



## Common as silence

Peter Fleming

All this – all the meanness and agony without end  
I sitting look out upon  
See, hear and am silent.

- Walt Whitman, 'I Sit and Look'

### I.

Is something changing in the way neoliberalism is being refused today? And if so, for better or worse? Two recent events indicate something is going on. In the late summer of 2011, the streets of London were ablaze. After the police shot and killed Mark Duggin in the north of the city one warm afternoon, a large gathering of concerned citizens assembled outside the local police station. Feelings between them and the Tottenham constabulary had been tense for some time, and this appeared to be the final straw. The gathering was met with police hostility, and all out violence ensued. The dispute spread throughout the city and other major UK centres, including Manchester and Birmingham. A good majority of those involved were younger people, in their teens, and proficient in the art of self-organization.

On the surface, such unrest is not that surprising. Like other large cities marked by excessive wealth inequalities and manufactured deprivation, London has long been prone to street fighting of this sort, as E. P. Thompson (1963) records in his history of the English working class. And as the media started to report on the events, the customary question emerged almost immediately. *Why are they doing this? What is their rationale? What are they trying to achieve?* In the conservative press, typical scorn about ungrateful welfare recipients abound. The looting was opportunistic, symptomatic of a 'Broken Britain' whose light touch on unsocial

behaviour was now bearing fruit. On the other side of the coin, the liberal media gave more socio-economic explanations about ‘alienated youth’, education cuts, exclusion and poverty.

Both sides, of course, missed the point. One of the most striking aspects of these revolts was the outward representative *silence* of those involved – especially regarding their rationale, purpose, objectives, etc. Official voice was solely the preserve of the middle class media, policy pundits, and moralists. And this silence confused the government and its hired ‘experts’ profoundly. When pressed to communicate the programme motivating their behaviour, no representative or leader emerged to speak, no charter was delivered. Apart from the dramatic demolition of their own disenfranchised conditions, only a taciturn withdrawal from the machinery of dialogue was evident.

Braving the second night of arson attacks and unrest, I wandered through my East London neighbourhood eager to discover ‘their’ side of the story. Many of the young people I approached were courteously disinterested in my ‘inquiries’ as they regrouped around a large supermarket. I too was met with mute non-recognition. Of course, this did not mean that they were not talking among themselves, planning and deliberating on the nature of their refusal. A rich stratum of communication was patently apparent. But when encouraged by power to account for their actions the mood decidedly changed. It was as if a secret compact had been made: best to remain opaque rather than gift to David Cameron et al. what they so fervently sought: *their voice*.

## 2.

And didn’t this silence also frustrate many observers in 2011 when Wall Street was occupied, then Zuccotti Park, and then so many other privatized public spaces including St. Paul’s in London? Commentators on the Left and Right were perplexed: What do they want? What is their alternative? We ask them, but they seem to have no workable plan. They don’t even seem to be interested in making a plan. And so on. Of course, there were many experts at hand ready to speak on the occupier’s behalf. Even Bill Clinton and Slavoj Žižek got in on the act. Inside the movement, of course, much debate and dialogue was pivotal for its mobilization. Assemblies were held, political concepts debated and new modes of democratic self-organization tested. But a curious structural silence prevailed (it was enough to simply state, ‘we are the 99%’ ... we are you). This reticence was no more evident than when called upon by the extreme neoliberal apparatus (the corporate-state alliance) to testify, to represent, to deliver a policy, a point-by-point charter of demands. Spray-painted on a wall in East London (Norton Folgate

Street), the anonymous reply to this invitation was borrowed from the streets of Paris '68: *We ask nothing, we will demand nothing, we will take, we will occupy.*

What is the logic of this silence? How does it function in the context of what some call 'extreme neoliberalism', and why does it appear at the present juncture? The first point we must observe is that this refusal to represent is not itself internally (or externally) bereft of words or expression. In fact, the exact opposite. The Occupy Movement, for example, was a swarming din of tactics, alternatives and molecular moments of collective exchange. It just chose not to talk to power, especially in the manner that power wanted them to. Occupiers refused to enter into the discursive mirror game that is now governing so much liberal discourse. The erstwhile radical clarion call to be 'recognized' (Habermas, Honneth, etc.) is here displaced by what we might term a *post-recognition politics*. Many are now suspicious about 'participation' and 'being counted'. Recognition by the powerful is just another way of being sucked back into a one-sided arrangement, crippling compromises and pointless commitments. The refusal to be recognized might therefore convey a kind of social preservation. As Kolowratnik and Miessen (2012) conclude, to wake up from the 'nightmare of participation' means reclaiming the means of self-defence.

