

Iscrpljujući nematerijalni rad u izvedbi

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Exhausting Immaterial Labour in Performance

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Épuiser le travail immatériel dans la performance

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FLORIAN SCANEDER:

- IM MATERIAL LABOUR = DIFFERENT

MANUAL & VS INTELLECTUAL LABOR IN D

- IMAGINARY PROPERTY: HOW/WHAT IS THE VALUE P

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

BOTANAC → DIVISION OF LABOUR IN PERFORM

1) REPERTORY (STATE) WHO OWN

2) COMPANY (PRIVATE) DISTRIBU

3) FREELANCE (SELFEMPLOYMENT)

ANA V.

cf NANA MÜLLER "IM COMPANY

1) SPECIALISATION ⇒ LACK OF MEANING ⇒ LA

2) MULTITASKING FREELANCE VS HIGHLY SPECIAL

CASE STUDIES = EVERYBODY'S W
HYBRIS KONSTPRODU

Exhausting Immaterial Labour in Performance

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Exhausting Immaterial Labour

Bojana Cvejić and Ana Vujanović

The decision to address immaterial labour in the performing arts today in this joint issue of *TkH (Teorija koja hoda / Walking Theory)* and *JDL (Journal des Laboratoires)* was motivated by the curiosity of suspicion. The recent, yet belated, “application” of the topic has amounted to an uncritical appraisal, and has only highlighted, as usual, the symptom whereby performance is seeking its political legitimacy and contemporaneity-upgrade in a theoretical transfer. Hence, the “post-Fordist diagnosis” in performance begs for a reconsideration that might make the problem thicker. What kinds of transformations of labour and production have the performing arts undergone in the past decade and how specifically different are they from other institutional practices or media? Should this kind of production be qualified as “immaterial”, or has the concept turned out to be misleading and inadequate, blurring the overall assessment of the situation, its potentiality of resistance to, and autonomy from, capitalism? Moreover, should we regard this situation as global, since post-industrial production and the new forms of labour it engenders apply mostly to capitalism in the West, geo-economically positing those countries as the ruling class to the rest of the world, where production is still all too material?

The initial suspicion implied rematerializing the immaterial of performance in performance, not in the sense of “capitalizing” it, but in the sense of articulating it as a theoretical problem from a materialist critical point of view. First, this departure aims against misrecognising the ontological immateriality of performance, its ephemerality and disappearance, and superficially associating them with (immaterial) resistance to commodification. From a materialist point of view, performance is a material artefact, a product and commodity of the institution of the performing arts. Secondly, we recognise that besides the commodity of performance, the processes of production, distribution, circulation, and consumption of performances involve activities that don’t just support or enable the “product” of the performance, but also substitute for it. The content of these activities – which have greatly increased in the last decade – encompasses information and services, which are often not materially accounted for. It is the notorious call for the “process beyond the product” whereby performance practitioners, groping with cultural and economic marginalization, are

trying to reclaim the specific value of their work. Indeed, knowledge and experience are always “beyond measure”, in excess of the performance as a public event. And performance workers are certainly low on the social-economic scale of precarisation, when compared to other independent, freelance, or self-employed workers. The problem is neither in the complaint about the social-economic status of the precarious, nor in the utopia of the immeasurable biopolitical production, but needs to be posed elsewhere. Restructuring the problem requires that the material forms of the transformation of labour in performance be precisely differentiated and identified first. The production of artistic research – in residencies, “laboratories” and other temporary working situations – reads as the conjunction of information, social relations, and services in the presence, display, or the atmosphere of the artist at work and in networking. The festivalisation and co-production of freelance projects are atomising and multiplying work without end or limit. The proliferation of small-scale projects engenders a rejuvenation of the labour force, a capital investment in youth as both a promise and cheap labour. Redistributing performance practice by model of open-source education seeks to re-specialize the performance practitioner into a multitasking *bricoleur*. Although the objective is to separate authorship from ownership in an immaterial exchange of knowledge, the “communism of ideas” does not minimize but, on the contrary, accelerates competition, or the immaterial war within “the creative class”, as Pasquinelli remarks in his *Immaterial Civil War: Prototypes of Conflict within Cognitive Capitalism*. The proactive strategies of self-organization supersede institutional critique as a homeopathic treatment, striving to decelerate or temporarily alleviate the normative conditions of work. Finally, the specification of the materiality of various performance activities, unrecognized, unwaged, or overdone and overstated, doesn’t exhaust itself here... but what could it do, other than confirm the situation as we already know it?

We sought a whole other set of approaches to the question by asking a number of theorists to comment on immaterial labour, from political theory and philosophy, via media activism and law, to performing arts theory and performance studies. While for some texts assembled here the point of departure is the Post-Operaist framework, in which immaterial labour is politically invested into the production of a new, revolutionary subjectivity, others are oriented instead toward a critique of cognitive capitalism. By questioning the value, accessibility and (im)measurability of immaterial labour and its products (knowledge and information), they discuss the problems of copyright, branding, competition, and the informational common. A third approach is dedicated to a critical analysis of Post-Fordist organisational modes of immaterial production, addressing the processes of individualisation, collaboration, networking, communication, subsumption of life and leisure time under work, etc.

To our surprise, there arose a polyphony of discontents with the very concept, even among its initial proponents. Lazzarato renounces it for its inoperability: once it was assigned a type of activity, a type of work and a species of worker, the political project of “immaterial labour” migrated into the socio-economic sphere, as in the movement of *“intermittents et précaires”*, where it became clear that it wouldn't give rise to a new political (revolutionary) subject. So, instead of joy and the enthusiasm, with which immaterial labour was often proclaimed, especially in the (performing) arts, post-industrial forms of labour today register other than only positive affects, e.g. depression as an internal regulation of the economy of desire (see Pasquinelli), or the shared experience of fatigue (see BADco.), which paralyzes political action. While “immaterial workers” are *entrepreneurs de soi-même* [of themselves], who exhaust their creative capacities and destroy social relations by the economic logic of competition, Kunst re-addresses collaboration as a mode of subjectivation specific to performance, where “collaborability” measures the artist's currency as the intensity of being in the present time, or in the contemporary. Schneider argues that due to the disaffecting ambiguity of immaterial labour, especially as to the distinction between the material and the immaterial, the manual and the intellectual, the concept of immaterial labour blurs rather than helps us elucidate the reconfiguration of the work process and conduct a more rigorous analysis of the changes within the division of labour, both in its technical and social aspects. As a result of such analysis in the new/digital media, he proposes a new conceptual framework of “imaginary property”, where image is more and more a matter of property and the acceleration in appropriation makes this property more and more a matter of imagination. Thus, extreme attitudes on the archiving and free distribution of performances – reluctance or promotion – can be contested: the video-image belongs to the author alright, but what is its value?

Art and labour have always been at odds, Kostanić observes, ever since the Lumière brothers filmed their property and, at the same time, made the first film in the history of cinema: workers leaving the factory. In spite of Duchamp's or Brecht's critical demonstrations of the production mechanisms of art, or the Soviet post-revolutionary programme for the artists and workers to shape the production process together, the (bourgeois) autonomy of Western art historically always had its stake in hiding the material conditions of its process of production. Critical of the recent enthusiastic identification of non-mainstream art with immaterial labour, Kostanić recommends another struggle: to defend art as a matter of public interest, where it can join other movements of resistance to the privatisation and abolition of social rights in the public sphere. This is why we invited WochenKlausur, a group of artists whose projects are bluntly social and “all too material”, as their work manifests the shift from the artistic production of art objects to the real material effects of artistic practice in the social field. Projects such as setting up a mobile clinic for the homeless or housing for students use the public's interest for art to focus its attention onto social problems and usurp the open contract of the definition of art for social intervention. Paradoxically, their stance, which denies artistic autonomy is an act of autonomy *par excellence*, as Grlja defines it here, the collective material practice of making an ethical choice in a given situation by breaking up with the dominant “rationality”.

At first, we were determined to search for those artistic initiatives and projects that not only recognise and capitalise on the current changes of labour and production, but also problematise, proactively contest, and transform their conditions, actions, or status... Faced with a scarcity of such approaches in the performing arts today, we abandoned the idea to commission or represent art that critically examines the theoretical concept to which it was subjected for some time. Therefore, the artistic statements and presentations of the projects are self-managed contributions from the art practitioners who responded to a call or an invitation, by their affinity to the problematic and a will to grasp it in a critical way. While some of the artistic contributions featured here deal with the current economy of art in a systematic manner, trying to divert the business logic and undertake the model of company – like Hybris Kunstproduktion and “critical enterprises” such as etoy.Corporation, Superflex, or Ouest-Lumière, as argued by Vanessa Théodoropoulou – or adopt the form of social service (WochenKlausur), others offer a variety of personal reactions, micro-solutions, and small-scale “games” that question the given conditions of work in the arts.

Isscrpljujući nematerijalni rad Bojana Cvejić i Ana Vujanović

Odluka da se pozabavimo nematerijalnim radom u savremenim izvođačkim umetnostima u ovom zajedničkom izdanju časopisa *TkH* (*Teorija koja hoda*) i *JDL* (*Journal des Laboratoires*) motivisana je radoznalošću i sumnjom. U skorije vreme uobičajena, pa ipak zakasnela „primena“ ovog pojma svodi se na nekritičke hvalospeve i ukazuje, kao što se često dešava, na simptome traganja izvedbe [*performance*] za političkom legitimacijom i osavremenjavanjem kroz teorijski transfer. Otuda, „postfordistička dijagnoza“ u performansu vapi za preispitivanjem koje bi problem postavilo kao kompleksniji. Kroz kakve transformacije radnih procesa i produkcije su izvođačke umetnosti prošle u poslednjoj deceniji, i po čemu su one specifične u odnosu na druge institucionalne prakse ili medije? Da li bi ovu produkciju trebalo kvalifikovati kao „nematerijalnu“ ili je već izvesno da je taj koncept varljiv i neadekvatan, jer ne doprinosi ukupnoj proceni situacije i potencijalnostima za otpor kapitalizmu ili autonomiju od njega? Štaviše, može li se ova situacija smatrati globalnom, pošto se postindustrijska proizvodnja i nove forme rada koje ona uzrokuje uglavnom odnose na kapitalizam zapadnih zemalja, geo-ekonomski uspostavljajući te zemlje kao vladajuću klasu nad ostatkom sveta, čija je proizvodnja, nažalost, i dalje odveć materijalna?

Inicijalna sumnja podrazumevala je rematerijalizovanje nematerijalnog u izvedbi, ne u smislu njegove „kapitalizacije“, već u smislu njegove artikulacije kao teorijskog problema s kritičkog materijalističkog stanovišta. Prvo, ovo polazište je usmereno protiv zablude ontološke nematerijalnosti performansa, njegove efemernosti i iščeznuća koje se površno povezuje s (nematerijalnim) otporom komodifikaciji. S materijalističke tačke gledišta, izvedba je materijalni artefakt, proizvod i roba institucije izvođačkih umetnosti. Drugo, uviđamo da pored izvedbe kao robe, procesi proizvodnje, distribucije, cirkulacije i potrošnje izvedbe uključuju aktivnosti koje ne samo da podržavaju ili čine mogućim „proizvod“ izvedbe, već predstavljaju i supstitut za njega. Sadržaj ovih aktivnosti – koje su se značajno intenzivirale u poslednjoj deceniji – obuhvata informacije i usluge koje se često ne razmatraju u sferi materijalnog. Praktičari izvedbe, koji se neprekidno bore s kulturnom i ekonomskom marginalizacijom svog rada, pripisuju mu specifičnu vrednost

zalažući se za „proces, a ne proizvod“ (što već postaje opšte mesto). Zaista, njihovo znanje i iskustvo uvek se smatraju za „nemerljivi“ dodatak izvedbi kao javnom događaju. A, sasvim izvesno, radnici u izvođačkim umetnostima stoje nisko na društveno-ekonomskoj lestvici prekarizacije u poređenju s ostalim nezavisnim, *freelance* ili samozaposlenim radnicima. Problem nije u žalopjkama o njihovom društveno-ekonomskom statusu obeženoj nesigurnošću, niti je u utopiji nemerljive biopolitičke proizvodnje, već ga treba postaviti drugde. Restrukturiranje problema zahteva da se transformacije materijalnih formi rada u izvođačkim umetnostima najpre precizno diferenciraju i identifikuju. Proizvodnja umetničkih istraživanja – tokom rezidencijalnih boravaka, u „laboratorijama“ i drugim privremenim radnim situacijama – čita se kao spoj informacija, društvenih odnosa i usluga u prezenci, prikazivanju i atmosferi koja se stvara oko umetnika koji radi ili se „umrežava“. Festivalizacija i koprodukcije nezavisnih projekata atomizuju i multiplikuju rad bez kraja i granica. Proliferacija niskobudžetnih projekata utiče na podmlađivanje radne snage, kao kapitalna investicija u mladost – koja istovremeno predstavlja obećanje i jeftinu radnu snagu. Redistribucijom izvođačkih praksi prema modelu *open-source* obrazovanja, praktičar/ka izvedbe prekvalifikuje se u neku vrstu „svaštara“, *multitasking bricoleur-a*. Premda je cilj razdvojiti autorstvo od vlasništva u nematerijalnoj razmeni znanja, „komunizam ideja“ ne umanjuje, već sasvim suprotno, zaoštava konkurenciju ili nematerijalni rat unutar „kreativne klase“, kao što je primetio Matteo Pasquinelli u tekstu *Immaterial Civil War: Prototypes of Conflict within Cognitive Capitalism* (Nematerijalni građanski rat: prototipovi konflikta unutar kognitivnog kapitalizma). Proaktivne strategije samoorganizacije smenjuju institucionalnu kritiku kao homeopatski tretman, nastojeći da umanje pritisak ili privremeno olakšaju normativne radne uslove. Konačno, specifikacija materijalnosti različitih aktivnosti u performansu, neprepoznatih, neplaćenih, ili preuveličanih i precejenjenih, ovde se ne iscrpljuje... ali šta ona može da učini sem da potvrdi situaciju koju već poznajemo?

Tragali smo za celim jednim drugim korpusom pristupa ovom pitanju i pozvali izvestan broj teoretičara da komentarišu nematerijalni rad – iz perspektive političke teorije i filozofije, preko medijskog aktivizma i prava, do teorije izvodačkih umetnosti i studija performansa. Dok je polazište nekih priloga u postoperaističkim okvirima, u kojima se nematerijalni rad politički investira u proizvodnju nove, revolucionarne subjektivnosti, drugi su usmereni na kritiku kognitivnog kapitalizma. Preispitivanjem vrednosti, pristupačnosti i (ne)merljivosti nematerijalnog rada i njegovih proizvoda (znanja i informacija), u njima se raspravlja o problemima autorskih prava, brendova, konkurencije i razmene informacija. Treći pristup posvećen je kritičkoj analizi postfordističkih organizacionih modela nematerijalne proizvodnje, i procesima individualizacije, saradnje, umrežavanja, komunikacije, stapanja privatnog života i slobodnog vremena s radnim procesima itd.

