‘object’. But in the *Poetics* of Aristotle it also means ‘action’, i.e. ‘plot’, and ‘sense’. The Stoics uses it to denote the phenomenon of ‘the sense of the event’.

It is important to realise that the Stoics did not think of any causal relation between *tynchanon* and *pragma*: they cannot be ascribed any causal theory of meaning. They thought that the two dimensions coexisted, both expressing the cosmic logos. It was the ethical task of any individual to unite them, and this was the core of their ethos of the event, because *tynchanon* followed the *synektion aition*, or *series causarum* – as

8 *What is Philosophy?*, p.156

Chrysippos named it – the both necessary and sufficient level of causes, the ‘iron hard laws of fate’. However, the Stoics in general did not subscribe to any determinism, they only accepted fate (*heimarmené*, *fatum*), and this means, that the attitude of the individual could be reconciled with a concept of personal freedom. The pike of this freedom was the ability to ‘prove worthy of the event’ by meeting everything which happened with exactly the same mental attitude, the *eudymia*, the happy and calm assent to your own destruction. It is no accident, of course, that Deleuze is so focused on Chrysippos in *The Logic of Sense* – also the concept of dividing the work into ‘series’ is a repetition of the way Chrysippos divided his enormous opus of which nothing is preserved, alas. Now, the problem is that mirrored from the level of *tynchanon*, the world of distinct phenomena, the *tóde-ti*, seems to have a rather firm identity – applying the concepts of causality and law both implies and demands that. But in the capacity of *pragma* the range of its possible articulations seems rather wide. *Pragma* and *tynchanon* present parallel lines which only seem to be able to meet when the *tóde-ti* crashes.

This figure of their possible interrelation reproduces the problem of Leibniz, manifested in the principle of the so-called ‘pre-established harmony’, because it is impossible to point to a direct causal relation between *tynchanon* and *pragma*, even if there must exist some kind of powerful limitations arising from *tynchanon*. There must be some pre-structured direction of the rails, even if the material dimension cannot be grasped as something which automatically transforms itself into sense, i.e., into language games. So, if the event is conceived solely at the *pragma*-level – which Deleuze is inclined to; “The event is sense itself, in so far as it is disengaged or distinguished from the states of affairs which produce it and in which it is actualised”⁹ – one reproduces the monadology of Leibniz. This line of thinking would by analogy conceive of the event as an immaterial entity without spatial extension, only defined by its properties and appetites. In every monad each state is the consequence of its former states, and it only relates to the realm of other monads through a more or less distinct perception of them. The pre-established harmony means that each monad reacts in the way it ought to react, if there had been a real, material mediated, causality among them. Invested with a teleological perspective, this thinking comes close to the idealism of Hegel.

The problem here could also be posed as the need to evade any kind of ‘symptomatology’. This is only possible, if we accept the *pragma*-level, the level of sense, and the definite predication of the event, as constitutive and effectuating in itself, i.e., as having causal power in relation to the level of *tynchanon*. This would not presuppose the vision of Prospero, that life is nothing but a dream, but instead pose the problem of that which Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* named *deinótes*, the force which transfers thought into action, theory into practise. The level of sense must be able to influence the level of the material. But the opposite must also be the case, even if we deny any direct causality. This means that we have got a very complicated structure of reciprocal causation here at the heart of the event. So, we have to accept also some kind of causality, and hence, a contrafinality of Otherness, of the unfamiliar and almost anti-human level of the *series causerum*; and we have to accept an element of sense-creation too. This paradox can only be solved in accordance with the concept of ‘the subject of knowledge’ with which we operate. The question of how to conceive of the subject is

9 *The Logic of Sense*, p.210.

focussed, if not definitely 'solved', through the concept of 'constellation'. Now, the weakness of the thinking of Deleuze is, to my opinion, that he does not cope properly with these two dimensions of the event, *tynchanon* and *pragma*.