Perhaps, then, neoliberal power is not merely maintained today by too few words, but too many words to the wrong people. When we speak to the manager, the teacher, the police officer, the bureaucrat, even transgressively, we are identified once more, fixed within a constellation that will never accept the preconditions of what this voice means. What Moten and Harney (2012) call 'managed self-management' functions via a plethora of accounts (to be accountable), responses (to be responsible) and reports (to be reportable). Hence a confusing paradox: 'Today nobody can hear you over the noise of talk' (Moten and Harney, 2012: 359).

And yet... so much silence. Why would we want to theorize it, practice it, conserve it, use it, strategize it, share it, enrich it or occupy it? I want to experiment with the idea that silence might be suggestive of an emergent kind of sub-commons, no doubt transitory, but crucially collective. Its commonality is founded on the shared misgiving that the neoliberal project now gains sustenance from any kind of communicative participation between it and 'the 99%'. In its last dying stage of development, corporate hegemony even welcomes critical discourse into its language game, as long as it abides by prefixed rules. Accordingly, I want to propose that the silent commons is anything but reserved quietude or fearful seclusion. At the present juncture at least, in which a myopic economic formalism has colonized so many modes of social representation,

mute opacity in the face of an invitation to ‘participate’ might tilt towards something transversal, truly communal and classless.

### 3.

This outward aphasia, of course, has incited much talk among the powerful who thrive on representation, the frustrated liberal Left and the tired office worker who sees no ‘underlying principle’ behind their disrupted commute. From an analytical point of view, moreover, theorists also tend to view political non-speech with consternation. When it comes to the functioning of power and social domination, is not silence a synonym for secrecy and agenda setting? And on the other side of the coin: consent, capitulation and fear?

This *anti-silence* stance is certainly understandable from the point of view of the neoliberal agenda, which would love nothing more than to have us enter its discourse and squirm using its words. However, non-representability is also viewed with deep suspicion among those interested in post-capitalist projects. Silence in the political sphere usually points to some kind of grievous *lack*. That is to say, the refusal to speak is the ultimate emblem of powerlessness. What unites a good deal of contemporary liberal and radical thinking today is the premise that one must be able to volubly express in order to resist. And is not this a reasonable assumption? Those deprived of voice, rendered speechless before the law pose a double travesty. Silence not only indicates a) the sheer enormity of an individual’s or group’s oppression (since for Anne Frank in her secret attic or Winston Smith in Orwell’s *Nineteen eighty four*, speaking would surely equal death); but also b) a dangerous opportunity for the oppressors themselves to speak on the behalf of the silenced. The circle of power is thus closed.

The case against silence has antecedents in the pro-recognition politics forged in the US. The influential ‘community power debates’ during the 1960s are illustrative here. C. Wright Mills among others revealed how elites partially manage populations by erasing certain issues from public discourse – especially those that might reveal hypocritical truths (Lukes, 2005). The cold war context undoubtedly inspired some of these observations. A key tool of totalitarian societies consists of regulating the very words used (and not used) in everyday parlance. During the dark years of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, party officials hoped that manufactured non-signification would disappear the very thought alluded to by the word. Comrade Beria knew of the magical power of discourse in carving up the social world as well as any contemporary post-structuralist. Who could ever forget those wonderful propaganda posters picturing a stern peasant

woman, forefinger pressed to her lips: 'Keep your mouth shut! Yabbering goes hand in hand with treason!'