Na naše iznenađenje, dobili smo svojevrsnu polifoniju nezadovoljstva samim konceptom, čak i među njegovim prvobitnim zagovornicima. Lazzarato ga odbacuje zbog njegove neoperativnosti: jednom kada mu je pripisan tip aktivnosti, rada ili radnika, politički projekat „nematerijalnog rada“ emigrira u društveno-ekonomsku sferu, kao u pokretu „*intermittents et précaires*“, u kome je postalo jasno da neće doprineti stvaranju novog političkog (revolucionarnog) subjekta. Tako, umesto radosti i entuzijazma uz koje se nematerijalni rad često prizivao naročito u (izvođačkim) umetnostima, postindustrijski oblici rada danas izazivaju afekte koji nisu nužno pozitivni, npr. depresiju kao unutrašnju regulaciju ekonomije želje (videti tekst Mattea Pasquinellija) ili kolektivni osećaj zamora (videti prilog BADco.) koji parališe političku akciju. Budući da su „nematerijalni radnici“ samopreduzetnici (*entrepreneurs de soi-même*) koji iscrpljuju svoje kreativne sposobnosti i uništavaju socijalne odnose ekonomskom logikom konkurencije, Bojana Kunst se bavi saradnjom kao modusom subjektivacije specifičnim za izvedbu, gde se „sposobnošću saradnje“ meri aktuelnost umetnika, intenzitet njegovog bivstvovanja u sadašnjosti ili savremenosti. Schneider tvrdi da zahvaljujući otuđujućoj ambivalentnosti nematerijalnog rada, naročito u pogledu distinkcije između materijalnog i nematerijalnog, manuelnog i intelektualnog, ovaj koncept pre zamađljuje nego što pojašnjava rekonfiguraciju radnih procesa i rigorozniju analizu promena u podeli rada, kako u tehničkim, tako i u društvenim aspektima. Kao rezultat

takve analize unutar novih / digitalnih medija, on predlaže nov konceptualni okvir „imaginarnog vlasništva“, gde slika sve više postaje pitanje svojine, a ubrzanje prisvajanja čini ovo vlasništvo sve imaginarnijim. Tako se mogu dovesti u pitanje i ekstremni stavovi prema arhiviranju i slobodnoj distribuciji izvedbe – uzdržanost ili agresivna promocija: video-slika možda pripada autoru, ali u čemu je njena vrednost?

Umetnost i rad uvek su bili u raskoraku, primećuje Kostanić, još od vremena kada su braća Lumière snimali svoju imovinu, a u isto vreme stvarali prvi film u istoriji kinematografije: radnike koji napuštaju njihovu fabriku. Uprkos Duchampovim ili Brechtovim kritičkim demonstracijama proizvodnih mehanizama umetnosti ili sovjetskom postrevolucionarnom programu prema kome umetnici i radnici zajedno oblikuju proizvodne procese, ulog (buržoaske) autonomije zapadne umetnosti istorijski je bio u prikrivanju materijalnih uslova njenih proizvodnih procesa. Kritičan prema entuzijastičnoj identifikaciji *non-mainstream* umetnosti s nematerijalnim radom novijeg datuma, Kostanić preporučuje drugi tip borbe: braniti umetnost kao stvar javnog interesa, tamo gde ona može da se pridruži drugim pokretima otpora privatizaciji i ukidanju socijalnih prava u javnoj sferi. Zbog toga smo pozvali WochenKlausur, grupu umetnika čiji su projekti nedvosmisleno socijalni i „odveć materijalni“, a njihov rad manifestuje prelaz s proizvodnje umetničkih objekata na realne materijalne efekte umetničke prakse u socijalnoj sferi. Projekti kao što su pokretna ambulanta za beskućnike ili stanovi za studente koriste mogućnost umetnosti da usmerava javni interes na socijalne probleme i dovodi u pitanje društveni ugovor kojim se regulišu ingerencije umetnosti kao društveno interventne prakse. Paradoks je u tome što njihov pristup koji poriče autonomiju umetnosti jeste *par excellence* iskaz autonomije, kako je Dušan Grlja definiše – kolektivna materijalna praksa etičkog izbora u konkretnoj situaciji i raskid s dominantnom „racionalnošću“.

Na početku, odlučili smo da tragamo za onim umetničkim inicijativama i projektima koji ne samo da prepoznaju i „kapitalizuju“ aktuelne promene u radu i proizvodnji, već ih problematizuju, proaktivno im se suprotstavljaju i transformišu sopstvene uslove rada, delatnost ili status... Suočeni s retkošću ovakvog pristupa u savremenim izvođačkim umetnostima, odustali smo od kustoske narudžbine da bi se pozabavili umetnošću koja kritički preispituje nematerijalni rad kao teorijski koncept pod kojim se već izvesno vreme vodi. Stoga umetnički stejmenti i prezentacije projekata predstavljaju samostalne doprinose umetnika koji su se odazvali našem pozivu, zbog afiniteta prema ovoj problematici i volje da se s njome uhvate u koštac kritički. Neki od ovih umetnika bave se aktuelnom ekonomijom umetnosti na sistematičan način, pokušavajući da podrivaju logiku biznisa i preuzmu model komercijalne kompanije – kao Hybris Konstproduktion, i „kritička preduzeća“ kao što su etoy.Corporation, Superflex ili Ouest-Lumière, kako ih naziva Vanessa Théodoropoulou – ili da deluju prema modelu socijalne službe (WochenKlausur). Ostali prilozi umetnika predstavljaju kombinaciju ličnih reakcija, mikrorešenja i malih „igara“ koje preispituju zadate uslove rada u umetnosti.

.Épuiser le travail immatériel. Bojana Cvejić et Ana Vujanović

Le choix d'aborder le travail immatériel dans les arts de la scène aujourd'hui à travers ce numéro conjoint de *TkH (Walking Theory/ La théorie en marche)* et du *JDL (Journal des Laboratoires)* a été motivé par la curiosité d'une suspicion. La cooptation récente, quoique tardive, de ce concept, revient à une approbation sans distance critique, symptomatique d'une pratique en quête de légitimation politique et d'une mise au goût du jour par le transfert théorique. C'est pourquoi le « diagnostique post-fordiste » dans le champ de la performance appelle à un réexamen qui pourrait compliquer le problème. Comment le travail et la production des arts de la scène se sont-ils transformés au cours des dix dernières années? Quelle est la spécificité de ces transformations, en regard d'autres média ou pratiques institutionnelles? Doit-on parler de production « immatérielle », ou bien ce concept s'avère-t-il trompeur et inadéquat, brouillant l'appréciation globale de la situation, sa potentialité de résistance au capitalisme et d'autonomie envers celui-ci? Qui plus est, peut-on parler d'une situation globale, quand la production post-industrielle et les nouvelles formes de travail qui en découlent concernent principalement le capitalisme occidental, classe géoéconomique dominant un reste du monde dont la production reste par trop matérielle?

Notre suspicion première nous a poussé à re-matérialiser l'immatériel dans et de la performance ; non pas le « capitaliser », mais l'aborder en tant que problème théorique, par une approche critique et matérialiste. En premier lieu, ce point de départ vise à dissiper les malentendus autour de l'immatérialité ontologique de la performance, son éphémérité et sa disparition, que l'observateur superficiel associe à une résistance (immatérielle) contre la marchandisation. D'un point de vue matérialiste, la performance est un objet matériel, un produit et une marchandise pour les institutions des arts de la scène. En second lieu, nous observons, au-delà du statut de la performance comme marchandise, que les activités que représentent sa production, sa diffusion, sa circulation et sa consommation se substituent au « produit-performance » autant qu'elles le soutiennent ou le permettent. Ces activités (qui ont connu un essor considérable au cours de ces dernières années) incluent l'information et le service, et leur matérialité est souvent ignorée. C'est la revendication bien connue d'un « processus qui dépasse le produit », par laquelle les artistes, en prise avec une marginalisation culturelle et économique, reprennent possession de la valeur particulière de leur travail. En effet, le savoir et l'expérience sont incalculables, et dépassent le cadre de la performance comme événement public. Il est certain que les travailleurs de la performance sont au bas

de l'échelle socioéconomique de la précarisation, comparé aux autres travailleurs indépendants, free-lance ou auto-employés. Plutôt que de nous plaindre du statut socioéconomique des personnes précaires ou de célébrer l'utopie d'une production biopolitique qui échapperait à la mesure, il nous faut poser le problème autrement. Pour restructurer le problème, il nous faut d'abord différencier et identifier précisément les formes matérielles de la transformation du travail dans la performance. La production de la recherche artistique (dans le cadre de résidences, de « laboratoires » et autres situations de travail temporaires) s'effectue à la jonction entre l'information, les relations sociales et le service, lequel prend principalement deux formes : l'atmosphère, l'étagage et la présence valorisée de « l'artiste au travail » et la construction de réseaux. La pratique des festivals et de coproduction pour les projets free-lance disperse et multiplie le travail indéfiniment. La prolifération de projets à petite échelle mène à un rajeunissement de la force de travail, un investissement dans la jeunesse comme promesse aussi bien que comme travail bon marché. En redistribuant sa pratique artistique selon le principe de l'éducation « open source », le performeur se spécialise en bricoleur polyvalent. Comme Pasquinelli l'observe dans son texte *La Guerre Civile Immatérielle : Prototypes du Conflit dans le Capitalisme Cognitif*, malgré l'intention de séparer la question de l'auteur de celle de la propriété dans un échange immatériel de savoirs, le « communisme des idées » ne réduit en rien la compétition, ou guerre immatérielle, au sein de la « classe créative », bien au contraire. Les stratégies proactives d'auto-gestion supplantent la critique institutionnelle pour un traitement homéopathe qui s'attache à ralentir ou soulager, même temporairement, des conditions de travail normatives. Enfin, nous ne pourrions pas déterminer ici la matérialité spécifique de maintes activités liées à la performance, méconnues, non rémunérées ou exagérées et surestimées... mais une telle spécification peut-elle faire plus que confirmer une situation déjà connue?

Nous avons recherché d'autres approches à cette question, en invitant des théoriciens à commenter la notion de travail immatériel, de la théorie politique et la philosophie aux études culturelles en passant par le droit et l'activisme des média. Alors que certains textes prennent leur source dans le post-opéraïsme, voyant un potentiel politique dans la capacité du travail immatériel à produire une nouvelle subjectivité révolutionnaire, d'autres critiquent le capitalisme cognitif. Mettant en doute la valeur, l'accessibilité et l'impossibilité de mesurer le travail immatériel et ses productions (savoir et information), ils abordent les problèmes du droit d'auteur, des marques, de la compétition et de l'information comme bien commun. La troisième approche s'attache à une analyse critique des modes d'organisation post-fordistes dans la production immatérielle, en abordant les processus d'individualisation, de collaboration, d'entretien des relations, de communication, d'inclusion des temps de vie et de loisirs dans le temps de travail, etc.

À notre grande surprise, nous avons vu émerger une polyphonie d'insatisfactions avec le concept lui-même, y compris parmi ses partisans initiaux. Lazzarato y renonce, parce qu'il le trouve inopérant : une fois assigné à un certain type d'activité, de travail et de travailleur, le projet politique du « travail immatériel » s'est déplacé vers la sphère socio-économique, comme c'est le cas pour le mouvement des « intermittents et précaires », dont il est devenu évident qu'il ne ferait pas naître de nouveau sujet politique (révolutionnaire). Ainsi, au lieu de la joie et de l'enthousiasme avec lesquels beaucoup ont proclamé le travail immatériel, en particulier dans les arts (de la scène), les formes contemporaines du travail post-industriel produisent aussi des affects négatifs, ainsi la dépression comme régulation interne de l'économie du désir (cf. Pasquinelli), ou l'expérience collective de fatigue (cf. BAdco.) qui paralyse l'action politique. Alors que les « travailleurs immatériels » sont des *entrepreneurs de soi-même* qui épuisent leurs capacités de création et détruisent leurs relations sociales en poursuivant la logique économique de la compétition, Kunst s'intéresse à la collaboration comme mode de subjectivation spécifique à la performance ; la capacité à collaborer devient la mesure par laquelle la contemporanéité d'un artiste est valorisé. Selon Schneider, à cause de l'ambiguïté peu populaire du travail immatériel et en particulier de la difficulté à distinguer matériel et immatériel, manuel et intellectuel, ce concept brouille plus qu'il n'éclaire la reconfiguration des processus de travail, ou qu'il n'alimente une analyse rigoureuse des changements apparus dans la distribution du travail, tant des ses aspects techniques que sociaux. Après un analyse des nouveaux médias, il propose un nouveau cadre conceptuel avec l'idée de « propriété imaginaire », où l'image est de plus en plus une question de propriété et où l'appropriation de plus en plus répandue fait de cette propriété un fait d'imagination. Ce qui nous mène à contester les attitudes extrêmes (qu'elles expriment une répugnance ou un attrait) envers l'archivage et la libre distribution des performances : l'image vidéo peut bien appartenir à son auteur, mais quelle en est la valeur?

Comme le remarque Kostanić, l'art et le travail ont toujours été en conflit, depuis que les frères Lumière, tout en filmant leur propriété, réalisèrent le premier film de l'histoire du cinéma : les travailleurs sortant de l'usine Lumière. Malgré les démonstrations critiques que Duchamp ou Brecht ont pu faire des mécanismes de production de l'art, ou encore le programme soviétique post-révolutionnaire par lequel artistes et travailleurs définiraient ensemble le processus de production, l'enjeu de l'autonomie de l'art occidental (bourgeois) a occulté les conditions matérielles de son processus de production à travers l'histoire. Condamnant l'enthousiasme récent avec lequel la contre-culture s'est identifiée au travail immatériel, Kostanić prône un combat différent : défendre l'art comme une question d'intérêt public, pour l'associer à d'autres mouvements de résistance contre la privatisation et l'abolition des droits sociaux dans la sphère publique. C'est pourquoi nous avons invité WochenKlausur, collectif d'artistes dont les projets sont ouvertement sociaux et « par trop matériels », leur travail reflétant un glissement de la production d'objets d'art vers les effets matériels réels de la pratique artistique dans le champ social. Avec des projets comme la construction d'un centre médical mobile pour les sans-abri ou de logements pour les étudiants, ils détournent l'attention dont bénéficie l'art vers des problèmes sociaux, et profitent de ce que le contrat le définissant est un contrat ouvert pour intervenir dans la sphère sociale. Il est paradoxal que leur déni de l'autonomie de l'art soit un acte d'autonomie *par excellence*, au sens où Grlja le définit : une pratique collective et matérielle de prise de décision éthique dans une situation donnée, en rupture avec le « rationalisme » dominant.

Au début, nous étions bien décidés à chercher les initiatives artistiques et autres projets qui, au-delà du fait de reconnaître les changements actuels dans le travail et la production pour capitaliser dessus, mettent en cause, contestent activement et transforment leurs propres situations, actions ou statut ... Face à la rareté de telles approches dans les arts de la scène à notre époque, nous avons abandonné l'idée de passer commande ou de représenter un art qui examinerait, sous un angle critique, un concept théorique auquel il a été assimilé depuis un moment. C'est pourquoi les positions artistiques et les présentations de projets sont des contributions d'artistes qui ont répondu à notre invitation, par intérêt pour cette problématique et par désir de s'en saisir de manière critique. Certaines traitent de l'économie actuelle de l'art de façon systématique, en tentant de détourner la logique commerciale et de s'emparer du modèle entrepreneurial – ainsi Hybris Konstproduktion et certaines « entreprises critiques » comme etoy.Corporation, Superflex ou Ouest-Lumière, comme le soutient Vanessa Théodoropoulou – ou prennent la forme d'un service social (WochenKlausur) ; les autres contributions artistiques présentées offrent une variété de réactions personnelles, de micro-solutions et de « jeux » à petite échelle qui remettent en cause les conditions de travail dans les arts.

Traduit de l'anglais par Alice Chauchat

Editing a(s) Publica(c)tion*

Report about the Public Editing of the Joint Issue
of the *TkH Journal* and *Le Journal des Laboratoires*,
May/June 2010.

Bojan Djordjev

* Based on transcripts of sessions and other documents, which can be found at www.how-to-do-things-by-theory.info/category/laborious-public-editing/.

The TkH (Walking Theory / Teorija koja hoda) project *How to Do Things by Theory* defines critical theory of performance as a social practice – something that can be public and intervene, something that should be taken out of the academia and into the “open” – put onstage, displayed in a gallery, shown onscreen, done in the street. One of the various formats of “performing theory” in this project was Public Editing – a series of three events where the editing process of the joint issue of *Le Journal des Laboratoires* and the *TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory* were open not only to public view but also to participation. First and foremost, these sessions aimed at sharpening the object of the issue – theoretical discussions on the problematics of immaterial labour – but they also involved commissioning, producing, and discussing concrete contributions to the journal. This was done without *mimicking* or *simulating* a typical “editorial board” situation – throwing in contributions, dickered and fighting over them – but rather by *performing* the very shaping of the subject in a public situation.