Constellation and Installation

An example: When management, shop stewards and local line leaders meet as a result of a generally felt, and formally bottom-line-registered, malfunction of the organisation, this session, in the capacity of proto-event, might not be the proper one to suggest or create solutions of a proactive kind, solutions that would be able to promote processes of a sensitive organising. The same goes, of course, for the finite set of possible events of theorising upon this proto-event. They are nothing but aspects of this alma-event, the permanent secret of *eventing*, adding new proto-events in a linear time, proto-events of theorising on the proto-event, which not necessarily, though, in spite of their conjunctural character, intensifies abstraction. It is possible to imagine a point in time, in which the new proto-event of thought suddenly comes much closer to what one often experiences as the 'primal event' that presented the material of experience, but which is nothing but the alma-event in disguise. There was never a primal event, and that goes for every little banal event, as well as for the event of the universe.

The figure of thought, that the proto-event can never be traced back to a naturalistically caught event of sense but only is absorbed into the alma-event, means that there does not exist any original event whatsoever. On the other hand, this does not favour any concept of construction in relation to the event, even if the notion of sense as something negotiated or fought about seems to suggest itself. However, if we in some sense could be said to *create* the event, this could only mean that we choose an interpretation on behalf of an ethos of the event. A distinction could be relevant in order to distinguish between the event as a *constellation* on the one hand, and as an *installation* on the other. This should not be understood as an attempt to smuggle in some criterion of authenticity, quite the contrary, because we only relate 'authentically' to the event by transforming authenticity into *hetero-enticity*, into the capacity to relate to the event on the terms that it is the event which poses the possibilities of reproducing our inner feeling of a 'sameness' (*idem*). To take the event serious, is to revolt against the concept of the substantial and essential 'I' (*ipse*), and to substitute for it a process of becoming. This is the first maxim of Deleuze, and finely taught by him.

However, if the event is seen as a constellation, this must not be interpreted as something original. Instead it must be understood as the rule of contingency. But we must remember, that *contingere* origins in the two Greek words, *endechomenon* from Aristotle, meaning 'that which is possible, but not necessary'; and *symbainein*, used by Aristotle too in the sense of 'throw', 'that which occurs'. Combing the realm of the possible with that which occurs, Boëthius created the word 'contingency', thus giving us the conceptual instrument to understand 'eventing' as a process which we draw from the realm of the possible into the real or which we simply re-actualise, by choosing to adhere to its sense. This does, however, not come up to any management of meaning and not at all to 'creation of meaning'. So, we can posit an opposition to the concept of

‘constellation’ on the analytical level, and speak about an ‘installation’ as the attitude towards the event that we are able to control its sense. Hence, if we begin with a crude distinction, a constellation shall appear as a non-strategic attitude towards the event, while installing is similar to event-making. This distinction is of great importance to business economics, because we are forced to develop a critical position towards the non-ethical instrumentalisations of the event, both in practise, and in narrative after-rationalisations.

Now, there is of course no way to make a strict distinction between a constellation and installation, because they are constantly intermixed. Every installation rests on constellations, and every constellation has, as far as it is a part of social life, an installatory element, in so far people try to influence the event. We are also able to phrase this predicament as a post-dialectical tension between constellating and installing. A dialectics of reconciliation is impossible, because the process is not simultaneous with itself.

‘Installing’ itself is dualistic: There is an installation effectuated by Power (*krasis, potestas*), and an installation effectuated by Force (*dynamis*). The first one could be named ‘tragic’ because it wears the mask of *ananké*, and hence of death. Its practise is hierarchy, command, the mechanical assembling of people. This is the world of Marx, the battlefield of labour on which the cathedrals of the corporate dynasties were built during the last three hundred years, in the image of the army, and the labour mills of the paupers. ‘Power’ is the architect and strategist here, because the issue is the distribution of force, the managing of powers by generating constrained compromises between wills; the wicked rituals performed on the negotiations of wages and profits, the organisation as the prolonged arm of bare need. To distribute resources through a layer of justice imposed on violence, discipline and control, the micro-politics of *libido dominandi* – as Barthes speaks about. Both the market and authority of managers, in seemingly just settings of negotiating, impersonate this evil image of a first nature projected on to a second one, and hailed as mere utility, the pseudonym of profit. This is organising as always organisation. The machine constructed in the name of Power and its priests. The act of installing becomes installation, and hence, institution.