But is deficit the only component of public silence or might it have strengths of its own? This is the problem Jean Baudrillard grapples with in his book *In the shadow of the silent majorities* (2007). He argues that the social – or its living modes of representation *apropos* class, peoples, cultures, nations, etc. – has been dissolved into a sheer single nothingness, only capable of being symbolized through the alienated abstractions of surveys and opinion polls. Silence 'despite it all' is now one of the most characteristic elements of this inscrutable mass. Behind the abstraction is a voiceless universe that merely soaks up, observes and sinks back into anonymous oblivion. The political index orientating this silence, however, is uncertain. On the one hand, it is symptomatic of a new constellation of dissent, one that emerges from a long (and fruitless) battle with the fetishizing principles of modernity. And this could well become 'an absolute weapon' (Baudrillard, 2007: 49) if its ironic signature disrupts the din of noisy talk in order lay the ground for a more transformative engagement with power.

On the other hand, however, Baudrillard argues that without any new and positive referents the silent majority will never gather enough explosive capacity to overcome its own negative content. In other words, Baudrillard insists we characterize the silent crowd as yet another instance of the oppressed failing to speak out. This makes them both refreshingly inaccessible to classical schemas – including emancipatory ones – but also perilously inert and pliant: 'the mass is dumb like beasts, and its silence is equal to the silence of beasts... its says neither whether the truth is to the left or to the right, nor whether it prefers revolution or repression... it is without conscience and without unconscious' (Baudrillard, 2007: 54). Because the silent majority is unreadable, a kind of codeless non-voice, it can never enter the lexicon of democratic exchange. It therefore absorbs the nothingness of its own non-existence, something encouraged by the neoliberal nullification of all imaginative alternatives.

#### 4.

So, is there nothing salvageable in this silent majority for a post-capitalist project? I'm not sure. But we might begin by revisiting Marx and some of the most striking pages of *Capital* (1867/1972) where he gives graphic details of what factory work does to people – especially in the dark and dirty English workhouses of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The passages in 'The working day' (about overwork), 'The division of labour and manufacture' (about exploitation) and 'Machinery and large-scale industry' (about forced submission) are still remarkable in how

they depict the human misery underlying capitalist wealth production. But as Jameson (2011) argues in his recent rereading of *Capital*, something very strange is occurring here, which is essential to Marx's critique. As opposed to other reports on the horrors of life in the factory (or the coalmine, the nascent bureaucratic offices emerging at the time, etc.), Marx consistently refuses to describe hired labour power as living, breathing people. Even in the most disturbing sections, a worker's singular anguish must remain secondary to the whirl of a nonfigurative process.

Dickens breathes life into his workers so that we might identify with their predicament. The Utopian Socialists wrap them in effusive sentiment to shed light on the dreadfulness of their lives. Marx remains stubbornly stone cold (except, of course, for the amusing side jokes, ironic quips and references to Shakespearian literature in the footnotes). Jameson (2011) highlights this strange paradox, since the 'Bible of Labour' ultimately leaves its humanity mysteriously unrepresented. Why is this? According to Jameson, this is fundamentally necessary if Marx is to remain faithful to his understanding of capitalist exploitation. To imbue work with human qualities would fudge the reality of the labour process, inadvertently (and ideologically) transporting us 'outside of the realm of capital, which is not in the lived qualities of work as such, but only its quantity and the surplus values to be extracted' (Jameson, 2011: 112). Abstract labour cannot speak, for it is strictly lifeless, formalized dead time. It is only when the *impossibility* of the capital accumulation process appears – overworked bodies collapsing, overproduction of commodities, unsustainable immiseration – that individual personages with singular histories are allowed to emerge in *Capital*. This sort of 'vanishing point' of impossibility is essentially extraneous to the accumulation process, but more importantly, indicative of something preceding the dominance of dead time (i.e., the social surplus of living labour).

This thematic of impossibility is so central to Marx's analysis that hired labour power must remain mute if it is not to be crowned with the false virtues of bourgeois reconciliation. A silent workforce remains truthful to what it is, a conscious bearer of an unfeasible world. To speak to the boss or manager would participate in the fantasy that some kind of life under capitalism might be viable after all, blinding us to its untenable nature. This point was well understood by activists during the May '68 événements, especially the Situationist International. Public dialogue had to be approached with extreme caution. Otherwise it might sanctify an outmoded way of life. Meaningful anti-capitalist protest can therefore only be instigated in the idiom of a voiced impossibility. More recently, we saw this during the French *banlieues* riots in November 2005. As some astute commentators put it, 'the rioters didn't demand anything, they attacked their own condition, they made everything that produces and defines

them a target' (Théorie Communiste, 2012: 49). In other words, it was their very own impossibility that spoke with bricks and fire.