Our blog www.howtothingsbytheory.info was conceived as an on-line scrapbook of texts, working materials, and comments that would gradually result in a printed journal issue, through a process of accumulation, elaboration, and elimination, in three sessions. In that sense, the Public Editing took place not only in live discussion sessions, but continued through discussions on the blog.

Preparing the issue involved brainstorming topics, authors, and artistic practices that deal with the subject of immaterial labour from different perspectives and sharing this material with the public via the Internet. This working list also served as the common point of departure for preparing the Public Editing sessions. In order to minimise the gap between the editorial collective and the audience in the Public Editing sessions, we decided to base all the discussions on texts that would be offered to the audience in advance.

These public working sessions took place in May and June of 2010, which involved guests invited to debate topics involving contemporary materialist approaches to the issue of immaterial labour.

The first of these Public Editing sessions was dedicated to the performing arts proper and the issues of mapping the relationship between institutions, freelance artists, and the political potentials of artistic practice in a situation where the transgressive and critical practices of the past have been co-opted or even commodified. The research, process orientation, and articulation of art as research (G. C. Argan) emerged in the 1950s and '60s in the arts as resistance to commodification, only to be later commodified themselves. Today, behind all the “research aesthetics”, proliferation of solos, “works in (never-ending) progress”, and nomadic artists moving from one residency to other, there is often hiding a cheap political-economic deal: what is all that a young performing artist needs? – “a room of one’s own (Virginia Woolf) and a bit of cash”. One of the consequences of the above-mentioned nomadism of artists and cultural workers is that they have become a floating commodity, with no stable or clear context or sphere of action. Losing its political sphere, its sphere of pressure, a practice becomes mediated and cannot intervene anymore.

This mapping session went wide, defining the notions of immateriality and materiality in the performing arts context, before moving towards immaterial labour as a mode of post-Fordist production and its possible emancipatory or, more likely, reactionary potential in performance. On the one hand, the aim was to investigate critically the application of theoretical, philosophical, and political concepts to performance practice, as well as to investigate, on the other hand, how we can challenge wider social-political concepts by our performance practices and experiences. This second, “reverse” move became a point of special insistence in the following two sessions. The preparatory texts for the first session were concerned with the following topics: the fetishisation of collaboration in the performing arts today – in Bojana Kunst’s *Prognosis on Collaboration* (published in this issue); the discussion of research in work methodologies and education in Bojana Cvejić’s *In the Making of the Making of: The Practice of Rendering Performance Virtual* and the critical overview of the notions of work, *praxis* (intervention), *poiesis* (making,

production) in the arts in Ana Vujanović's *What Do We Actually Do when We Make Art*. The starting point of this discussion was the topic of the latter text – the blurring of the borders between practice (*praxis*) and production (*poiesis*) in immaterial labour and cognitive capitalism. What is at stake here is that *poiesis* is part of a production that is de-politicising and doesn't belong to the public sphere, but is an affirmative contribution to civilisation – adding yet another object to the collection of objects. The session concluded with the challenging question whether art should shift more to *praxis* – critical intervening in the social sphere and a way to re-politicise artistic activity.

Our guest panellist in the first session was Goran Sergej Pristaš, dramaturge and theatre maker from Zagreb, one of the founders of BADco, who criticised the practice of artists in the performing arts as more and more providing a service to the institutions, accepting "the game of taking care of the audience".

The title originally proposed for the issue was *Rematerialisation of Immaterial Labour in Performance* underlining the direction in which the problems mentioned above were going to be taken. *Rematerialisation* here should not be confused with *commodification* and/or *capitalisation*. *Materialisation* involves defining objects critically and theoretically in concrete political and economical situations. (Re-)materialisation is necessary in order that we do not keep thinking about freedom, creativity, inventiveness on an asocial, purportedly transcendent plane, as idealist discourse would have it, but rather descend to the material level of society, finding there politically and economically regulated relations to capital (materialist discourse).

For the second Public Editing session, dedicated to the wider field of (immaterial) cultural production, we proposed the following texts as preparatory: *Collaboration* by Florian Schneider; *Immaterial Civil War: Prototypes of Conflict within Cognitive Capitalism* by Matteo Pasquinelli; and *The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction* by Robert Luxemburg. The guest-panellist of second Public Editing session, Florian Schneider, filmmaker, curator, and writer from Munich/Brussels, criticised the very concept of immaterial labour that is, according to him, used mainly as a metaphor, representing incapacity to deal with a process that is taking place on a different level – the process of the reorganisation of intellectual and manual labour, merely producing a new division of labour. Some of his theses are elaborated in the *Notes on the Division of Labour* in this issue. Schneider introduces the notion of *imaginary property* – a critical paraphrase of intellectual property – based on the question: What does it mean to own an image today? At the end of his intervention, he proposed the notion of *relational value* – since categories such as *use value* and *exchange value* cannot measure the value of a (digital) image. Created through user-generated meta-data, relational value feeds again on a massive expropriation of knowledge – comparable to the one that happened to the workers when Fordist assembly lines were introduced.

The session then moved towards identifying examples of artistic practices that tackle the problematic of immaterial labour as a mode of production in a critical and pro-active way. Several artistic projects and practices were proposed by the participants and most of them were invited to contribute to this issue: the collectives Hybris Konstruktiv, everybody's, WochenKlausur, and the Novi Sad project proposal *Labour&Leisure*. Following the publication of the documents from the first Public Editing session and the preparatory texts on the blog, as an immediate response we received a proposal from Tea Tupajić and Petra Zanki, who were in the midst of realising their *Curators' Piece*.

Between our second and third session, we decided to reformulate the focus and title of this issue – from *Rematerialisation of Immaterial Labour in Performance* to *Exhausting Immaterial Labour in Performance*. The discussions made it obvious that the concept should be thoroughly exhausted, abandoned, or replaced with another conceptual framework. In this sense *exhaustion* appears as a *solution*, but also refers to the constant notion of fatigue engendered by immaterial labour. According to Deleuze, "the tired can no longer achieve, but the exhausted can no longer 'possibilize'... there is no more possible".¹ Abandoning *immaterial labour* as something that can no longer "possibilize" or act as an enabling constraint was also a topic of discussion with our next guest.

Our final session was dedicated to a discussion of the problematic from a sociological perspective with Maurizio Lazzarato, whose 1996 essay *Immaterial Labour* had the strongest impact on setting this topic. He presented a critical history of immaterial labour, in order to state that he had abandoned it altogether and was presently focused on a more fundamental process of subjectivation. The transcript of this discussion is published in this issue. Judith Ickowicz, a jurist from Paris and our second guest in the third Public Editing session, focused on the legal issues of copyleft/right in immaterial artistic production such as dance and choreography, and in general, on the juridical consequences of the de-materialisation of the art object. The abstract to her PhD thesis in private law is also included in the present issue. Beside the abstract to Ickowicz's thesis and Lazzarato's *Immaterial Labour*, the other two preparatory texts for the session were *Arbitrary Power; or, On Organisation without Ends* by Akseli Virtanen and another text by Lazzarato, *Renouveau du concept de production et ses sémiotiques*. Participating from the audience in all three sessions, Vanessa Théodoropoulou cited an example of the systematisation of "critical enterprises" in the arts in the book *Critical Enterprises*, and proposed to write a review of the book for this issue. The preparatory texts for this session also included drafts commissioned from Dušan Grlja, a sociologist from Belgrade, and Marko Kostanić, a dramaturge from Zagreb (the respective final versions of which are published in this issue as well).

The aim of the Public Editing sessions was to expand our perspectives in dialogue with whoever was interested in contributing to the discussion. Publicly editing a journal issue is meant to lay open the reflection underlying the process of making a journal – from formulating the topic to discussing concrete contributions. In that way, the content of the journal was formed according to the issues and problematics discussed in the sessions, with almost all of the texts proposed or written by the participants. By moving beyond the stultifying active-passive binary and "patronising service" (as discussed with Pristaš in the first session), a new common situation was created: instead of intervening "in" the audience, we were working "with" the audience.

1 Gilles Deleuze "L'Épuisé", postface in Samuel Beckett, *Quad*, Éd. de Minuit, Paris, 1992.

Conversation with Maurizio Lazzarato

– Public Editing Session #3

June 23, 2010

Bojana Cvejić

When we began talking about the subject of this issue, which is entitled *A Materialistic Approach to Immaterial Labour*, we all had a problem with the concept of immaterial labour, especially as it applies to the performing arts. The way that this concept is dealt with in the performing arts is often problematic and, moreover, it had been a hotly debated topic at prior sessions. As one of the first of your articles to reach us in English – I mention English because sometimes your influence has lagged because of translation – it was much discussed and often cited. Yet, the first time we met you, you immediately told us that immaterial labour is a concept you abandoned long ago. The discussions that we've had since then have brought us to the conclusion that, for mainly political reasons, the concept should be *exhausted*. Maybe that's a good place to start the discussion.

Maurizio Lazzarato

I'd like to start by talking about how the concept of immaterial labour was born. Articles on the subject date to the early 1990s, but the concept itself was born in the late 1980s. Politically, it was a distinctive period and we who worked on the concept came from distinctive backgrounds. We had left Italy in the early 1980s and arrived in France in 1982. We were part of an Italian political group called *Autonomia Operaia*. We escaped prison by becoming political refugees in France. It was difficult to do conceptual work for many years, because we had to earn a living. At the end of the 1980s, we started to meet again and to pick up the political work where we had left off, and that is how the concept was born.

It began not as a socio-economic project, but as a political one. That, at least, was how I saw it. We realized, at the end of the 1980s, that the revolutionary models that had been built in the 19th century and implemented throughout the 20th century had run their course. As Marxists we were somewhat heterodox, but we were Marxists nonetheless. Since these revolutionary models had outlived their usefulness, the question became what to put in their place. We came up with the concept of immaterial labour as a way of conceptualizing these capitalist transformations. At first the concept was non-specific: it wasn't meant to apply to a particular guild, sector of the art market, or type of immaterial worker. Its only purpose was to grasp changes in the concept of production. In the very first article Negri and I coauthored about the concept, there was already a shift in tone. The first part of the article was classically Marxist, it was a classical analysis of changes in production and labour. The second part, which was extremely important and hasn't been sufficiently emphasized, dealt with the concept of subjectivity production as outlined by Foucault and Félix Guattari. We were trying to combine two traditions: an Italian tradition that is known as *operaista* – or rather *post-operaista*, since *operaismo* ended in 1973 – and the French tradition. So, starting with this article, the concept of production shifted toward the concept of subjectivity production.

That gives you some background about how the notion was conceived. It was born out of a need for a new revolutionary agenda.

But the concept of immaterial labour was filled with ambiguities. Shortly after writing those articles I decided to abandon the idea and haven't used it since. One of the ambiguities it created had to do with the concept of immateriality. Distinguishing between the *material* and the *immaterial* was a theoretical complication we were never able to resolve. Though Marx obviously talks about material production all the time, he talks about immaterial production too. In *The Theory of Surplus Value*, for example, he mentions a change in the form of production with reference to education. No sooner had we borrowed the concept than we were faced with ambiguities. People interpreted *material* and *immaterial* as opposites: there was immaterial work on the one hand – the work of artists or architects for example – and traditional work on the other. We couldn't seem to escape this polarity between the two terms and that was a constant source of confusion. The concept was intended to be political in nature but it was recast in a socio-economic light as soon as it was published. I think that did it a disservice. People started saying that such-and-such a worker was an immaterial worker and such-and-such an industry was an immaterial industry. People applied the concept to the Internet. This wasn't at all what I had intended, I wasn't interested in putting things into separate categories. So I abandoned the concept altogether and worked on subjectivity production instead. Félix Guattari argued that the crisis we have been witnessing for the last 40 years is not a political or economic crisis, but a crisis in the production of subjectivity, a crisis of subjectification. Now that, I find interesting. From that angle, immaterial labour as a category doesn't make much sense.

I tried to find concepts that more accurately describe the reality we are studying. Deterritorialization is a better match, but *deterritorialized labour* doesn't work either. Deterritorialization isn't the same thing as immateriality. Félix Guattari's ideas are better suited to what has actually taken place. Classical modes of Fordist production, concentrated in and around the factory, have lost their territorial identity. They have lost their form of subjectivity and have become deterritorialized. Even so, it would have been absurd to talk about *deterritorialized labour*. It's astonishing how successful the concept was, considering how little it corresponded to what was actually happening. It could describe certain individual phenomena, but the analysis didn't stand up to the big picture. Later, some experimented with concepts like *cognitive work* or *cognitive capitalism*, which were even worse in my opinion.

At the same time there was all of this debate about the creative class. In the United States, Richard Florida adopted the concept and popularized it in English-speaking countries. He developed a theory about a new form of work called cognitive work and its sort of works. But I think the concept of creation and its uses are very ambiguous, because what has actually come to pass is a neutralization of creation. It would be wrong to claim that all of these capitalist systems stimulate creativity. On the contrary, for the past 20 years we have been gradually

standardizing creation. We are talking about creative work at a time when creativity is disappearing everywhere, except in its most formatted, standardized forms. We see it happening in academia and in the arts, in France and other countries. We are going through a homogenization, or standardization, of artistic creation, in both economic and creative terms. So these theories are misleading because they suggest the opposite of what is gradually taking root.

The only way to move ahead is to think about the big picture without limiting ourselves to the concept of immaterial labour. One very powerful example of this has occurred in France, where there is a movement of artists known as *les intermittents du spectacle*¹. Their political movement has managed to avoid falling into this trap. In 1992, even before the Paris branch of the movement had been organized, a group of *intermittents* in Lyon had clearly stated that “artists” weren’t the issue. They said the problem wasn’t just artistic work, it concerned a much larger chunk of production. It wasn’t artists who were in jeopardy, but rather anyone who worked the way artists do – that is, on short projects. The debate, then, became about making *intermittent* unemployment benefits available to any sector suffering from endemic job insecurity. Hence, the concept became quite clear. The main point is that the concept of immaterial labour does not facilitate political subjectification. In the 19th century, political subjectification meant recognizing the working class. People acknowledged and subjectified each other as workers. Today, we don’t subjectify each other as immaterial workers and that’s another reason the concept doesn’t work. But let’s go back to the example of the French *intermittents du spectacle*. I’m using France as an example because so far it’s the only place where a real “artistic” movement has gotten off the ground. I mean “artistic” in the most inclusive way possible, because technicians were an important part of the movement too. The *intermittents* did not see themselves as cognitive or immaterial labourers. They tried to escape such labels. But how do we avoid using *artist* as a category? The category has proven useful because it accounts for changes in the way labour is organized but, as soon as it becomes associated with a particular field, it creates divisions and fractures. In my view, the fundamental mistake was to say, “this is the new avant-garde”, or “this is the cutting-edge of capitalist labour practices, so if we can modify it, we can modify everything”. I don’t think that’s really true; it was a political miscalculation. Going back to the example of the *intermittents* in France: they shifted toward a discourse on job insecurity, which is an issue that cuts through every sector of society. We haven’t yet found an answer to the question of political subjectification. That is still a problem. How do we escape this imaginary concept, which belongs to a 19th century system that was centred around the working class and wage-earners. In Italy, we had already begun to break free of that model by the 1970s. We had already discussed a major transformation when we developed the concept of *intellectuality of the masses*, which was sort of a precursor of immaterial labour. But the earlier concept was much broader because it included other kinds of transformations. For example, my entire generation benefited from schooling. I went to school, but my father was a labourer. Some belonged to what we called the “suburban proletariat”, which represented a new form of subjectivity. It wasn’t a new type of profession or labour system. Things got complicated when we tried to tack this new form of subjectivity onto an old profession or job. That’s where it got ambiguous.