The installation effectuated by Force is first and foremost the guardian, *ho phylax*, of the state of Eros, the *libido ordonans*. Its aim is civilisation, then humanism, and in the end humanisation, i.e. enlightenment, *paideia*, life-long-learning, culture, competence, empowerment, human resources, self-development, a life adhering to principles. Force depicts Man as a corporate citizen, potentially of the world, and presents Man as the protagonist of a second nature contrasted to the first one. Organising here is a permanent attempt to build a Chinese wall against outer and inner nature. This demands a broad wall, where Man is able to stand safely: to walk as if there were a guardian angel, and not forced to keep in a lethal balance like Zarathustra’s walker on the tightrope.

The *ontostasis* inside the chaos of Power is confronted with the *taxis kai kosmos*, the natural, unaggressive *ordo* of the Force, a security and a threat at the very same time. The machine of power confronts the organism of force, but the organism could be transformed into an advanced machine of repression through a strategy of security

which is able to meet the master plan of a post-innocent and post-naïve, total and totalitarian care – ‘biopolitics’ in the language of Foucault and Deleuze.

The negation of power – which is not equal to Force – presents itself in phenomena like wildcat strikes, slow-down work, revolts against hierarchies, but also by working after the norm, by doing meticulously what was told. It represents itself as the obstinate and recalcitrant body. But Power could also disguise itself as docile body, as pupil, proselyte and as professor. Its basic gesture is that of Caliban, it performs as a believer, trying hard to know what his master told him to know, looking for every excuse to evade his own insight in knowledge as the bare function of power and self-deceit. Power takes on the face of Force, it practises a benevolent territorialisation in the name of the enlightened self-interest. It is devoted to a concept of utility in which is mixed the missionary’s desire for converts to control and for co-visionaries to rejoice hand in hand. It shall never take a ‘No!’ for a ‘No!’. To Power it just signals its faulty strategies of humanisation. The basic gesture of Power is reflective all-too-reflective, encompassing, all-encompassing. Force, on the contrary, works in silence, at the heart of the event, and if it succeeds, it breaks through in the organic shape of the constellation, exchanging the phantasmagoric, utopian setting, for real flesh. So far, it must suffice to present these ideal-types.

A constellation is in principle always disharmonic, non-dialectical, as well as dualistic and monistic at the very same time. Or, reciprocally, time *is* this tension between the dualistic and the monistic. A constellation is the only mode in which a subject can exist. A constellation is perhaps rhizomatic, but the rhizome only designates the contextual network, *peristasis*. We are, however, interested in *epi-stasis* and in *endo-stasis*, in the way in which the primary event (the event that is the subject of an event of sense of the proto-event) re-presents its whole rhizomatic network, and hence its virtual dimension, by condensating at the very same time sense *and* being inside yet a condensation...and so on. This movement is not conjunctive, it is both accumulative and dispersing. A constellation does not relate to a virtuality. It is the destruction of virtuality, and hence, of the figure of actualisation. It is like a black hole of astrophysics, it draws all energy, all intensity, all images, and all thoughts into its middle. It does not allow any lines of flight.

Might it be the chance of theory to be absorbed thus into the constellation in which the ‘This has happened’ as already-always, and never, is born? But something makes this picture complicated. This is not just because these two types of installations are folded into and onto each other, as are the Other and the Same in Plato, supplied by a triple infolding with the One. It is far more because their reciprocal *complicare/explicare*, their mutual mix, is folded into another cloth, in which, on which, and through which, they appear differently, almost changing places, borrowing endlessly from each other. This cloth is the event.

Deleuze's Concept of the Event

There is a schism at the heart of Deleuze's concept of the event. This is due to his equivocal relation to vitalism. A consequent vitalism would trace *pragma* back to the level of *tynchanon*, and even, in its mono-ontological form, conceive of *pragma* as a form of *tynchanon*. Actually this is also an aporia in the Stoic thinking itself, because their vitalism enforces them to think the world of phenomena to be a function of the so-called *pneumatic tonos*, the creative tension in the cosmos.