It is here that Vaneigem (2001) points to the combative elements of silence:

our freedom is that of an abstract temporality in which we are named in the language of power, with choice left to us to find officially recognized synonyms for ourselves. In contrast, the space of our authentic realization (the space of everyday life) is under the dominion of silence. There is no name to name the space of lived experience. (2001: 56)

Any naming would betray the unworkable social existence that currently passes for 'living' under capitalist conditions. Moreover, like a governmental 'consultation meeting' that invites many perspectives to legitimate an authoritarian decision already made, the form kills the content. Why so? First, addressing power (even critically) perpetuates the mistaken notion that this power has not reduced us to nothing (i.e., abstract, dead labour). And this gifts capitalism certain synergies with life, something it doesn't deserve. Second, the post-capitalist moment embedded in abstract labour's own impossibility is forsaken since the crisis becomes over-coded through its very relation to the enemy. Hence the event's closure, delivered back to us as an inescapable *post-limit* that becomes purely self-referential, without end or *coda*. In rather crass terms, think here of the stockbroker wearing a 'Capitalism sucks' t-shirt with an image of V.I Lenin giving the finger.

## 5.

A society based purely on neoliberalism wouldn't last a day. Not even an hour. Due to its anti-social tenets, it cannot reproduce itself on its own terms and thus requires something beyond its remit to continue. This is how we must define 'the social' today, a communist underbelly that both absorbs the shocks of extreme capitalism and provides the living sustenance it needs (the creative commons, knowledge sharing, non-market ways of life, co-operative mutual aid, etc.). Henceforth, living labour can be conceptualised as something autonomous to the datum of capital accumulation since the latter could never exist in a world that perfectly reflected its own principles. Neoliberalism persists despite itself and needs to cultivate ways of gaining our recognition, our attention and interest. Speaking to power in this parasitical setting, even critically, thus risks granting it something, implying worth to the addressee. Perhaps this is why emergent political movements are so hesitant about entering into dialogue with the corporation, the state, the military, etc. From the enigmatic provocations of The Invisible Committee to the anti-work co-operatives in the larges cities of Europe

and the Americas, it is *exit* or ‘opting out’ (Jones, 2012) that appears to be galvanizing democratic praxis. But what does ‘exit’ mean here and how is it related to radical silence?

Hobbes’ ghost still haunts us. Even much critical inquiry still thinks the Master makes the (albeit exploitative) world in which the Slave dwells. *Corporations rule the world. The state is still the ultimate director. Fight the cuts! The only thing worse about having a job is the thought of not having one, of being abandoned by power. Yes, it’s harmful, but without capitalism there would be no aeroplanes, penicillin or internet!* These curious presumptions echo the Slave’s belief that they are nothing without their Master. Much of Bauman’s (2004) recent work, for example, exemplifies this rationale. He deplores the millions of ‘wasted lives’ spat out by the global production/consumption system since they have been truly abandoned. To be forgotten by power, according to this line of thought, is the same as having no power. Even in more radical circles, the same logic is subtly present. Whether power lies in the means of production, the state or the private enterprise, it must be seized and turned towards non-capitalist ends. For this to occur we must first be recognized as important players in the statist game of *realpolitik*.

Others, however, are rethinking this Hobbesian model of power and resistance. Instead of struggling for recognition, a kind of post-recognition politics is animating the disparate refusal movement (for an overview see Fleming, 2012). It is underpinned by a new understanding of corporate and statist hegemony, one that doesn’t gift it so many constitutive powers. The corporation and private property do not create value or wealth. We do, often working around the rules of neoliberal property rights. Innovations and inventions are more often developed *despite* private property rights and commodification (Perelman, 2002). It’s the corporation that resists, not workers. In the realm of employment studies, it is astounding how many employees in large enterprise complain about how *useless* or superfluous most management is. The boss gets in the way more than anything else. This is because capitalist enterprises were never designed to be functional social systems. They are first and foremost *class structures* – highly irrational machines of capture that seldom ‘work’ for majority involved. Old-school pro-business writers are funny in this regard because they thought management was about achieving common objectives. Take these first impressions of a worried researcher studying a well-known US plant in the 1950s:

Management is so preoccupied with its efforts to establish control over the workers, that it loses sight of the presumed purpose of the organization. A casual visitor to the plant might indeed be surprised to learn that its purpose was to get out production. Certainly, if it had been possible to enforce some of the rules



described... the result would have been a slowing down of production. (Whyte, 1955: 65-66)

What makes this excerpt so amusing is that Whyte naively assumes he is witnessing 'bad management'. In truth, he is giving a fairly accurate definition of it in most situations under class conditions. For there is nothing 'common' in the capitalistic endeavour. This is why most of us find it so bewilderingly stupid. In this sense, the corporate form must logically *follow* rather than compose the social common that actually works around it. The neoliberal enterprise accentuates this logic as it encloses the massive amount of social wealth it simply cannot engender on its own terms. That is why it appears so unnecessarily.

Maybe now silence and exit are contiguous forces. Hardly anyone today fears being abandoned by power. That would be a blessing. No. What really frightens us is the idea of being included, forced to participate in an unwinnable mirror game with the Master. To make matters worse, the Master is now diffuse and increasingly difficult to identify. Lolowratnik and Miessen (2012) encapsulate this in their analysis of the nightmare of participation. From rightwing community liaison meetings, to the consultative 'listening exercises' of multinational firms, to team building meetings in the postmodern workplace – the new injunction is to enter a parasitical domain... and speak. Its objective, of course, is to render one's voice truly silent, profoundly impotent. Here, we might think of the self-serving logic of former US president George W. Bush when he declared that he was technically vindicated by the millions of protesters opposing his policies since it proved his commitment to free-speech.

Some critical elements of this *radical silence* can be traced back to Foucault's (1997; 2011) far-reaching insights regarding how biopower grips us in neoliberal societies. In an interview conducted in 1982 he suggests that silence can be grasped as a political weapon only when voice loses its disruptive content, overcoded by a reductive form (religious settings, bourgeois mannerisms, fake parliamentary exchange, etc.). Whatever we say in these settings, no matter however seditious, merely reinforces its totalizing setting. No proper rupture is possible. The speaking subject is also the subject of the statement, as Foucault (1976) famously cautioned. An obvious example is the catholic confessional, but so too is the frenetic compulsion to speak under liberalism and now, neo-liberalism (also see Foucault, 2011). There is undoubtedly an aspect of flippancy in the philosopher's remarks: 'Silence might be a much more interesting way of having a relation with people' (Foucault, 1997: 122). The tone, however, belies the seriousness of his investigations at the time. This becomes evident (in English, at least) in his last set of annual lectures entitled *Courage of truth* (Foucault, 2011).

Towards the end of his life, Foucault returned to ancient Greek thought in order to conceptually reassemble something like a pre-disciplinary subject. There is no romanticism or nostalgia here, but a strategic reinvention of techniques that might allow us to fight an enemy that has been inserted into our everyday subjectivity. As Hardt (2010) points out, this is especially important in the biopolitical era where economic optimization is seemingly indistinguishable from 'life itself'. This is why, according to Foucault, biopower operates unlike anything we have seen before. Its currency is permanent visibility, binding us to a strange talking-person-machine or what the neoclassical economist Gary Becker preferred to call 'human capital'. And perhaps this is also why personal authenticity is so salient in recent management ideology: 'what is unique about *you*, what makes *you* stand out and how can it be enhanced, used and traded?' But what happens when human capital replies? Not unlike Marx's factory worker of yesteryear, it camouflages its own impossibility, having us believe that abstract labour might somehow 'have a life'.

Any kind of visibility in a biopolitical clearing, no matter how radical and subversive, can reconnect us to the machinic flows we are all keen to escape. Perhaps what Foucault (2011: 17) calls 'structural silence' is 'wise' because it points to social goods lying beyond the operative grid of neoliberal sociality (although he does not explicitly say so, it's obvious that the philosophical inspiration for this argument comes from 'The child with the mirror' in Nietzsche's *Thus spoke Zarathustra*). And if silence provides a space for inscrutable communication, then might it not also engender linkages of solidarity with those who have already awoken from the nightmare of work?