That’s how the concept was born.

The question of how to rematerialize immaterial labour was indeed asked. By definition, labour or an occupation cannot be immaterial: what would it mean if they were? Even if they represented a smaller

investment of subjectivity, they could not be immaterial. Even if you work on a computer, there is a lot of materiality at your fingertips: there are networks and so on. You can’t just separate things. They are still machines. They may not be machines in the sense of a Fordist assembly line, but they are computational machines or telecommunication machines or whatever. *Intangible labour* doesn’t work either because there is indeed tangibility. I tried for a while to find another concept and then gave up.

Bojana Cvejić

How do we achieve a logic of difference versus a logic of representation, when we’re talking about the production of subjectivity in a capitalist society that encourages individualism? We know that, unfortunately, in art, the dominant ideology is one of individualistic, not collective, autonomy. We often confuse singularity and this disagreement, or the order of difference as Deleuze puts it. I’d like to know you explain the theoretical but also the political differences between capitalism’s individualism, which is depoliticizing, and singularity as a production of experimental subjectivity.

Maurizio Lazzarato

What capitalism asks for – the subjectivity it produces – is a very extreme form of individualization. One has to be one’s own entrepreneur, meaning one must be able to take on all of the economic and social burdens of production. Today, capitalism’s model of subjectification is the entrepreneur. But remember, it is a very weak model of subjectification. The model of the entrepreneur does not resolve the problem of capitalist subjectification. That is why there is a crisis of subjectification. The entrepreneur, like the larger economy, destroys society by definition, it destroys social relations because it replaces them with a competitive and purely economic logic. Capitalism has always needed other forms of subjectification. That is why the nation-state was so essential to the development of capitalism. Capitalism was a deterritorializing force. It destroyed ancient modes of life and work. At the same time, capitalism needed to be reterritorialized, it needed an accumulation of subjectivity that wasn’t immediately linked to its appearance, because its appearance is a destructive one. So instead of referring to it, we made reference either to religion or, more importantly, to the nation-state. The 19th century mode of subjectification was nationalism, the same nationalism that led Europe’s peoples to destroy each other. The two world wars were built around this concept. They were the first form of a reactionary reterritorialization of capital. Today, things are more complex. Formerly, capitalism’s rallying cry was “get rich quick”, today it is also “think creatively, be an entrepreneur”. It’s all about individual initiative and that poses major difficulties. This is not a form of subjectification that will work. Once the nation-state had disappeared, once this madness about subjectifying nationalism had disappeared, they couldn’t find an adequate form of subjectivity. But critics of capitalism have the same type of problem, because subjectivity doesn’t depend on the working class anymore. The working class has lost this capacity to embody capitalism. We just don’t identify with it anymore. There is an absence of subjectification and I think that is the problem.

¹ French performing arts workers who are paid special unemployment benefits between short-term show business contracts. (*Translators Note*)

I'm not as categorical about artists as some others. Ever since artists began to capitalize directly on its work (culture is an integral part of the capitalist economy and now employs 2% of the European population), they have been one of the few communities to talk about the changes of the last twenty years. Take the example of the *intermittents du spectacle*: when the Ile-de-France committee was created in 2003, a heated debate took place about what to name it. Some said, "we are artists and should organize under that banner", while union members wanted to call themselves "stage workers". The committee finally came to be known as *La Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires* (The Committee for Temp and Precariat Workers). In these debates, the classical 19th century individualization of artists came under fire. So, those who argued that there was an organized labour side and an artistic side, who said, "we are professionals OR we are artists", lost the political battle in 2003. That wasn't the end of the problem though, it popped up again in the following years. Dissent reappeared between artists and temporary workers and it was unclear which definition to adopt. That is the problem with subjectification and it still hasn't been resolved. The question of what we are and what we are becoming is yet to be resolved. But the artist's role became the subject of debate. In the 1980s and '90s though, there was an important shift in artistic circles on the subject of individualization and it is still continuing today.

The difference between individualization and singularization in a more general sense brings up a similar problem. To understand it, you have to separate *singularity* and *individual*. Capitalism does the opposite: singularity is individual. We have to figure out how to get beyond the individualized subject, because we are caught in systems that largely go beyond the singular individual. But capitalism needs to bring deterritorialization back to individualization. In discourse, the self-entrepreneur is king. In social policy, everything is dealt with one case or individual at a time: whether you're being paid by a company or receiving money from the welfare state, it's still individualization. The problem is how one would define a singularity that could be a collective singularity. We are constantly coming back to the problem of the production of subjectivity. What is political subjectification today? It's a problem we still haven't resolved. There are ways of testing it though. In artistic circles, we find micro-political experiments that move in that direction. We can find them elsewhere as well. The *intermittents'* experiences and struggles are forms of singularity: they singularize or experiment with this type of singularization.

Vanessa Théodoropoulou

Can you develop a little on the theoretical aspects of political subjectivity?

Subjectivity or subjectification? Would you talk to us about subjectification, that is, *potential* political subjectivity?

Maurizio Lazzarato

Actually, subjectivity is capitalism's biggest output. It's the single largest commodity we produce, because it goes into the production of all other commodities. It was like that even in non-capitalist societies. The problem is, what type of subjectivity or norm should be put into place? For capitalism, there is a mass industry that produces subjectivity. Mass media and even the arts are similar systems. We are in a capitalist system that doesn't only produce models of products. It doesn't only produce automobiles, it produces models of subjectivity: a way of thinking about the relationship between men and women, a way of thinking about relationships with children, with the world, with trees, with anything you can think of. The purpose of this production is homogenization and individualization, a standardization of the production of subjectivity. We can see it every day, in language and other forms of expression, though pockets of resistance do occur.

How do we produce subjectivity? What are the systems by which subjectivity is produced? You'd have to draw a map to see all the systems that produce subjectivity. Deleuze and Guattari talk about the collective assemblages of enunciation, for example. According to them, the subject is produced by a multiplicity of subjectivity-producing apparatuses. According to them, the subject is produced by a multiplicity of apparatuses that include humans, machines, objects, different kinds of semiotics, institutions and the welfare state. All of these apparatuses produce a certain kind of subjectivity. So what type of subjectivity are we producing today? To answer that question, let's go back for a second to this story of the entrepreneur. He is trying to perfect a discourse on the production of standardized subjectivity, which applies as much to production as to consumption. He needs subjectivity and he needs to build models of behaviour. These behaviours are subject to what Foucault called the government of behaviour. So what is important today is this governmentality of subjectivity. That's why this discourse on immaterial labour is very limited: it only takes one aspect of things into account, while capitalism really works like a general governmentality of society. Power doesn't make this distinction between material, immaterial, poor neighbourhoods, the poor, the rich. Power has trouble dealing with these differences, so it pits them against one other. And then you have a government of inequality. It's an inversion of the philosophy of difference, which manifests itself as a power structure.

Vanessa Théodoropoulou

And that's the competition principle?

Maurizio Lazzarato

It's the competition principle, but also the principle of subjectivity formation, which includes a whole series of apparatuses, ranging from school to mass media, to the arts. I think the arts are definitely part of it. They produce a certain type of audience: a TV audience, a museum audience, and so on. They are all connected.

How can we come up with a kind of subjectivity production that is not standardized, but unique. That's the real question.

Vanessa Théodoropoulou

It sure is.

Maurizio Lazzarato

Examples do exist. Deleuze and Guattari often make reference to “savage” or “primitive” societies for purposes of comparison. Even the labour movement produced a subjective singularity to a certain extent. People in the 19th century were very good at predicting the future. If you take the rallying cry of the *Communist Manifesto*, “workers of the world unite”, it anticipated globalization. Back then they had the intelligence to think about subjectification while anticipating the development of capitalism. “Workers of the world unite”, was a discourse that was even more deterritorialized than capitalist production itself, which, at the time, was centred around European national identity. What had been organized was a system for the production of subjectivity. There were apparatuses, trade unions and political parties, but also an intangible aspect, a value-based aspect, and that allowed for a certain type of subjectivity production. Today, we can no longer reproduce this type of dynamic and we should be asking ourselves why.

Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez

Can we blame globalization for this dispersal of political subjectification, which we no longer find in the working class because immaterial workers can no longer identify themselves in order to resist? Is it tied to late twentieth century globalization? You just mentioned how the words of the *Internationale* seem to predict it.

Bojana Cvejić

Isn't it also related to a certain temporal hegemony imposed by the market? It's interesting that, each time we bring up Deleuze and Guattari in this analysis, it introduces a new form of temporality, a new hegemony of non-time. When I think of politics, when I travel abroad to countries that still aren't a part of the market, the differences are indescribable. They often have no entrepreneurial system, nor do their artists know how to manage or sell their works. They use strange metaphors to describe themselves. Maybe these are the “savages” we need in the Western world. And that gets me to thinking that, maybe what we'd like to see happen can happen if we change our form of temporality. Only, the market won't allow us to. Because when I first meet *intermittents* in France, I don't know whether they are *intermittents* or *précaires*. First and foremost they are artists in their respective fields. They are all in competition with one another for greater visibility, they are all seeking attention and looking for ways to sell themselves. There is no solidarity. But things are different in places where there isn't any capital in the Western sense. Can we learn something from these other places, or are they only “lagging behind”? Eastern Europe, for example, is still in transition. There are places in Latin America that aren't part of the hegemony of the market in its Western form.

Maurizio Lazzarato

To get back to the *intermittents*, they represent a political movement and thus, by definition, have interrupted the temporality of the market. Otherwise, they wouldn't constitute a political movement. One can only call something political if it succeeds in breaking the flow of that temporality. An event takes place and that event introduces a new temporality. This new temporality affects subjectivity first and foremost. The political movement opens up a space and it's in that space that subjectivity can qualify itself.

We must interrupt the flow, and use these interruptions as a stage on which to enact a new type of meaning. That's why Deleuze and especially Guattari chose a system of aesthetics as a model. They say that what we should take away from art isn't necessarily the objects it produces, but rather a certain type of methodology. In other words, an interruption in the everyday spatio-temporal flow. The interruption opens up a new mode of temporality, and this new temporality begins or triggers a creative process. We go through a window of meaninglessness in order to produce a new meaning.

A new form of temporality may emerge from a variety of different situations: it may be seen in a political movement, it may be seen in a play, or it can occur on an individual basis. The problem is to find out how one of these micro-interruptions might be used. But, in a certain sense, they occur every day.

Only an interruption in the flow of temporality can change subjectivity, which can in turn be reoriented. At that moment a new process begins, a constitutive process out of which a different form of subjectivity arises. We have to consider the instruments at our disposal to create these partial interruptions in temporality. It's essential that we break out of the market's temporality. In the *intermittent* movement for example, there was a break in the political flow, followed by a window of opportunity. This window gradually closed as people went back to work. Having to go back to work was physically palpable actually. It created a lot of problems, even for artists. After tasting a different form of temporality, no one wanted to say: “I'm going into the rehearsal studio and shutting the door behind me”. That created a problem. These are different temporalities: the temporality of political creation at that specific moment was different than the temporality of artistic creation, even if people did gradually go back to work.

But it is these interruptions in the flow that determine the *possibility* of a change in subjectivity. They allow us to see the world differently, in the same way that people in front of a painting can see different things. We must actualize these possibilities. That's the theory of the event in Deleuze. These possibilities must be realized so that they may be used to build. To build we must not only change subjectivity, but also change the institutions that go with it. That's another fundamental thing that Deleuze and Guattari said: you have to distinguish subjectivity and humanity. The subject is not the same thing as the human. That's important because the machines, too, are part of our subjectivity, as are institutions, objects, different systems of semiotics, and not only human subjects. There is subjectivity everywhere.

Ana Vujanović

In a sense you seem to be saying that we are in a closed system, that western capitalism is the only context for thought, and that that's why a distinction must be made between the category of standardized subjectivity and individualization on the one hand, and a more experimental subjectivity or singularity, which we should be trying to achieve, on the other. It would seem that no solution can come from within the system. I'd like to know whether you think there is a way of rethinking the system in its entirety, rather than trying to produce a subjective singularity within Western capitalism's social and economic systems.

Maurizio Lazzarato

I'm not saying that there is no solution. There are real things, but they are limited in space and time for the moment.

Ana Vujanović

I think the issue, if I understand it correctly, was which type of subjectivity we're talking about. We don't have to think about subjectivity in the negative, as something that interrupts such-and-such a model of subjectivity. Today we have to try something else, in the absence of an ideal we can look to, like there was before.

Maurizio Lazzarato

The problem, as I said earlier, is that the interruptions will only give us new possibilities, but the subjectivity they produce can't be predetermined.

Before there was an image we could lean on. We had the working class model, which was the positive or negative reference. Today, we no longer have that model. So much the better. That's why Guattari uses aesthetics as a model, because they don't presuppose a preformed image of what we're going to do. It's a creative process, and it's what produces a form of subjectivity. This form of subjectivity produces its own rules, forming as it occurs. We can't anticipate it or look for a form of subjectivity beforehand.

Ana Vujanović

However, in the aesthetic field, artists also return to models of pre-existing subjectivity.

Maurizio Lazzarato

I often use Duchamp as an example because I like him very much. And he doesn't do that at all. Duchamp, in my opinion, broke away from a certain conception of the artist, a certain way of thinking about art and the artwork. For me, he truly broke with the past.

It's true that, today, we don't have the same kind of dynamic. We have to imagine something else. That's also why, in the field of art, I find that a lot of practices actually involve the reproduction of subjectivity, as you said.

Bojana Cvejić

But when I talk about the hegemony of the market, I think we have to find tactics and strategies to change the way we work and live together, and that will produce singular subjectivities. We are constantly reacting and adapting to survive a situation, to continue to produce. What we are missing is solidarity, a system of political thought. What artists are missing is the political background needed to interrupt the flow of work.

Maurizio Lazzarato

The aesthetics I was talking about in Guattari applies to more than just the art world, it is a methodology of subjectivity production. The point is not to aestheticize society or to see artists as part of an avant-garde. Moreover, many artists, or people who describe themselves as artists, agree.

In the 1960s, Duchamp said no one would ever be able to reproduce what he had done. Maybe today, we need to try something different. The artist's role in society has changed and must be reconsidered. Once upon a time we could think about an artistic revolution, a political revolution, or a social revolution on almost separate terms. There were avant-garde aesthetics. Today, it's no longer possible to think about an aesthetic change as such, or a political change as such. I think that's what is hard to understand. Apparatuses for producing subjectivity span across all of these elements. We must reconfigure all of these subjectivity-production apparatuses, because they touch on all of these elements. The artist cannot reflect and reinvent alone, just as the political avant-garde cannot explain how to change society alone. There are different types of knowledge, different dynamics, which have to be laid out first. Political party leadership can't set political agendas as they once did. It won't work anymore. But we haven't yet found a way to combine these different forms of labour, these different forms of subjectivity. I think that's the work that needs to be done.

*Transcript by Clémentine Bobin
Translated from French by David Pickering*

Immaterial as Material

Akseli Virtanen

The thought of immaterial labour is a paradox. It causes problems to old meanings and distinctions as if it did not fit within the boundaries of normal world and common and good opinion. With this thought we are already far from the slow progression of temporal succession in industrial production and in verbal thinking, far away from the clearly phased coherence of the courses of our lives. But isn't the indeterminacy and inconsistency of my life, the overlapping of its phases, its permanent precarity and concreteness of its abstractness exactly where our thinking should also be able to climb?

We cannot get rid of paradoxes by saying that they do not exist (it is in this sense that Deleuze talks about concepts that answer true problems as paradoxes). They point at the inability of used language and words to express that something to which they refer or which they invent. Paradoxes are like rebel elements in language which do not signify (mean anything) but only demonstrate (reveal or initiate something). They reveal the limits of our understanding by demonstrating something (non-linguistic, singular and sensual) which does not yet have really a voice, like the concrete experience of abstractness of work (that it is turning into something not tied to particular place and time, something withdrawing from its actual embodiments) which manifests itself already as a distrust of the permanence of one's employment and of one's immediate communities. It is confusing that work blends with my personality and transforms into a kind of black hole that exhausts and forces me as if to be capable of my own capabilities (to cooperate, be inventive, handle arbitrariness...) without a possibility to become anything else.