In vitalism, and its more recent version, philosophical expressionism, the inherent idea is that experience and action are incorporating forces which grow naturally into concepts. However, already Plato showed it in the *Theaetetus*, not just that conceptualisation might be off the mark, i.e., unproductive in relation to knowledge, but that *aisthesis* itself, the acts of perception, produces phantasms, because of the ambiguity of perception. Plato here anticipates a just critique of Epicurus and of his five hundred years younger advocate, Lucretius, the hero of Deleuze in the appendices of *The Logic of Sense* – may I remind of the implications of Wittgenstein's celebrated hare-duck-image too.

This is the Achilles' heel of vitalism. Because there must be a doubling, not only between the expression and the expressed, not only between the actualisation and the actualised, but between the eventing as an effect at the *tynchanon*-level, as a *nisus*, as a flux of forces, as a stream of creative and destructive wills, and the eventing of this eventing as event, i.e., the effect on the level of *pragma*. There is a crack at the heart of the event itself, and certainly in the capacity of eventing, and a double crack, actually, that makes the self-identity, the mono-ontological performance of expression itself impossible. This is the crack between the alma-event and the proto-event.

Deleuze generally seems to see the event as twofold, but actually the event is threefold, having a level of *pragma*, a level of *tynchanon*, and a level of creative non-sense, the alma-event. The concepts of the Real, the Possible, The Virtual, and the Actual, have to be reinterpreted in this context. At a somewhat lower level of abstraction, this dichotomic concept of the event would answer to a radical constructivism, even if we accept the 'virtual' as almost as real as the actual; and even if we define the 'real' as the distinction between the virtual and the actual, *not* initiated by the negative logic of an identity-creation through noematic processes of exclusion, approximating the truth-level of the possible as a diairetic authority. The alternative, however, the affirmative definition of the event, is impossible, both because of the causal crack between *tynchanon* and *pragma* which defies the expressive ontology of vitalism and because of the fact that the event is always subject to a positive regression. The infinite instantiation of the proto-event into the alma-event simply presents us to the fact that the event is beyond the figure of actualisation in the capacity of an actualisation of an 'always' and a 'never'. It is 'alnever', a concept more fragile, more able to receive, more *chora*-like, more defiant, than the *omnitudo*, and closer to the real transformation of the *plethora* or *poikilia*, the *omnitudo* or 'the manifold', into the *pleroma* of St. Paul, into the abundance of becoming, in becoming.

This picture might seem to be one where earlier events are incubated into momentary proto-events through a causality of sense, i.e., of interpretation, until the outbreak of the diagnostically precise disease of sense, but this cannot be true, as far as we accept a mild pluralism of perspectives. There would be no real mechanism of interpreting, i.e., of defining, hence, and thus the picture would be one of strong ambiguity – a state very far from the state of the event as ‘This has happened’ or ‘This is what happened’. The material substance of this perspectivism cannot, however, rest in the demarcation line created by omni-sense or non-sense either. Thought, and hence, theory, seems ‘just another whore’ of sense added to the list in an infinite series of the adventures of a Don Juanania without *finale*.

It is important that we have to evade concepts like ‘actualising’ and ‘unfolding’ in order to grasp the true character of the constellation, unless a crack is implied herein, as Deleuze is careful to underline in Chapter Five of his book *Bergsonism*, what concerns the relation between the virtual and the actual – in strict opposition to the relation between the potential and the real:

The virtual, on the other hand, does not have to be realized, but rather actualised; and the rules of actualisation are not those of resemblance and limitation, but those of difference or divergence and of creation. ... While the real is in the image and likeness of the possible that it realizes, the actual, on the other hand does not resemble the virtuality that it embodies.... the characteristic of virtuality is to exist in such a way that it is actualised by being differentiated and is forced to differentiate itself, to create its lines of differentiation in order to be actualised.¹⁰

This is a very strict way to cut the link between vitalism and expressionism in the capacity of a figure of representing through repetition on another scale, to destroy *the* figure of a phenomenon which mirrors its essence – the arch-figure *metexis* and *parousia*, the triad of *phantasma*, *eidolon/eikon*, and *idea*, in Plato.