## 6.

The silent common is more than a reclamation of dignity 'despite everything' (see Foucault, 2011). Neither is it a kind of stylized politics, since that too is exactly what the unstated majoritarian now seeks to break away from. It's more a turning away from power. Again, in order to conceptualize this, we have to purge our analysis of any Hobbsian presuppositions. Rather than picturing the labouring majority as tragically dependent upon (yet systematically excluded from) an unfair institutional edifice that for better or worse produces worlds, we ought to reverse the scenario. Capitalism is a pure subtraction that feeds on modes of life struggling to supersede the stupidity of private property, timetables and an obsession with pointless jobs. Now we can appreciate why so many are currently refusing to recognize or be recognized by power. Silence here does not aim to send a signal to capitalism (i.e. a moment of aplomb amidst adversity, etc.). Nor does it attempt to bamboozle its maps of domination by remaining

mute amidst violent demands for our acknowledgment. It is more like a background ‘after image’ that flares up as we turn our backs on a world of useless work... and disappear. Non-signification is all that remains once the bio-proletariat escapes back into life.

If such inscrutability takes anything from the lexicon of power, then perhaps it is the one device that private property has always used to terrorize those who have nothing to sell but their labor power: *repossession*. The coming bio-proletariat turns away from an economized ‘life itself’ to auto-valorize what is currently being harvested for capitalistic ends: our social intelligence, open co-operation and artisanal inventiveness (also see Pasquinelli, 2008; Shukaitis, 2009). Silence is all that remains following its disentanglement from corporate capture, when our socially determined ‘free work’ (that capitalism is so dependent upon) is truly *freed* from a parasitical system and rendered collective once again. Not in any weird survivalist sense ala *How to disappear in America* (2008) or isolated bourgeois individualism. These types of escape merely reflect what they negate. What we might call a new workers’ repossession movement takes back what it already is, leaving a moribund and self-destructive ossification behind it. From the viewpoint of neoliberal reason, silence, invisibility and exit are now synonymous. From the perspective of living labour, of course, speaking can resume once more.

## 7.

A final instance of common silence might be posited. An important aspect of the biopolitical terrain of contemporary work is the way it has assumed a ‘gaseous’ form, rendering obsolete traditional divisions like work time/free time, public/private or fixed/variable capital. Deleuze (1992) hints at this in his essay ‘Postscript on the societies of control’. The ideology of ‘human capital’ seeks to spread the logic of work throughout the entire social body like a kind of virus. We find it invading our dreams (Lucas, 2009), our putative free time (Gregg, 2011) our social inventiveness (Michel, 2012) and even our desire to escape (McGuigan, 2009). As a result, our relationship to work has changed substantially. Unlike the factory of yesteryear where we could disappear from it upon checking out, now we *are* the job – 24/7. The irony, of course, is that like neoliberalism, this ideology of work only functions through the social ‘other’ it cannot provide on its own accord, and would immediately halt if it got what it really wanted.

But when work aspires to capture everything about us – transcending the old vertical boundaries (i.e. ruling and subordinate classes) and horizontal divisions (i.e., occupational differentiation, work and non-work) – a new universal

emerges. Unlike preceding eras of capitalist accumulation, labor's lament is just as likely to be heard among perversely salaried bankers as it is with lowly call-centre workers. Since the curse of work is now detached from its material moorings and is inserted inside all of us as something properly concrete, its malaise becomes generalized and bodily. This is why the line in the sand today is no longer only between labor and capital but *capital and life*. And this shifts the nature of its power and the co-ordinates of its social refusal, as Tiqqun note:

Historical conflict no longer opposes two massive molar heaps, two classes – the exploited and the exploiters, the dominant and the dominated, managers and workers – among which, in every individual case, one could differentiate. The front line no longer cuts through the middle of society; it runs through the middle of each of us. (2011: 12)