We need new concepts and words to understand an economy where immaterial matters, where value is produced more with words and images than with machines and direct labour or where machines and tools blend in human abilities and memory, where products are more like communicative acts than material things and where value seems to be born out of "nothing", of mere words and ideas.

How to understand that our ideas, relations and thoughts seem today to have the material weight and value that used to belong only to the material things and actual labour? How to understand that our experience, memory and understanding are productive in themselves without any need of mediation or incarnation into a commodity, actual labour or meaningful act?

How to think about the materiality of the immaterial?

1.

In one of his lectures Gilles Deleuze explains how we could best understand what a matter in a state of continuous mutation means¹. When we perceive a table, the physician has already explained that here we have atoms and electrons in move, but it is difficult for us to perceive the table as movement-matter. How could we then best become aware of the *movement as matter*? Deleuze answers: By thinking of it as metal. It might be wise to explain this a little.

In the lecture Deleuze invites Edmund Husserl and Gilbert Simondon to help him². According to Husserl we can distinguish fixed, intelligible and eternal essences as well as things that we can sense and perceive: there are formal, intelligible essences like the circle as a geometrical essence, and then round things, sensible, formed, perceivable things like for instance a wheel or a table. Between these there is however an intermediary domain consisting of elements that are not fixed or formal and neither sensible or perceivable. Unlike the formal essences these are inexact or indeterminate essences: their indeterminacy is not hazardous nor a defect, for they are indeterminate by their essence. They belong to a space and time which is in itself indeterminate.

So there is a precise and definite time-space and an indeterminate and indefinite time-space, endless and spaceless time, to which Henri Bergson refers when he says that "time is exactly this indeterminateness"³. Formless or indeterminate (Husserl uses the term *vague*) essences belong to the latter, for they cannot be reduced to their visible and spatial conditions. As Deleuze says, Husserl knew very well that "*vague*" is *vagus*: these are the heart of the vagrant, the rambling, stateless, precarious, *vagabond essences*.

Husserl defines these vagabond essences as certain kinds of materialities or corporealities. They are something different than *thingness*, which is a quality of sensible, perceivable, formed things (a plate), or than *essentiality* which is a quality of formal, definite and fixed essences (a circle). According to Deleuze Husserl defines corporeality in two ways. First, it cannot be distinguished from the events of transformation whose place it is: its first character is fusion, dissolution, propagation, event, passage to the limit which means mutation etc. The indeterminate time-space is thus the place of transformation and mutation.

1 Gilles Deleuze, "Anti-Œdipe et Mille plateaux", Cours Vincennes 27.02.1979. <http://www.web-deleuze.com>; see also Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1980; especially Ch. 12 "Traité de nomadologie: La machine de guerre".

2 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, tr. W.R. Gibson, Humanities Press, New York, 1976, Part 1, passage 74; Edmund Husserl, *Origin of Geometry*, tr. J.P. Leavy, Stoney Book, New Hayes, 1978; Gilbert Simondon, *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*, PUF, Paris, 1964, p. 35–60. See also Gilles Deleuze, "Revue de Gilbert Simondon L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique", *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* 156, 1966, p. 115–118.

3 Henri Bergson, *La pensée et le mouvant*, PUF, Paris, 1962, p. 13.

Secondly, the corporeality is not inseparable only of the event of transformation (whose time-place it is), but also of those certain properties which are susceptible to intensities in different degree (colour, density, heat, hardness, durability etc.)⁴. So there is a combination of mutation, “events-intensities”, that constitutes the vagabond material essences and has to be separated from the “sedentary linkage” belonging to a definite time-space.

If the circle is a formal essence and the plate, the round table and the sun sensible formed things, and if the indeterminate essence is neither one of these, then what is it? Husserl answers that it is the *roundness* (*die Rundheit*), roundness as matter, roundness as flesh. What does this mean? It means that the roundness is inseparable of the operations through which different materials undergo. Or as Deleuze says, “roundness is only the result of a process of rounding (*arrondir*), a passage towards its limit”. Roundness as a vagabond essence does not mean the tranquil and fixed essence of the Euclidean circle, but the roundness as the limit of a polygon continuously increasing the number of its sides. This is precisely the indeterminate character of a *stateless essence*, roundness in the sense of Archimedes’ mutating definition (passage to the limit) and not of Euclid’s essential definition.

We have a tendency to think through formal essences and formed, sensible things, but then we forget something: we forget the intermediary space where everything happens. According to Deleuze this intermediary space or metastable state exists only as a “border-process” (becoming-round) via sensible things and technological agents (a millstone, a lathe, a drawing hand etc.). But the intermediary space is “in between” only in the sense that the nomad has a home in homelessness. I return to this idea shortly, but in any case, the intermediateness has independency and creates itself in between things and thoughts in the sense that it is the mutating identity between them. This is why we cannot understand the world of definite time-space, of formal essences and formed things, if we do not understand what is going on in the middle, in the indeterminate region of *stateless essences*, where everything happens.

One should notice that this is not a question of opposition, but of two different worlds: in the world of roundness we move corporeally towards the limit, just like the roundness is the materiality inseparable of the passage caused by the acts of rounding (roundness as the limit of multiplying the sides of the polygon). The circle has essential qualities that pass from the formal essence into the matter, in which the essence gets realised. But roundness is something different: it is something that assumes the movement of the hand and the continuous straightening of the angles, or as Deleuze puts it, “it is inseparable from events, it is inseparable from affects”.

Some of Gilbert Simondon’s concepts can be compared to those of Husserl. Simondon aims at freeing matter from *hylomorphism*, that is, from a form-matter model where the form (*morphe*) informs (*in forma*) the passive matter (*hyle*) like the casting mould informs the clay. The casting mould is like a form which is pressed into the clay-matter, imposing qualities to it. Deleuze calls this also “the legal model”. Simondon was not the first one to criticise the hylomorphic model but the way in which he criticised it was new: Simondon was interested in what happened amongst the mould and the clay-matter, in what happened in between them, in the intermediary state.

In the hylomorphic model the function of the casting mould is to impose

the clay, to determine the clay to take on its state of equilibrium, after which the mould is removed. The form and matter are thought to be two things separately receiving their definition, like two ends of a chain whose linkage is no longer visible. But what happens at the side of the matter when it is passing to the state of equilibrium? This is no longer a question of form and matter but a question of the pressure or the tendency of matter to move towards certain equilibrium, which in fact is not an equilibrium at all but a series of equilibriums, a metastable form, a structure of heterogeneity, or an equilibrium not defined by stability⁵. The form-matter model does not take this into account for it assumes a homogeneous, stable, already given and workable matter. According to Simondon we cannot even talk about casting into a mould, since the mere thought of moulding assumes already a more complicated procedure of *modulation*. Modulation is boundless moulding or moulding in a continuously variable way. A modulator is a mould that continuously changes its form, function and settings. If modulation is moulding in a variable and endless way (indeterminate time-space), then moulding is modulation in a fixed and finite way (determinate time-space)⁶.

But how can we then think about this continuous mutation of matter or the materiality of mutation? Also according to Simondon it is defined by two things. First, it contains singularities which are like implicit (indeterminate, inexact) forms eluding the coordinates of definite time and space in merging with the events of transformation: for example the changing spirals and undulations in the grain that guide the splitting of the wood. Secondly, it is defined by changing affect qualities. For example the wood, Simondon’s favourite example, can be more or less porous, more or less flexible and resistant. According to Simondon the artisan does not merely impose the form to the matter, but rather surrenders to the wood, feels and follows it (like a shepherd his flock) by combining different procedures with the materiality.

Where Simondon’s favourite example is wood, Deleuze defines the movement-matter as metal. By this he means that metal and metallurgy, which as a process is explicitly modulatory, makes visible for intuition that which is normally hidden in other materialities. That is why Deleuze says “metallurgy is consciousness” and that “metal is the consciousness of the matter itself”. We cannot think of metallurgy just through the hylomorphic model, for the metallic matter, which to begin with is very rarely in its pure native state, must go through several series of intermediary states before attaining its “form”. Once it has attained its final characteristics, it is still subject to several changes that form and add its qualities (hardening, decarbonation etc.). The forming does not take place in one visible moment and place, but in several operations which go on at the same time and follow each other: we can not separate the forming from the mutation. Forging and hardening the metal in a way both precede and follow that which could be called attaining the actual form. It is as if the procedures would communicate, beyond the thresholds that actually separate them from each other, directly in the continuous process of variation of matter itself. This was true for clay also, but nothing forced us to realise it. Metal instead compels us to think of movement-matter, matter as variation and variation as matter. We are no longer addressing a matter submitted to form or to law, but a “materiality possessing a *nomos*”⁷.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, op.cit, p. 44.

⁶ Deleuze deals with the difference between the mould and modulation especially in trying to explain the passage from the disciplinary society to the control society. See e.g. “Postscript on Control Societies” in Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, tr. Martin Joughin, Columbia UP, New York, 1995.

⁷ Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, op.cit, p. 508.

2.

Nomos is the phonetically shortened version of *nomeus*, the shepherd. The connection between the *nomos* and the nomadic life comes forth most clearly in the Greek words *nomeus* (shepherd), *nomeuo* (driving to the pasture) and *nomós* (the pasture, the pasturing, the dwelling place), and in the verb *nemein* (to distribute, to give), often used by Homer⁸. The other meaning of the verb *nemein* directly points at the life of a shepherd (to be out in the pasture, to pasture the herd, to drive the sheep to the pasture, to feed the herd etc.) and it seems that the word has received its connotation of “dispersing”, “drifting” and “spreading” exactly from this area.

In the Homeric “society” there were no fences and no ownership in the pasture ground. The pasturing was thus not a question of dividing the land to the animals but on the contrary of the distribution and of the division of the animals to the open pasture grounds. When Deleuze and Guattari comment the etymological roots of *nomos* they state that the word means exactly this particular distribution: a division which does not divide anything in parts, a division in space with no boundaries and no enclosures⁹. *Nem*, the root of *nomos*, means first and foremost the distribution of animals to the pasture ground with no allusion to splitting and dividing the ground in parts or to distribution in the sense of allocation (which is better expressed by the Greek words *temnein* and *diairein*). In the pastoral sense the distribution of animals happens in a boundless space and does not suppose distribution of the ground: in the Homeric time it had nothing to do with land registers or land distribution; when the question of land ownership arose in Solon’s days, a completely different kind of terminology was applied.

It was only after Solon that *nomos* started to mean the principle behind the law and justice (*thesmos* and *dike*) and then to identify with the laws themselves (*nomos* as the separate and limited space of law)¹⁰. Before this the place of *nomos* was an intermediary space, the plain, the steppe and the desert between the wild forest and the *polis* governed by laws.

This idea of division is the key to the distinction made by Deleuze and Guattari between the *nomos* and the *polis*. *Polis*, the city state ruled by laws, is characterised by the distribution in the terms of *logos*. Deleuze

defines it as distribution which divides up the already distributed according to fixed and established definitions, and which is guided by the “public opinion” and “common sense”¹¹. Against this we have the nomadic distribution which is not about dividing the distributed, visible wealth, but about “division amongst those who distribute *themselves* in an open space – a space which is unlimited or at least without precise limits”¹². There nothing belongs to someone or is his or her property, but everybody regroup just in order to spread and to fill the largest possible space. Dividing in space, and spreading and filling the space are a very different matter than distributing the space¹³. It is about an errant or even a “delirious” distribution, a demonic rather than divine organisation, since it is a “peculiarity of demons to operate in the intervals between the gods’ fields of action”¹⁴. Where gods have their fixed qualities, functions, properties, places and codes, and where they are to do with borders and land registers, the demons leap over fences and enclosures, from one interspace to the other, thereby confounding the boundaries between the areas¹⁵.

Thus the open or indeterminate space and the nomadic distribution belong together. For a nomad the territory exists exactly in the sense of this in between or intermediary space. He uses the usual, habitual routes, he moves from one place to another, to which he is in no way indifferent (the water place, the resting place, the meeting place, the hiding place etc.). But even though the places determine the routes, they are, unlike for those living a settled life, subordinated to the routes they define. One arrives at the water place or to the hiding place only to leave it behind again. Dwelling is not tied up with a place but with a route that keeps one always in motion. Every place is just a connection, like the connecting flight exists only as a connection. The routes move between the places, but the being in between or the delay of interspace is primary, autonomous and has its own orientation. The nomad life is this existence in between, with no visible land marks or formal, fixed principles to orientate oneself with.

8 We can give *nomos* two principal meanings which differ from one another by their accents: in the word *nomós* the stress is on the second syllable, and in the word *nomeus* on the first syllable. The first means the pasture ground and the steppes (in Homer it can be found only in this form) and the other, which is considered more recent, means the way of life of beings following their own norms (Hesiod) or more simply just the way or norm which stresses determination of behaviour, often considered as essential to the word. Out of the latter was developed the third, much more recent meaning of *nomos* as a law and a codified habit. The meaning of *nomos* as habit was not, however, so arbitrary to begin with. It meant rather the way of life that was habitual, a normal way to live, which was almost impossible to separate from the geography of the steppes and the ways of battle and cooking food necessary there. In this sense it is not impossible that the most ancient term for habit could have been born out of a term which was used for the most ordinary, habitual way of life, life in the steppes, where the austere conditions of life required a special form of life in order to survive. See Liddell and Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford UP, Oxford, 2002; also, Akseli Virtanen, *Biopolittisen talouden kritiikki [Critique of Biopolitical Economy. The End of Modern Economy and the Birth of Arbitrary Power]*, Tutkijaliitto, Helsinki, 2006.

9 Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, op.cit, p. 472.

10 Ari Hirvonen, *Oikeuden käynti*, Loki, Helsinki, 2000, p. 65.

11 Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, 1968, p. 54.

12 *Ibid*, p 54.

13 *Nomos* does not therefore mean the first measuring and dividing of the land, the way in which for example Carl Schmitt seems to think *nomos* in his creative etymology. The land is occupied, but not in the way presented by Schmitt; there is a concrete order in *nomos*, but it is not the one outlined by Schmitt. See Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*, Telos Press, New York, 2003, 1-4; V.

14 Gilles Deleuze, op.cit, p. 54. We can regard also Pan, the demon god of “disorder” occupying these intermediary states as a bearer of this kind of a folly. He is the son of the god of thieves, Hermes, whose home is in the meadows and in the mountains between the city state and the forest. Maybe it was for this reason that the Greek feared the scream of Pan and the “irrational” madness it evoked: Panic (*panikon deima*); a surprising, sudden feeling of fear, horror, anxiety or insecurity which often takes over flocks of animals or men) raises and becomes infectious when people drift too far away from the divine or political limits and meanings controlling them. “Then Pan, who declares and always moves (*aei polon*) all, is rightly called goat-herd (*aipolos*)” Plato, *Kratylos*, 408b–d. See James Hillman, *An Essay on Pan*, Spring Publications, 1972.