The possible is a false notion, the source of false problems. The real is supposed to resemble it.... In fact, it is not the real that resembles the possible, it is the possible that resembles the real, because it has been abstracted from the real once made, arbitrarily abstracted from the real like a sterile double. Hence we no longer understand anything either of the mechanism of difference or of the mechanism of understanding.¹¹

and

The possible has no reality (although it may have an actuality); Conversely, the virtual is not actual, but as such possesses a reality. Here again Proust’s formula best defines the states of virtuality: real without being actual, ideal without being abstract.¹²

These famous lines could be interpreted in a way that casts a light on the concept of constellation. A constellation is a tension, the *pneumatic tonos* of the Stoics that manifests itself both at a vertical and horizontal level. Vertically the constellation means the intermingling, the chiasm, of the body as mind and flesh, as *sarx*, ‘corporeality’, with the event as the processing of the ‘This happened’ among the dimensions of

10 Deleuze, G. (1991) *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam. New York: Zone Books, p.97.

11 *Bergsonism*, p.98.

12 *Bergsonism*, p.96.

pragma and *tynchanon*. It is a double subject, and hence it proves the basis of a process that can never create objects. The proto-event, the event in which the process of experiencing understanding, and understanding experience, takes place, has this vertical tension, a tension that can never be abolished. We could say that this is genuine actuality because it appears as *tóde-ti*, as facticity to perception, and as *haecceitas* to reflection, i.e. “but it has a shadowy and secret part that is continually subtracted from or added to its actualisation”¹³ (it has a part which lays in the shadow, or which is secret, and it never ceases to subtract or add). But this is only due to the fact that it itself casts this shadow.

In the language of Deleuze the event is the place and motor of sense, it is *l’entre-temps* or *devenir*, the ‘in-between’, or ‘becoming’.¹⁴ However, we cannot, like Deleuze sometimes seem to be inclined to, conceive of the event in the dimension of *pragma*, as mere sense, or as “possible worlds in the capacity of concepts.”¹⁵ And we also cannot accept the event as a genuine virtuality in which sense produces sense.

Everything happens in the event, and everything is changed. Deleuze’s neglect of the dimension of *tynchanon*, or, what seems to be neglect, anyhow, makes him rather blind to the fact that the level of sense transforms the material world on the plane of ‘This has happened’. Nothing can become at the genuine level of sense – the opposite would imply a proto-Hegelian figure of thought. Experience as movement inside *pragma* might replace itself in relation to the dynamics of *tynchanon* – not because we change our inner *scenaria* just by doing nothing, but because they change us by changing – but it has to release the ‘This is happening’ or ‘This is what happened’: it has to transform itself into the plane of the *eventing* in order to act. It has to become hand, foot, face, iron, paper, pen, in order to enter the realm of becoming. It has to be ‘That which happened’.

When I say that a vertical tension takes place between *tynchanon* and *pragma*, at the level of the ‘This has happened’, where *tynchanon* is identical to the vulnerability of the body, and *pragma* is identical to the immaterial integrity of the event, to that which the Stoic called the *lekton*, the only incorporeal level of sense – in opposition to the *phantasma (imago)*, the mental image, and to the word as voice – it means that sense has material or physical effects. This is because the *lekton* in the capacity of the incorporeal dimension of sense creates effects through its incorporation into the corporeal, kata-physical phenomenon of voice, and into the choreographies of movement. Hence, *pragma* is always chiasmatically built into *tynchanon*, and their union appears as ‘This has happened’, as the always illusionary ‘that-ness’ of the proto-event. The price of being able to experience the ‘that-ness’ of the event is that it always hides a thought without an object at the level of the *alma-event*. Further, it creates thought, seeking a thinker, too.

It would be misleading to try to understand the ‘This has happened’ as a domain produced by the ‘affects’ in the Deleuzean sense: As dispositions with the power or

13 *What is Philosophy?*, p156.

14 *What is Philosophy?*, p.158.