The crucial question that follows is thus: how might this commonality be articulated and assigned a shared value as a new universal moment? For when we enter the sphere of discursive exchange, the old divisions invariably appear again, categories and distances that are rightly perceived to be unbridgeable. What words could ever forge a bond between a white corporate banker and a Sudanese nighttime cleaner? Here, we might return one last time to Baudrillard's (2007) essay on the silent majority. The death of the social is marked by the decline of important referents, representations and objectifications. The diffuse, decentred and molecular nature of late capitalism fuels the multitude's silence, and, for Baudrillard, highlights its ultimate impotence. But can we also draw something more positive from this collective non-signification, something like a shared acknowledgement of what work has made us all become? Furthermore, if there are no words to convey this communal predicament without again artificially isolating ourselves from ourselves and others, could the silent majority in fact point to an emergent nonfigurative common? A shared turning away from neoliberal capitalism, a massive evacuation from its predicates and fantasies?

## references

- Anonymous, (2008) *How to disappear in America*. New York: Leopard Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (2007) *In the shadow of the silent majority*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).
- Bauman, Z. (2004) *Wasted lives*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1992) 'Postscript on the societies of control', *October*, 59(Winter): 3-7.
- Fleming, P. (2012) 'The birth of "biocracy" and its discontents in the workplace', *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 35: 205-228.
- Foucault, M. (1976) *History of sexuality, volume one: An introduction*, trans. R. Hurley. London: Penguin.

- Foucault, M. (1982/1997) 'Michel Foucault: An interview with Stephen Riggins', in P. Rainbow (ed.) *Michel Foucault. Ethics: Subjectivity and truth. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984, volume one*. New York: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2011) *The courage of truth: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983-1984*. London: Palgrave.
- Gregg, M. (2011) *Work's intimacy*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hardt, M. (2010) 'Militant life', *New Left Review*, 64: 151-160.
- Jameson, F. (2011) *Representing capital. A reading of volume one*. London: Verso.
- Jones, B.E. (2012) *Women who opted out*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kolowratnik, N.V. and M. Miessen (2012) *Waking up from the nightmare of participation*. Utrecht: Expodium.
- Lucas, R. (2010) 'Dreaming in code', *New Left Review*, 62: 125-132.
- Lukes, S. (2005) *Power: A radical view*, 2nd edition. London: Macmillan.
- Marx, K. (1867/1972) *Capital, volume one*. London: Penguin.
- McGuigan, J. (2009) *Cool capitalism*. London: Pluto Press.
- Michel, A. (2012) 'Transcending socialization: A nine-year ethnography of the body's role in organizational control and knowledge workers transformation', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 56(3): 325-368.
- Moten, F. and S. Harney (2012) 'Blackness and governance', in P.T. Clough and C. Willse (eds.) *Beyond biopolitics: Essays on the governance of life and death*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (2003) *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin Books.
- Pasquinelli, M. (2008). *Animal spirits: A bestiary of the commons*. Rotterdam/Amsterdam: NAI Publishers and the Institute of Network Cultures.
- Perelman, M. (2002) *Steal this idea: Intellectual property rights and the corporate confiscation of creativity*. New York: Palgrave.
- Shukiatis, S. (2009) *Imaginal machines: Autonomy & self-organization in the revolutions of everyday life*. New York: Autonomedia.
- The Invisible Committee (2009) *The coming insurrection*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).
- Théorie Communiste (2012) 'Communization in the present tense', in B. Noys (ed.) *Communization and its discontents*. New York: Autonomedia.
- Thompson, E.P. (1963) *The making of the English working class*. London: Penguin Books.
- Tiqqun (2011) *This is not a program*, trans. D. Jordan. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).
- Vaneigem, R. (2001) 'Totality for kids', in *Dark Star* (eds.) "Beneath the paving stones": Situationists and the Beach, May 1968. New York: AK Press.
- Whyte, W.F. (1955) *Money and motivation*. New York: Harper and Row.

## the author

Peter Fleming is Professor of Business and Society at Cass Business School, City University, London. His research focuses on the changing nature of workplace politics, especially in the context of neoliberalism in crisis. His recent books include *Dead man working* (Zero, 2012) and *The end of corporate social responsibility* (Sage, 2013). His new

book *Why work? The corporatization of life and its discontents* is out in 2014 with Temple University Press.

E-mail: Peter.Fleming.1@city.ac.uk