15 Gilles Deleuze, *Haastatteluja*, 2005, p. 141.

Even though the nomad movement may follow the pathways and the habitual routes, it does not fill the function that a road has in a settled life. It does not divide or parcel out a limited space for men, it does not distribute everybody their own share, and it does not regulate the communication between the parts. It functions rather in the opposite direction: it distributes men and animals in an open space that is indefinite or indeterminate and does not communicate. *Nomos* means this particular way of distribution: distribution without dividing in parts or shares, distribution in a space without borders and enclosures. It is the consistency of this indeterminate, formless, intermediate *existence without a state* (without a form, without a *polis*). In this sense of a hinterland, backcountry, intermediate state or openness of mountain side it contradicts the *polis* organized by the law. The nomads distribute themselves in this smooth intermediate space, they spread themselves, they live and dwell this space: it is their territorial and organisational principle. This is why Deleuze and Guattari note that the nomads are in fact not determined by movement (in the geographical sense)¹⁶. The nomad is rather the one who does not move. Unlike the migrant who goes from place to place, leaves behind a hostile place to arrive to another place (though maybe still indeterminate and non-localisable), the nomad does not leave¹⁷. S/he moves and holds to her/his open space. S/he does not flee from her/his steppes, but makes her/his homelessness into a home. The nomadic organisation is a solution to this challenge. Nomads are quite simply those living in *nomos*, those whose home the *nomos* is. In a way the nomads could be defined by the term *apolis*, which means an outlaw, a man without a *polis* (home or city). But the nomads do have a home: *nomos* is their home. We cannot understand the nomads by defining them in a negative relation to *polis*, as if they were lacking something, but positively as a multitude of people whose home is *nomos*¹⁸. Unlike the organization of *polis*, the nomad pack does not have a coordinating law that would be separate from the pack and would rule and direct it. And unlike the organization of *oikos*, it does not have a "lineage" or a "descend". It does not have a common ancestor. Becoming a pack is not characterized by a descend from the father but rather by contamination, the birth and proliferation through contamination, not through bloodline. Unlike proliferation through descend and the simple dualistic difference between the sexes included there, contamination always concern heterogeneous elements: "people, animals, bacteria, viruses, molecules, micro-organisms..."¹⁹.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 13 8; Deleuze, *Autioma*, Gaudeamus, Helsinki, 1992, p. 18.

17 On the difference between the nomads and the migrants see Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *op.cit.*, p. 472-473.

18 In Greek nomads (*nomas*) are quite simply those who live in *nomos*, who distribute in it with their flocks with no allusion *polis*. See Gilles Deleuze, *Haastattelija*, 2005, p. 205. Klaus Harju has accurately treated the question of home in homelessness by the concept of *saudade*. See Harju, "Saudade, to be at home without a home", *Ephemera. Theory and Politics in Organization*, 2005, 5(X): 687-689.

19 Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *op.cit.*, p. 295.

According to Aristotle, the place of human being is in the *polis* in so far as he fulfills his own nature as a "political animal". A human being who is outside the state because of his nature is, for Aristotle, like the brotherless, lawless and homeless lover of war, condemned by Homer²⁰. According to Aristotle a human being can actualise his own nature only as a part of *polis* since "the city-state is prior in nature to the household and to each of us individually, for the whole must necessarily be prior to the part" and the part exists only when filling its appropriate task as a part of the whole²¹. For Deleuze and Guattari instead, a human being or an animal outside the *polis* is not "an isolated piece at draughts" as for Aristotle, but always gregarious, always a multitude and therefore a war machine²².

By this Deleuze and Guattari mean that the community, the *polis* has no monopoly of acting together. The condition of cooperation does not lie in the weaving together of several different, it does not lie in law, in moral, in tolerance or in agreement, it does not lie in "us" or in "I". Acting together is not about the dialectics between the individual and the collective or about the search for the "good" totality. The herds of animals or men find their common substance rather in the mere movement and mutation. There the relations are not organized by a common cause, but by laws of closeness, attraction, rejection and contamination. There "good" are the relations that increase powers, that spread and combine themselves, and "bad" are the ones that suffocate and pull apart²³. When a herd meets something fit for it, it merges to it, devours it and the powers of the herd expand. What the herd was before transforms, together with that encountered, into a part of a bigger and larger subjectivity.

20 Iliad 9.63: "For he that foments civil discord (*polemos*) is a clanless (*afretar*), hearthless (*anestios*) outlaw (*athemistos*)".

21 Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253 a18.

22 *Ibid.*, 1253 a5-10; See Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *op.cit.*, p. 471: Proposition V: Nomad existence necessarily effectuates the conditions of the war machine in space.

23 Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, tr. Robert Hurley, City Lights Books, San Francisco, 1988, p. 22.

3.

Deleuze gives the materiality of the immaterial also a third name: *multitude* (*multiplicité*). The idea of immaterial as multiplicity helps us to understand further the immaterial as substance which is not just actual: it is rather real without being actual and ideal without being abstract.

Deleuze emphasises repeatedly that *multiplicité* is not an adjective, a character or an attribute, but a noun (substantive). The idea of a substantive multitude underlines that it is not about the relation between the *one* and the *many* characterizing the classical political thought. The question is not of organizing the many different (people) into one through a common cause or task, but of the organisation of the many as such, with no need to uniformity, unanimity, common language or any other common nominator. Multitude is the organisation of singularities in which nobody can be inside or outside but always at the same level "alone together", by oneself in conjunction with others alike: "When the pack of wolfs forms a ring around the fire, each man will have neighbours to the right and left, but no one behind him; his back exposed to the wilderness..."²⁴. In other words the multitude is not a "one" constructed out of "many"; it is not composed of individuals or of a diversity of parts that are glued together. It does not amount to pluralism and has nothing to do with tolerance. It is a perfectly differentiated crowd lacking absolutely any transcendental nominator. It does not function based on shared values or meanings, but finds its unity only in movement and change.

Thus multitude is something that we cannot think or reach by spatial sequences or historical facts, just like in Zenon's paradox the arrow is motionless at every point of its trajectory and seems to annul the reality of movement and change. The multitude is deceived every time we try to think of it as a relation between actual elements or as a succession of present moments or motionless cuts, in other words when *time* is confused with space and *duration* with states of consciousness that are separate and external to one another. Multitude destroys spatial hierarchy and the self-evidences of common sense that our habits and communication require.

This is why Deleuze and Guattari distinguish multitude from *history*²⁵. Change may cause history, have outcomes, end in catastrophes, but it never *is* its outcomes, its history or its catastrophes. Even though there are relations between multitude and history, the multitude as a "place" of mutation does derive from its historical conditions. Change is not generated out of this or that wrong or this or that injustice. But it is neither eternal which would make it completely contrary to history. History can however only conceive how the change becomes effective under certain conditions. Change instead exceeds its motives and escapes history: it itself must be approached as a substance independent from history, a region not governed by historical time and space.

24 Elias Canetti quoted in Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, op.cit, p. 47.

25 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, tr. H. Thomlinson and B. Habberjam, Zone Books, New York, 1988, p. 37-38. The idea of the difference between change and history is grounded on a distinction made by Henri Bergson between two different types of multiplicity: one of space and homogeneous time and one of pure duration. The first one is a quantitative and measurable multiplicity, "a multiplicity of exteriority, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of order and of quantitative differentiation, of *difference in degree*". The other is qualitative, "an internal multiplicity of succession, of fusion, of organisation, of heterogeneity, of qualitative discrimination, or of difference in kind". The multiplicity of order is fragmentary and actual, whereas the multiplicity of organisation is continuous and virtual.

In other words, change cannot be reconstructed according to successive moments or spatial coordinates, just like our existence cannot be reconstructed merely by the successive present moments. We do not shrink into our particular deeds, to our spatial existence or to the places we occupy on the continuum of chronological time. The tense of time itself is rather the indeterminate *duration*. Duration is the element which prevents everything from being immediately given. It is the dimension of the *untimely*, of the *memory* or of the *in-organic life*, which at the same time is in time and works against the time, as if always external to its own time. It has no place in the region governed by space and time, but without it there would be no change. If the multiplicity as the place of mutation is duration, then duration must be that which differs not from something else but from itself. Thus duration must be that which *changes*. The change, that is, the difference, is no longer between two things or between two tendencies, but becomes in itself now a positive substance²⁶.

In the same way as the difference itself becomes a substance, the movement is no longer a movement of something, the change a change of something, the multiplicity a multiplicity of something, but they assume themselves a substantial character without having to presume something else like a changing or a multiple object. That duration is change means that it differs internally from itself: the difference in itself becomes a unity of substance and subject, a *causa sui*, a substance which is its own cause. This is why the multitude does not need anything external to it, like a reason or a meaning, no kind of mediation for the support or guarantee of its existence. As long as the cause is external to its effect it cannot guarantee its existence, only its possibility, not its substantiality and necessity.

Deleuze presents one of the most exact definitions of multiplicity in his essay "A quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?", even though he uses there the term *multiplicité* only once.

In the essay he differentiates three kinds of relations²⁷. First, there are relations between autonomous or independent elements, such as $1 + 2 = 3$. The factors in this relation are real and their relations must be also said to be *real*. Another kind of a relation is born between factors whose value is not defined, but which in any case must have a set value, like in the equation $x^2 + y^2 = R^2$. Deleuze calls these relations *imaginary* ones. A third type of relation appears between the factors which themselves have no defined value, but however reciprocally define each other, like in the equation $dy/dx = -x/y$, where the factors are in a differential relation. "*Dy* is totally undetermined in relation to *y*, *dx* is totally undetermined in relation to *x*: each one has neither existence, nor value, nor signification. And yet *dy/dx* is totally determined, the two elements determining each other reciprocally in the relation"²⁸. In other words the relation itself is completely real, but independent of its actual factors.

26 Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's conception of difference", in Mullarkey J. (ed.), *The New Bergson*, tr. Melissa McMahon, Manchester UP, Manchester, 1999, p. 48.

27 Gilles Deleuze, "A quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme" in F. Chatelet (ed.), *Histoire de la philosophie*, Paris, 1972, p. 183.

28 *Ibid*, p. 265.

When the factors, between which the relation emerges, are not definable (actual), but the relation in between them is completely defined in reciprocity, the relation is *virtual*. We must avoid the temptation of offering the elements constituting the virtual an actuality that they do not have, and of depriving their relations the reality that they do have: the reality of virtuality lies in the structure that does not drown or exhaust into any (present or past) actuality.

To clarify further the multitude's mode of existence we must still draw a clear line between the *virtual* and the *possible*. Possible is that which may realise but has not yet done so: for the possible to exist, it must *realise* itself. There is nothing that can at the same time be both possible and realised: possible is the opposite of the real and therefore has a negative character²⁹.

When something possible is realised, nothing essentially changes in its nature, an existence is simply added to it (this is why the real is *like* the possible). But since all the possibles cannot be realised, the realisation must mean limiting and eliminating other possibles, in order for certain possibles to "pass" into the real. Thus the relation between the possible and the real excludes always the other. *Possible* is never real, even if it might be actual. *Virtual* instead is always real.

This is why Deleuze says that the virtual does not realize itself but that it *actualises* itself³⁰. This is not just a question of terminology, but of defining the existence of multiplicity without any *negative* elements: the actual differs from the virtual, not as a negation, but as a positive act of creation. This is why virtual and actual are not alike: they do not resemble one another. Actualisation does not mean passing into a lower level of being or copying the ideal into the real. Actualisation does not mean reminding, similarity or limiting, but positive production and creation. The difference between the virtual and the actual requires the actualisation to be an act of creation. There is no ready made form for it, there is no set way or channel that would direct the birth of an actual multiplicity.

Multiplicity is always a question of the virtual in a process of actualisation – of differentiation, distribution, integration, that is to say: in a process of change – which lacks all external causes and meanings, all particular purposes and tasks. When a multiplicity actualises itself it differs internally from itself without any *mediation*. This is a process of actual and positive creation of something new, of change, and not a process of mere negative resemblance or reflection.

While the real is in the image and likeness of the possible that it realises (the image of possible), "the actual does not resemble the virtuality it embodies"³¹. The virtual is pure positive difference and emergence of a difference from the virtual: "virtuality exists 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"³². Multiplicity is a question of the relation between the virtual and the actual, not of the relation between the possible and the real, where in the latter the real is always completely ready and given. All the possible reality exists only as a kind of a "pseudo-actuality" that comes into "being" in the series of limitations conducted by sameness: no kind of a movement of creating something new can take place here³³. The realization of the possible generates a static multiplicity since all the real being is ready made and pre-existing in the "pseudo-actuality" of the possible. The actualisation of the virtual instead generates a dynamic multiplicity which is unpredictable and "indeterminate" but only in the sense that it is creative and generates something new. That is why Deleuze says that the existence of the multitude must be *determined* in the sense that it is necessary, qualitative, singular, substantial and actual. And it must be *indeterminate* because it is not determined by any pre-existing goal or cause, because it is always creative and generating something new.

Deleuze uses the neologism *differentiation* to conceptualize the structure of multitude³⁴. A virtual multiplicity has not yet differentiated, even though it is completely differentiated. The actualisation of the multiplicity is the process of differentiation. The multiplicity in itself is differential but has differentiating effects. Self-differentiation (change) is a movement of the virtual, which is actualising itself. Duration is the time of actualisation and change according to which the elements of the virtual with-being become different (actualised) in different rhythms. Time passes from the virtual to the actual, that is to say from the multiplicity to its actualisation, and not from one actual moment or thing to another. Time and the structure of multiplicity, or change (the birth of something new) and multiplicity can no longer be separated from each other. Since actualisation is a process of creative differentiation, the fact that the multiplicity is completely determined, does not imply limitations or capturing into any predetermined forms. The actualisation does not mean that something new emerges out of "nothing" or that existence is just added to possible things.

It means rather the substantial event of creation, which does not bend to already existing conditions, causes or purposes, but dreads its submission more than death.

29 *Ibid*, p. 211; Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, op.cit, p. 96.

30 According to the theory of memory or of the ontological unconsciousness by Bergson the multiplicity is in the past, "in a memory which in itself is pure, virtual, indifferent and idle", Gilles Deleuze, op.cit, p. 71. The creative movement from the unitedness of the past into the multiplicity of the present is a process of actualisation.

31 Gilles Deleuze, op.cit, p. 97.

32 *Ibid*, p. 97.

33 *Ibid*, p. 98.

34 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference & Repetition*, 1997, p. 210; Deleuze, "A quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?", 1972, p. 268.

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The absolutely desperate current state of affairs fills me with hope
(Karl Marx)

On the time left to live

In 2007, Carnegie Mellon University organised a series of lectures entitled *Last lecture*, for which several professors were asked to talk about what was really on their minds. If they had had to deliver the last lecture of their lives, what would that have been like and on what subject? The invitation from the university with the rhetorical implications of determinacy was clearly intended to challenge the lecturers and prompt their imagination to yield some additional value. The challenge got a totally different twist to it in September 2007, however, in the lecture given by Randy Pausch, Carnegie Mellon University professor of computer science, entitled *Achieving Your Childhood Dreams*. After stating that he had been diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer and only had half a year left to live, he began to talk in an optimistic and humorous way about his childhood dreams, giving insights into computer science and also giving advice on creating multi-disciplinary collaborations, group work and interaction with other people. All that was accompanied by enchanting life lessons and even push-ups on stage. His lecture immediately received media attention. The lecture video became an online hit at social networking sites such as YouTube, Google Video, etc., and within a few days, the promise of him publishing a book with his lecture was worth 6 to 7 million dollars.¹ His story led to unavoidable spectacle, where the empathy and compassion grew simultaneously with the market value. It contained all the necessary elements of tragedy – a good-looking man, a successful professor in his 40ies with three young children, is confronted with the evaporation of the time ahead of him. The reason that I'm starting my prognosis paper with this particular story is not out of empathy (with the unbearable heaviness of mortality), but due to some coincidences in the story which can reveal to us the intriguing relations between the contemporary experience of time and collaboration. A real attention-grabbing surplus of this story happened at the time when professor Pausch was already fighting his terminate illness as a celebrity. In the middle of the buzz in which collective identification was growing along with the anticipated

profit from his works, Pausch agreed to give another lecture at Columbia University, in which he talked about time management. He talked about the most efficient ways of making use of time, of how to create manageable plans, multiple schedules, efficient meetings and of how to go to bed with an empty inbox. This was something Pausch was an expert on in his lifetime, but of course acquired a completely different, much more metaphysical dimension when he accepted the invitation. The philosopher Renata Salecl who wrote about that story in a newspaper column, describes the obsession with time management as a desperate attempt to look behind the unbearable mask of death. There is no mystery behind the determinate fact of death or – whatever our strategy may be – behind the obsessive time management or refusal of all time plans; all strategies are equally unproductive.² Pausch fought his illness bravely and died in July 2008, one month after this text first appeared as a lecture within the scope of the *Prognosis conference*. The last period of his life is intriguingly commemorated by the book *The Last Lecture*, which besides providing optimistic guidelines for living, dealt also with subject of collaboration and ways of working together in research and time management. Strange combination of issues being put together with the fact of unavoidable prognosis about life, did not result from some publishing strategy, nor it is merely coincidental. It can also be understood as a peculiar symptom which discloses the strange relation between time and working together, a relation which is a necessity nowadays: in contemporary society, working together cannot be conceived of separately from time management.