15 *What is Philosophy?*, Chapter 2.

even intensity of thoughts, but without the discursive level. This would conceal an empiricism blind to the creative force-flux of the event as a reflective entity. These tuned states, the ‘affects’, are both the result of something coming from the outside, and something coming from within – this topological language is probably not totally just in relation to the epistemologically and ontologically anti-dualistic thought of Deleuze. However, he begs the question in using this term from Leibniz and Spinoza (they both use it in their way, of course), suggesting a causal framework between mind and matter. My point is that the ‘This has happened’ is beyond affects, and, hence, beyond ‘disposition’, beyond its German source (from Heidegger), *die Gestimmtheit*. We have to conceive of it as a ‘snapshot’, or as a passage for all senses, but especially for sight, because voice is everywhere, as a passage, or a hole, produced, when the always moving tapes, with their endless quantity of holes – the holes of the ‘now’ (the tapes of *pragma* and *tynchanon*) – create a common hole, opening to both sides. But this does not mean that the ‘This has happened’ is a place from where there could be a view simultaneously in both directions. Bohr’s principle of complementarity, as corroborated by the Aspect-experiment, also counts here. There is no experience, however flash-like, without an influence on the content of experience.

There is no mutual rhythm, and nothing happens synchronously, between the always-moving dimensions of *tynchanon* and *pragma*. Because in the dimension of *tynchanon*, the constellation appears as an installation by some level of ‘nature’; and in the dimension of *pragma*, the installation appears as constellation, as a product unharmed by construction. Hence, what concerns the former, anarchy will be grasped as law; and what concerns the latter, structure will be seen as opportunities for free construction.

The Event in the Light of Organising

From the application to the concept of organising these thoughts could effectuate that we are forced to understand the very process of organising as that, which produces the *fatum*, the installation of the seemingly unchangeable. The ‘eternal return’ in Deleuze must be re-interpreted as the contrafinality, the tissue of *heimarmené*, of fate, and organising seen, then, as a civilisation process with no *da capo*, no chance of repetition even with a difference. It is only one part of the truth that “The event is immaterial, incorporeal, invisible: pure reserve.”¹⁶

The tragedy of organising does not lay in the will of the individual to repeat the unbearable, but in the failure of the will, both to know itself properly, and to realise itself through the wanted ‘cascade of actualisations’. The problem is not just that we do not possess ourselves, and hence that we must become the ones who we are – to paraphrase Ernst Bloch – but it is that we are unable not to become the ones, who we are not. We cannot endure the permanent negation of the real by a merciless potentiality. But the lines of flight are illusions of an ideal will that cannot break out of its dream.

16 *What is Philosophy?*, p.156.

If the proto-event draws on the dimension of an unactualised actuality, we could interpret the dimension of virtuality as the endless series (the 'series' of *The Logic of Sense*) of earlier events, in this very moment being drawn into the web of the proto-event, the event in which the game is played exactly now between the sense of the event and the event of sense. This is the event in which we, without the power to know, are reproducing old organisations through new effortless efforts of organising. This is a parade, this horizontal processing of any earlier event within the heart of the proto-event by hand of a taxis that never transforms into an *ontostatics*, but stays an *epi-stasis*, or an *endo-stasis*, leading the virtuality of the earlier event into the new world of the momentary proto-event, the 'spotlight of *chora*', by an understanding in which the difference between these two events are celebrated by reflection as catches of new identities. This is the proud illusion of organising.

The tension at this horizontal level is the tension inside both the individual and fragmented experience itself, a tension between experience as ex-perience, as memory, and experience as perception. The event shall never relieve this tension, only preserve it as a movement fading away slowly, or being abruptly broken by the *epiphania* of the non-sense of the alma-event. This means that organising presents itself as a peculiar kind of presence, a presence that is always displaced: the constellation is displaced by its appearance as installation. The claim of inherence, and especially of an immanence coloured by its lack of transcendence, which the mono-dyadic character of the proto-event displays, is displaced through a strategic reflectivity that transforms living presence, the *duratio*, the *periferóntes* in Epicurus,¹⁷ into the 'dead time', into the past as the future's phantasms of the past, and the past's phantasms of the future. In this capacity organising is a way to construct a presence as the passage and path between the past and the future. But organising is *not* an event per se, it is a tension inside an event between the proto-event and the series of former events. Organising is like a play that seeks a playwright, a singing that seeks a song. Thus it is not precise in stating, even if of course it is right, almost a truism, that "The splendour and the magnificence of the event is sense."¹⁸ The important message is almost cancelled by this dichotomical phrasing:

No doubt, the event is not only made up from inseparable variations, it is itself inseparable from the state of affairs, bodies, and lived reality in which it is actualised or brought about. But we can also say the converse: the state of affairs is no more separable from the event that nonetheless goes beyond its actualisation in every aspect.¹⁹

The thoughts that I have presented here, with the emphasis on the triadic figure (*pragma*, *tynchanon*, alma-event), imply that organising as *eventing* has to be subject to an event, the alma-event, which in itself is not-accessible by analysis, i.e. as an application of reflective thought to itself. However, there are other levels of approach. The question is whether the proto-event could be seen as containing the act of theory, i.e. if the *duratio* could be a place of a reflective practise that breaks out of *pragma* as

17 Laertius, D. (1925/1995) *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Vol II, Book X, 72. Cambridge Mass & London: LOEB, Harvard University Press.

18 *Logic of Sense*, p.149.

19 *What is Philosophy?*, p.159.

‘This has happened’? Or it could also be phrased in this way: Is theory always an installation or could it stay at the level of the constellation, i.e. could it stand out (*ekstasis*) in the tension? Theory can only be a constellation if it itself is beyond the status of the object, but still a subject of an attempt at objectification.

Deleuze is not clear here, especially not in *Difference and Repetition*. At the same time he has a vitalistic notion of thought, on the other hand an almost voluntaristic. He seems to imagine a path from a pre-conceptual, chaotic dimension of life, from the *spatium* of intensities, consisting of monadic series without hierarchies, but with ‘crowned anarchies’ and ‘nomadic distributions’.²⁰ It is the idea of Deleuze that thought, and hence, theory, emerges out of this *spatium* through three quasi-ontological mechanisms: quantification, qualification, and total determination – the last one is the principle of potentiality. The stage is one of a multiple ratio beyond the mechanisms of representation and genuinely creative.

The now rather well known distinction in *Difference and Repetition* between ‘differenTiation’ and ‘differenCiation’, the first one with a ‘t’, the other one with a ‘c’, mirrors two separate dimensions of sense. The first one converges to non-sense. In it the pre-semantic substance of meaning rules, the *noema* as a pre-cogital ‘feeling for meaning’, the ‘passive synthesis’ – Deleuze names it ‘the symbol’ – of the virtual indifferenCiated, i.e., without a definite place in relation to a language game, however, at the same time not a realm of indistinct phenomena, not indifferenTiated. This first part of the dyad is objective reality of sense as virtuality, as the hypothetic relation between the star fog of a thought, and its actualisation as mental picture, and as discursive wording. As Deleuze puts it: “The virtual is difference at the heart of ideas.”²¹ Opposite this pre-individual individuation, this sphere of itinerant and flowing ‘semes’ in which thought is anticipated through a vague manifold of dispositional intensities in the capacities of endless series, Deleuze places the dimension of a pronounced semantics, a positive presentation of the phenomena as singularities to human experience. This last dimension is named ‘differenCiation’, i.e. with a ‘C’. However at the level of differenTiation ideas are distinct, though obscure; at the level of differenCiation, they are both clear, and distinct: the concept has grown into the word.

Thus, Deleuze must either adhere to a dualism, however vague:

The distinction is not *between* the imaginary and the real, but between the event as such and the corporeal state of affairs which incites it about or in which it is actualized.²²

Or he must accept actualisation as realisation, i.e., the classical figure of emanation, no matter its physicalist dress. As we are already told he chooses both by stating that the transition from the pre-semantic level to the semantic level entails a mechanism, which defies the duplication, the mirroring, the (despised) figure of representation, because actualisation of the virtual contains no figure of resemblance. However, he prevents himself from thinking the opposite movement, because of his inclination towards the

20 Deleuze, G. (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton. London: The Athlone Press, 279-80.

21 *Difference and Repetition*, p.279.