1 The book *The Last Lecture* has been published in many languages.

2 Renata Salecl, "Zadnje predavanje", (*The Last Lecture*), *Delo*, 8. 03. 2008.

I would like to argue that there are important economic, political and philosophical reasons nowadays for the fact that collaboration is understood as a timely constellation, one that calls for perfected time management, organisation and division. From the perspective of contemporary political economy, collaborative work processes are inextricably connected with time planning since contemporary capital is not only understood as a measure, but also as progress: contemporary political economy has an innovative element in itself. As Toni Negri said, we live in the “time of administration”, where “progress is the representation of a process that proceeds by leaps forward, in which all factors can be referred back to a proportion. Difference is then only quantitative and the unity of the project is always already before its articulation.”³ In other words, we all continuously behave as if being in a determinate race (with many deadlines to cross), where the abstract goal defines the present time of the process, its temporal dynamics, the ways in which the process is articulated, implemented, measured. In that sense, the collective identification with *the definiteness of the time left for us to live* is even more understandable: it springs from the sudden and absolutely desperate impossibility of proportion, from the terrible experience of the desperate impotency in the administration of our life.

“What is time, then? I know very well what time is if not asked about it, but if somebody asks me what time is and I want to explain, I become confused.”⁴ In this statement, St. Augustine relates the difficulty of articulation to the ontological understanding of time, with time closely related in his theological thought to the mystery of divinity. If we approach his statement from a contemporary perspective, we find that, today, this unspeakable ontological understanding of time is replaced with the maneuverable and explainable notion of time. That means that the contemporary experience of time is contained within our knowledge of what time is (or “what the time is”). This experience of time can also be related to the frequent sentence: sorry, don’t have

the time – which, of course, is but another description of our general experience of time. The contemporary acceleration of time, which results from the industrial, economic and scientific processes of the last two centuries, has not only dissolved the spatial coordinates of work processes, their immobile and static territoriality, but also changed the modes of individuation of contemporary subjects. Jameson argues that contemporary temporality is a schizophrenic one; it is a temporality of the present, which lacks any phenomenological connections to be able to hold on to the past and anticipate the future.⁵ However, the experience of the contemporary subject and the individuation of the human being is achieved through the multilayered and parallel present time experiences, which, regardless of the possibility of openness and liberation, have to be carefully planned throughout and have a particular, effective time structure. Their chaotic and multilayered experience has to be rationalised with the operative and effective procedures which necessarily subjugate subjective experiences to the common goal.

This argument can also be supported by the important maxim of immaterial labour of the last decades: that of “working together”. As Florian Schneider writes, working together or “teamwork” has been a key notion in the changed political and economical atmosphere of the last decade, and collaboration is very frequently used as a synonym for co-operation.⁶ Based on the comprehension of the management theory that, in teamwork environment, people are supposed to understand and believe that thinking, planning, decisions and actions are better when done in co-operation with others, teamwork served as a key notion for success, following the famous maxim of Andrew Carnegie from the beginning of 20th century: “Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision, the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”⁷ However, teamwork, as Schneider writes, also represents the subjugation of workers

to an omnipresent and individualized control regime. The concept of group replaced the classical one of ‘foremanship’ as the disciplining force. Rather than through repression, cost efficiency was increased by means of peer-pressure and the collective identification of relatively small groups of multi-skilled co-workers.⁸

Teamwork is therefore part of the obsessive administration of the neoliberal subject, who, paradoxically, has to be free from their inner constraints, creative, innovative and virtuous. A subject who, at least since the late 1960s onwards, has been able to reveal their subconscious desires and free themselves from the permanent feeling of mortality. At the same time, this creative and value-generating subject is free from the restraints of society, the difficulties posed by differences and

⁵ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1999.

⁶ Florian Schneider, “Collaboration”, <http://summit.kein.org/node/190> (18. 2. 2009).

⁷ Andrew Carnegie, quoted from Florian Schneider, “Collaboration”.

⁸ Florian Schneider, op.cit.

³ Toni Negri, *Time for Revolution*, Continuum, New York, 2003.

⁴ Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, Book XI, Ch XIV, 17.

On time left to work

Today, it is so difficult to think about the collaboration as a transformative process precisely because there is a certain excess of collaboration in our daily lives: we mostly become visible when collaborating. Collaboration is a key issue, not only in politics (which is somehow cynical, given the other meaning of "collaboration", connected with treason), but also in contemporary economy and culture. Collaboration is closely related to the mobility in flexibility of contemporary labour and even seems to be inscribed into the value of labour as based on the constant production and exchange of communication, relations, signs, and languages. Collaboration places people into the present (time); it is only through collaboration, on the constantly changing map of places, that people can actually become visible in the present time, where they constantly add to the contemporary flow of money, capital and signs. Interestingly, the other can most of the time be encountered exactly in the same work community that enables this contemporary mobility: more and more "non-collaborative or non-belonging" people or groups move in the invisible and deadly channels of illegality, poverty, invisibility and escape. We can say that collaboration, communication and connection belong to the most fetishized fields of the present day. As Paolo Virno writes, fundamental abilities of a human being are now at the forefront of production, with language, thought, self-reflection and ability to learn as principal characteristics of contemporary public labour. Contemporary production consists of sharing linguistic and cognitive habits (i.e. if affective and intellectual exchange of knowledge); it is the constitutive element of post-Fordist production of labour.

All the workers enter into the production as much as they are speaking-thinking. This has nothing to do, mind you, with "professionalism" or with the ancient concepts of "skill" or "craftsmanship": to speak/to think are generic habits of the human animal, the opposite of any sort of specialisation.¹²

For Virno, this can be described as preliminary *sharing*, which is itself the basis of contemporary production. In his view, sharing is opposed to the traditional division of labour. There are no longer objective technical criteria to regulate the working together, to define the responsibility of each worker in its own specialised sphere. Or, as Virno writes, "the segmentation of criteria is instead of that, explicitly arbitrary, reversible, changeable."¹³ Along these lines, the interesting notion of the process of *sharing* can also be interpreted as a specific understanding of collaboration as an exchange of differences, creations and innovations and no longer as a hierarchical division of tasks. The problem for Virno arises, however, when such sharing has no political effect, and does not affect change within a political community. "The public character of the intellect, when it does not take place in a public sphere, translates into the unchecked proliferation of hierarchies, groundless as they are thriving."¹⁴ This influences the ruthless mode of individuation in terms of complete subjugation of the worker's self or, in Virno's words, results in "personal dependence", which I already discussed in the previous chapter. The fetishized status of collaboration can also tell us

otherness. Not only can he/she freely work with others, but the otherness becomes value in co-operation. In this obsessive administration of the subject's self, refusal is only allowed from time to time; from time to time, it is possible to escape, maybe on holiday, into drugs or, unfortunately, to hospital. As Guattari argues, the human being is today confronted with a brutal intensification of the processes of individuation, where old forms of life become obsolete even before we are able to absorb them. In this way, the molecular dispersion of time has set free the finite, subconscious subjectivity, implemented in the endless existential paradoxes. At the same time, however, one is compelled to live in a constant state of tension, on the verge of exasperation, and it is this state that gives rise to the power of invention.

Moreover, the process is intensified even further by the fact that this aggravated tension and speeded-up power of invention not only nourish capital but actually constitute its principal source of value, its most profitable investment.⁹

The paradox is that immaterial work force, into which so much hope for collaboration has been invested over the last decade, is, as Matteo Pasquinelli ironically puts it, in a kind of "immaterial civil war" and not a struggle against new forms of exploitation:

It is the well known rivalry within academia and the art world, the economy of references, the deadline race, the competition for festivals, the envy and suspicion among activists. Cooperation is structurally difficult among creative workers, where a prestige economy operates the same way as in any star system (not to mention political philosophers!), and where new ideas have to confront each other, often involving their creators in a fight.¹⁰

Can we then imagine a different mode of collaboration which would not necessarily end in having no time at all, precisely at the point when we actually begin to collaborate? Can we also collaborate with no revolutionary, corporative, metaphysical deadlines on the horizon? As Schneider argues, the question is how new dimensions of working together could be reflected on, conceived of and at the same time distanced from the "free wheeling and well-meaning strategies of anti-authoritarianism on one side or the brutal force of coercing cooperation on the other".¹¹ So what then makes collaboration transformative and how do collaborative subjects really inflict change?

9 Suely Rolnik, "Life on the Spot", <http://www.caosmose.net/suelyrolnik/index.html> (18. 6. 2008).

10 Matteo Pasquinelli, "Immaterial Civil War, Prototypes of Conflict within Cognitive Capitalism," <http://eipcp.net/policies/cci/pasquinelli/en> (18. 02. 2009).

11 Florian Schneider, op.cit.

12 Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2004, p. 41.

13 *Ibid.* p. 41.

14 *Ibid.* p. 41.

something about what Virno terms the “non-public public sphere”, which reflects the one-dimensional character of global networks and communication channels. “Because this sphere is not a political sphere, the non-public public sphere thus created can produce the most devastating consequences: collective hallucinations of fear, occult form of superstition and general paranoia.”¹⁵ Or, if we apply this to the notion of collaboration: when collaboration fails to not inflict change within the public sphere, it is not part of *res publica* and can produce unrestrained forms of oppression.

It namely seems that there is something in our daily rhythm, in the way we experience this sharing of language and thought, which puts us into a state of constant mobility, flexibility and precariousness, where nothing is stable but the deadline of working together, and where space is generated as a consequence of mobility. In 2006 Eleanor Bauer, an American choreographer and dancer based in Brussels, completed her research on the Brussels dance community. In her text she humorously tackles the notion of mobility of contemporary performance artists, the changed status of this flexible and disembodied labour, and the value of the community which has resulted from such collaborative mobility of artists. Besides offering picturesque descriptions of the mobility of the contemporary performer, with an obligatory Mac computer and multiple toothbrushes, one of the last paragraphs of her research describes the contemporary performing artist in the following way:

The performing artist him/herself is a resource, a located node of activity and hub for information that processes and produces within the interstices of culture and community. In a neo-collective or post-collective model, the artists that remain pro-community engagement, must maintain very individual-oriented strength and productivity while remaining connected to the world and to each other, each highly differentiated while in constant collaboration with a larger network of other creative, productive, individuals that support and engage in each other’s interests. This description is ambitious considering what it requires in terms of time and energy, and generosity of course, as we are not paid for keeping in touch even when our work depends on it.¹⁶

Let us ask ourselves, however, where this accurate description of the highly ambitious performance artist actually comes from? Could this not be precisely the description of the contemporary collaborative worker, equipped for continuous high performance? That of the always critical and active labourer, whose subjectivity is totally subjected to the modes of contemporary capitalistic production? The fact that he/she has some generosity and even collaborates free of charge doesn’t save him or her from the contemporary forms of exploitation. Quite the opposite: this generosity becomes the extra value of belonging to the discursive and productive cultural community.¹⁷ The generosity puts him/her into the core of the contemporary mode of individuation, where what is demanded from the subject is precisely their extra time and energy. Could that description not be read also as a description of an artist who is desperately struggling with an excess of collaboration, with the publicity of their work which, at the same time, is not public at all (except maybe within a small specialistic operative circle which delegate value to each other)?

15 Hito Steyerl, “Forget Otherness” in *Another Publication*, Renee Ridgway, Katarina Zdjelar (eds), Piet Zwart Institute – Revolver, Rotterdam – Frankfurt, 2006, p. 17.

16 Eleanor Bauer, “Becoming Room, Becoming Mac, New Artistic Identities in the Transnational Brussels Dance Community”, *Maska*, no.107-108, 2007.

17 Slavoj Žižek is writing about that fact in: *Violence*, Picador, New York, 2008.

Over the last decade, collaboration has become a key issue in the vocabulary of dancers, choreographers, and other performing artists. There are many performances dealing with collaboration as well as conferences and lectures on that issue. The word appears, as Myriam Van Imschoot writes in one of her letters on collaboration in contemporary dance, “more often than one count: it gained a currency of a catch phrase.” However, “do we speak more about collaboration because dance makers collaborate more than they used to, say, a decade ago?”¹⁸ The enforced interest in collaboration could of course have been related to the changes in the understanding of artistic subjectivity. The subjectivity of the artist has no longer been understood as a singular, self-centred subjectivity. The process of artistic creation is now much more oriented towards research-related, transdisciplinary and performative aspects of work. This can be also related to the disappearance of professional divisions, as discussed by André Lepecki. For some time already, the divisions between choreographers, dancers, critics, producers and dramaturges are disappearing. Thus, each of those professions have on disposal theoretical and practical knowledge from other fields – another factor which reinforces collaboration and makes it visible in contemporary artistic policies. Lepecki relates this disappearance to the dissolving of the stable epistemological categories of “what dance is”, which has also caused changes in the position of an artist, critic and producer.¹⁹ Such changes have resulted in different models of collaborative work and also become part of contemporary cultural politics and economies of production. However, as Imschoot writes, this reorientation on the artistic scene may explain why the collaboration label circulates more frequently, but

it does not explain why it does so with so much emphasis, to the point of sheer over-determination and a compulsive repetition of the term. It seems as if collaboration functions as uncritical marker or signifier, an honorific that must signal more than it actually performs.²⁰

There is a certain crisis in the notion itself; its high frequency of use, as Imschoot continues by drawing on Foucault, reveals that there is some sort of anxiety at work in the very use of the collaboration term. This anxiety springs from “the sheer dominance of the pure movement, mobility for its own sake, a being on the move for the pleasure of the speed”.²¹ I would agree with Imschoot that there is something very problematic at work in the compulsive repetition of this term. This repetitive use is tightly linked to the changed notion of labour, where language and the thinking being are at the forefront of contemporary production. The anxiety springs from the inability to really inflict change, to make the processes of collaboration part of *res publica*, to open up one’s political and transformative potentiality. What Imschoot detects in this obsessive use and practice of collaboration is that, ultimately, we have no time at all. An anxiety of subjugation, an unbearable attempt to look behind the mask of the determinate race, whereby, at the same time, we just won’t admit that we are already intensely participating in that very race.

18 Myriam Van Imschoot, Xavier Le Roy, “Letters in Collaboration”, *Maska*, no. 84-85, 2004, p. 62.

19 André Lepecki, “Dance without distance”, *Ballet International / Tanz Aktuell*, February 2001.

20 Myriam Van Imschoot, Xavier Le Roy, op.cit, p. 62.

21 *Ibid.*

On time being left to collaborate

What is collaboration all about in that case, and what kind of prognosis can be made about it? It is well-known that, from the second half of the 20th century, we witnessed a lot of research being done on the nature of artistic collaborative processes. When analysing those processes in the visual arts, the art historian Charles Green showed that those processes came from a particular crisis of the singular artistic subject; they were a result of the crisis of authorship as such. However, the outcome of those collaborative processes was not necessarily more democratic and didn't result in a more dispersed process of working. As Green noticed, authorship was reinforced in most cases; collaboration therefore gave extra value to the contemporary artist's self.²² The visibility of collaboration processes is therefore tightly linked to the development of the cultural production and economical processes in the contemporary culture of the second half of the 20th century. As I wrote earlier on, this visibility was even reinforced by language and creativity coming to the forefront of contemporary production. With new communicative possibilities, collaborations became multiple and simultaneous:

People meet and work together under circumstances where their efficiency, performance and labour power cannot be singled out and individually measured; everyone's work points to someone else's. Making and maintaining connections seems more important than trying to capture and store ideas. One's own production is very peculiar yet it is generated and often multiplied in networks composed of countless distinct dependencies and constituted by the power to affect and be affected. At no point in the process can this be arrested and ascertained, for it gains its power by not having explicit points of entry or exit as a normative work scenario might.²³

Today, this arrest in the excess of collaboration makes the artist "contemporary" in the sense that he or she belongs to the present time, but at the same time, does not radically alter his/her position as such: in that arrest, there is no potentiality, only actuality.