22 *Difference and Repetition*, p.279.

figure of emanation, namely, the movement from *pragma* to *tynchanon*, from the level of sense to the level of matter. We must meet this line of thought through two lines of argumentation, which have already been presented:

A. The first one reproduces the quasi-metaphysical, but strict logic of Plato, Plotinus and Nicolaus Cusanus. Cusanus' genial proposition '*non aliud non aliud est quam non aliud*', (the not Other is nothing but the Not-other), the logo of his last work from 1460,²³ gives us the possibility to phrase the internal relation between the proto-event and the series of events inscribed through perception and experience/memory by defining it as the knowledge through which everything is posed as Otherness except this thought itself (of everything as identical to Otherness). This is the paradox of absolute immanence: it has to admit only its possession of its own thought. This figure of reflectivity is, of course, practical too. It is a reflectivity inherent in the *possum*, in the 'I can', or, what Cusanus names *possest* (In his *Triologue of Possest*) with a neologism: 'Doing-Is', as the prerogative of the almighty God.

This *diaphora*, this fundamental *differentia*, places thinking as *the* original activity of passing from the proto-event to the alma-event, from sense to non-sense. But this denotes a thinking without a subject, an all-comprehensive *noesis noeseos*, or *cogito cogitans*, the thinking of itself by thought, which, at the same time, is a *cogito cogitandum*, a thought that ought to be thought. This is the patho-ethological aspect of the possible identity between thinking and being. From this perspective thinking is a genuine constellation, always united with practise, always forced into a teleological reception of the series of events, in which the alma-event plays the part as the always-post-actualised Absolute Being of Mr. Hegel, but a Being with a limp, with a wilful shadow; the caricature of the 'blind spot' of another great-minor Hegelian, Mr. Luhmann.

The shadow of the event is passion, the *amor fati*. Passion, reveals the patho-ethological character of the alma-event, and hence of any event. Passion reveals the *modus operandi* of *tynchanon*, the *series causarum*, the *synektikon aition*, in Chrysippos, of the *causa perfecta et principalis* in Cicero, the immanent cause of both the being and the facticity of any phenomenon, the identity of Being and Essence – the defiance of Heidegger's ontological difference – the iron-hard laws of a deterministic realm of practise which has not yet actualised itself as fate. This patho-ethological sense of the alma-event is the real mode of the event: In the language of Epictetus, it is the *parascheuê*, the state of being prepared in order to give assent without resentment. In Deleuze's re-phrasing of Chrysippos and Epictetus, it means to be worthy of what happens to you. This idea goes back to the most important concept in all ethical theory of Hellenistic philosophy, to the *ta ef hemin*, the *actiones in nostra potestate*, to the demarcation between that which is in our power, and that which is not. It is the patho-ethological challenging of Doing and Is, succumbed and suffered as Doing-Is; the tragic and happy obligation to become.

B. Thus, we must stand out to the tension between the *parascheue*, the attitude of anticipation and suffering, and the defiance of the *katascheuê*, the 'apparatus' in the

23 op. cit.

terminology of Plato. We are obliged to act in relation to that which actually *is* in our power. This claim poses the question whether there is a 'constellative installation', whether it is possible to installate in accordance with life?

This is the game between *ananké* and *heimarmené*, between necessity and fate. It is certainly the *chora* of organising, too. In being constellated as omnitudinal mind-bodies, as incorporated *akatonomasta*, as the place between flesh and thought, as unnamed centres of incalculable actions, we are able to install just in the in-between, through the *intermezzo*, in the crack between the installationary practises which can be ascribed to the Power and to Force.

Installation is an in-fight with the *katascheuế*, with the intermingling of the powerful *apparata* of the Other and the Same, in order to set the middle marsh free. We have to change the world in the name of the unnameable, i.e., in approaching, yes, even handling, the event and its inherent zones in our capacity of bodies, which are corporeal hostages of the reality. This is the real organising.

To be equal to the event, this is the image of uniting theory and practise: through the passionless passion of *parascheuế*, of being ready and prepared to give assent (*synkatathasis* in the Stoics) to reality by creating it.

And Deleuze for the last time:

Either ethics makes no sense at all, or this is what it means and has nothing else to say: not to be unworthy of what happens to you.²⁴

But to be worthy of what happens to you, is to be equal to the event, not just by enduring it, but by being its motor of transformation. Organising is to make the world worthy of what could happen to it. This is also *the* place for theory.

the author

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24 *The Logic of Sense*, p.149.



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