22 Charles Green, "The Third Hand, Collaboration" in *Art from Modernism to Postmodernism*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2001.

23 Florian Schneider, op.cit.

Collaboration then seems to be a symptom of the diagnosis of the present time; and the prognosis about it could then only be a negative one, and perhaps even makes us wonder whether collaboration should be part of the vocabulary of the future at all. Nevertheless, the excess of collaboration could also be read as a peculiar reminder, one which is also discussed in Imschoot's letter. She explicitly writes that perhaps the notion of collaboration is also a cover for its antidote, "genuine exchange." But what is genuine exchange? Can we talk about the difference between collaboration as procedure (for its own sake) and true collaboration? The problem is that such a caesura springs from a remedial but naïve hope that there is always something which is more real than the relations in which we are already continuously participating in reality. This is a complex problem and can also become a kind of trap which leads to nostalgic utopian longing for proper encounter, which has disappeared. At the same time, this problem of "genuine exchange" is extremely challenging. I could relate it to a statement of Badiou which Slavoj Žižek also cites at the end of his book *On Violence*: "It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways of rendering visible that which Empire already recognises as existent".²⁴ In this book, Žižek analyses the problem of violence and discusses it in connection with the harsh critique of participation and constant demand for political activity. After several examples, Žižek ends the book with a refusal of taking action; paradoxically, however, this stance comes at the end of the book, when the book has already been written. The demand for refusal of action therefore comes at the end of very agile activity, and this should not only be understood as a playful paradox but as something which is reinforcing the power of critical analysis. It discloses the potentiality of critical articulation, which has been active because of the urgency of the refusal.

The demand for "genuine exchange" can thus be such a reminder, a trigger which can help us talk about the potential of collaboration as an agent of change. We have to think about the future of collaboration in the rupture between the impossibility of the refusal of the collaborative processes in which we are already implemented, and the possibility of genuine exchange, which has yet to happen. The future is namely not

24 Alain Badiou, "15 Theses on Art", *Maska* no. 85-86, 2004, p. 9.

related to actuality as a realisation of its “becoming” but finds itself in a rupture between something which has not happened and something which has yet to happen. In this sense, the imaginative potential of collaboration can actively be put into practice and can open to the wide and unpredictable practice of working together. But to enable that, we have to deal with the excess of collaboration, with the fact that the prognosis is being done in the moment of its very crisis. This crisis is deeply affecting the way how do we think about the future of collaboration and relate it to the potentiality. “The absolutely desperate current state of affairs fills me with hope”. Marx’s remark is not only disclosing the idea of the proximity of cure to the poison, but also special relation to time and historicity, which, as Leland Delandurantaye writes, we can also find later in Benjamin’s and Agamben’s work.²⁵ Benjamin talks about the vision of the drowning man, and Agamben is developing a concept of radical potentiality which discloses critical reversibility of the moment, of the very present time itself. Giorgio Agamben writes about an inevitable paradox of this peculiar philosophical concept of potentiality. One can namely become aware of his or her potential to exist, create and spring forth from oneself only when this potential is not realised. Potentiality is then a temporal constellation, which is divided from the action itself, it is not translated into the action at all. Potentiality can come to light only when not being actualised: when the potential of a thing or a person is not realised. A certain failure, an impossibility of actualisation, is then an intrinsic part of potentiality. At the same time, only when the potential is not being actualised, one is opened to one’s being in time, to one’s eventness. In this openness one experiences the *plurality of ways* that life comes into being and is exposed to the plurality of possible actions.²⁶ The crisis today is coming exactly from a permanent and ruthless actualisation of the potentiality, where the form, temporality itself (the way that the human becomes a human) is totally conditioned by its finalisation. The actualisation of potential has become a primary force of the value on the contemporary cultural, artistic and economic market. To put it differently: with the rise of immaterial work, human language, imagination and creativity have become primary capitalistic sources of value. That transition has happened in many different ways and it can be very clearly seen by example in the constant re-questioning of the conditions to produce which produce new conditions to produce. The present time of permanent actualisation is also deeply changing the ways that we perceive and experience collaboration. The problem is that such exploitation of human potentiality structured collaboration as a specific time mode where collaboration equals actualisation, an obsession with present time.

The future of collaboration would necessarily have to encroach upon this collaborative excess and radically rethink the exclusivity of the present time, which is what brings people to work together. This is only possible if collaboration is freed from the arrest of the present time: from the arrest of deadlines, speed, simultaneous connections, the illusion of mobility, the hypocrisy of difference, the illusion of eternity, constant actualisation. Today, it is namely very difficult (but perhaps easier with the huge crisis on the horizon, which has proved so many prognoses wrong so far), to persist in the potentiality, to open the path for material conditioning of our acts and doings together, to anticipate the future events independently of the already given scenario. How should we open the working together not only to unexpected paths of transformation and also inflict change? It’s time to come back to the question of time and its relation to the collaboration in artistic process or in the creation of performance. If collaboration means working together, the nature of the encounter which enables our work together, i.e. *the quality of time*, will be of crucial importance. Encounter is something that renders life possible (or impossible); this is the goal of encounters, both in life and thinking, as Agamben said when describing his meeting with his philosophical teachers like Benjamin.²⁷ Through collaboration, we condition our future lives together, which of course means that, in order to open up the time, we have to take time out of the obsession with presence and participate in the time what has yet to happen. Working together is a time constellation which opens a spatial potentiality for proximity, something which appears as a neighbouring space, a space that is added. Agamben writes about an example of such constellation, which he terms “ease” (peace, contemplation, delight). He writes that ease is a semantic constellation where spatial proximity always borders a convenient time: if the time is not convenient, there is no topos which enables the encounter.²⁸ That means that “genuine exchange” has something to do with potentiality: with the ways we condition our future together. No future would be disclosed if we did not condition ourselves alternatively. We couldn’t act towards the future by not simultaneously changing our way of life, the material protocols of life itself, the way we move time and experience it. Collaboration is belonging to another temporal concept – potentiality. This is a temporal concept of “time’s darkness, the hushed shadows massing about the stage of what happens.”²⁹

25 Leland Delandurantaye, “Agamben’s Potential”, *Diacritics*, summer 2000. p. 3 – 24.

26 Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

27 Giorgio Agamben, “An Interview with G. Agamben”, *Liberation*, April 1, 1999.

28 Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, op.cit.

29 Durand Delandurantaye, op.cit, p. 13.

Post scriptum

The first idea for this text came from the desire to do a prognosis on collaboration in a collaborative way, together with Ivana Muller. However strongly we wanted to do that, we failed because of the lack of time. When I was preparing for the conference I realised our failure was not only the result of the lack of time, but we failed because we wanted to invent and make visible yet another protocol of collaboration, to add something more to its excess. We didn't take into account that we were already collaborating, encountering and challenging each other through many situations, conditioning our future together, with no visibility required. I would like to end with the letter I received from her one day before the conference, when I was already in Berlin preparing to talk on the crisis of collaboration inspired with the challenge of our impossible meeting. This letter was read on stage at the end of the lecture and it posed another challenge to the writing process of the present text.

Dear Bojana,

I am not there but I see us working. You are not here but I see you responding. I am anticipating our next meeting, the one that will happen in Berlin, in some days, in the context of a conference on future. I see you reading this text.

Here and now, in Berlin.

I am anticipating that moment, days before it really happens, here and now at home in Paris. I can only imagine the event. I can imagine you standing there, in the light, reading this email aloud.

It is like theatre.

When we make theatre, we prepare ourselves for the moment of the meeting with the spectator; that moment in the future that will become our mutual here and now. Days and days in advance ... trying to imagine how it is all going to be. Rehearsing that moment over and over again. Rehearsing its potentiality, its accuracy, its power, even, absurdly, its

Authenticity. So in fact, a big part of working in theatre is conditioning our future together.

In here and now I am again in this situation that the two of us like to put ourselves into: the situation of no time, of dead line long time crossed of the future that is not future any more, but some how increasingly becoming present. Once again the limitations are so extreme that only this strange mix of intuition and believe can be the right way to think, act and create. It almost becomes our methodology. And once again, just like always when work together, we are reanimating that "dead" line, making it not die, making it active and performative, making it be our friend.

And now Bojana, here we are. We are in the future.

This is the moment in which the crowd is coming in and there is no more space to imagine it, as we look at them right in front of us.

now. We look at them. me standing next to you, on your right... also wearing black.

we are now together in the future.

me imagining it

you performing it!

strongly, to the point and with an extremely good timing!

and I am looking at you, together with everybody else in the audience.

as we meet in this future here and now

yours

Ivana

1 poor and one 0 – fragments

BADco.



Atomisation

Atomization is a cinematic phenomenon occurring at the factory gate. Once the work force leaves the work behind, the atomized workers go about their romances, their perpetrations, their destinies in the grand scheme of world events. Whilst the first film – *The Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* – still needed to make its point by demonstrating the unity of form and matter: film as a medium of capturing motion in images and film as a mass of people in motion, the future cinema was free to explore the motion as something else than mere motion in movement – as a motion of the social world. And there the individual destinies proved to be a better subject matter for the camera's prying eye. At the cinema's initial moment the work force entered the frame only to be rendered invisible for the posterity.

Contact Improvisation

In early 1970s the American choreographer Steve Paxton developed an improvisational proposition for two dancing bodies in contact exploring the easiest paths to their mutual moving masses. The proposition was based on giving and taking of each other's weight, sensing of each other's momentum and inertia. The proposition came to be known as Contact Improvisation. It was a generative improvisational proposition. Each situation the two bodies in

contact would enter into was a unique result of the position and movements executed before it. Nothing could be repeated. There were no pregivens. No knowledge other than experiential sensed as the exercise progressed. The intent was to be minimised, the sensing of intent was to be maximised.

Canonically dance was defined by the regime of visibility, by external representation of what the dance body should be performing. In opposition to this expressive externality of dance, Steve Paxton explored in his work the non-expressive internality. Much the same as other avant-garde choreographers, for instance, Trisha Brown in her *If you couldn't see me*, where she was dancing with her back facing the audience. The goal for him was to reveal the hidden, invisible, non-representational work of the dancing body. The invisible work of the neuro-motory system. Or as Steve Paxton summarised: when usage reveals the operations of the skeleton.

The implicit understanding of communication between subjects in Contact Improvisation resonated with the changes of its age – the early post-industrial age in the Western part of the developed world: the moving away from the class struggle based model of social relations to post-antagonistic forms of social interaction. The interaction in Contact Improvisation was spontaneous, mutual and reciprocal, while at the same time precluding social forms, gamesmanship, endocrine reactions. And in its disciplinary social structure non-hierarchic: no master and student, no authority. "A situation where only two can win".

Deactivation

I assume that each movement, each placement of the parts of my body in space can be imagined as a kind of vector, with its initial and terminal point, with its length and direction, speed and force. With this idea in mind I make my first movement, an initial proposition. Then, I imagine the vector of that movement and then I imagine what my next movement will be and then I imagine a vector between the movement I just made and the one I just imagined and then I perform the movement that is my interpretation of the vector between those two movements – the real movement I did and ghost, imagined movement of my body. The result movement becomes my next initial proposition.

Movement editing / gradual elimination

First. Find say 10 or 15 different men (preferably in as many separate establishments and different parts of the country) who are especially skilful in doing the particular work to be analyzed. *Second.* Study the exact series of elementary operations or motions which each of these men uses in doing the work which is being investigated, as well as the implements each man uses. *Third.* Study with a stop watch the time required to make each of these elementary movements and then select the quickest way of doing each element of the work. *Fourth.* Eliminate all false movements, slow movements and useless movements. *Fifth.* After doing away with all unnecessary movements collect into one series the quickest and the best movements as well as the best implements. (Frederick Winslow Taylor)



Post-industrialisation, fatigue

In former times the potential for formation of collective subjectivity rested on the proletariat's unique ability among the social classes to transform the economic relations into a political question. In post-industrial times however the possibility to form a universal political subject has become an enigma both for the political agency and the political thought. The industrial proletariat could separate the sphere of labour from the sphere of leisure time, intellection, affectivity, social communication and creativity. It was here, in the sphere of leisure time, where the political organisation could emerge. However, in the context of post-industrial economy, based on the subsumption of knowledge, creativity and attention to the economic production, that separation is no longer there. The elements that once formed the foundations for the emergence of political organisation and, consequently, the emancipation from economic power relations are now placed at the heart of economic production.

With the attention, social communication and creativity thus being exhausted in the production processes, with the social life thus being subsumed to the economic life, the potential for formation of political subjectivity and social agency disappears as well. It has become a political dogma that the social transformations can nowadays only be effected by the autonomous economic processes and not a political agency of a collective subject. In this disappearance of the potential to form a political subject, characterizing con-

temporary post-industrial societies, what seems to remain as a shared experience is the exhaustion of creative forces, where the subject leaves behind the sphere of production and where there's no more strength left for political organization – the experience of fatigue.

Fatigue sets in at the level of individual mental and physical capacities, yet it's an eminently collective phenomenon. It's a phenomenon in common that beckons towards political subjectivity, yet in its paralysis of economic efficiency it also marks the paralysis of political action.

Histories: moving images vs. labour vs. choreography

The first film ever made captured the workers of the Lumière factory collectively surging across the factory gate as they leave their place of work. This massive exodus across the factory gate marks the beginning of the history of cinema. And it is with these moving images of the industrial work force stepping into the space of cinematic production that the troubled relation of labour began. As commentators have noted, throughout its history the cinema doggedly avoided to show us what remains behind those factory gates, rather insisting on portraying individual stories of workers once they disband and atomize stepping across the factory gates: love stories, crime stories, war stories - but rarely ever workplace stories.

And while the cinema shied away from the industrial production process, the images themselves had a deactivating effect upon the work: the consumption competed with the production for attention, until industrial production was replaced and images became productive of value.

The intricate parallel history of film and labour begins with an organization of movement: directors Lumière ordered their workers to coordinate their movements so as to all exit the factory before the film reel (800 images, 50 seconds) runs out. Throughout the 20th century the choreographing of movement would continue to influence and be influenced by optimization of production process and development of film representation: think together Meyerhold and Kuleshov, think together Laban and Taylor, think together Paxton and post-industrialization...

Shadow thoughts

...revue today... didactical variété... theatricals of populist performance... distinction between populist and realist style... exalted style in realities... translation from one coordinate system to another: does it change the latter?... twoface – exhaustion and agency... arresting then and arresting now...exploded view...red coming from the left and leaving to the right...short breath choreographies...interval and interstice...a woman like me, but...silent show...shadow movement...slacker... absence of others... topological space is a strategy... arithmetics of image... taking power over the original sound...

Us

Me, the director; it, the camera; you, the filmgoers; them, the subjects; us, watching the film; them, performing for the film; us, re-enacting them on the film set; you, watching us re-enacting them facing sideways; us, present; them, gone; us, in so many ways not us. "All that, we had all organized like that – all the sounds, all the images, in that order." (Dzięca Vertov Group)



On Fatigue – matching game

Siniša Ilić



Tired of repetition

Tired of knowledge

Tired of being a symptom

Tired of professionalism

Tired of bureaucracy

Tired of migrations

Tired of heteronormativity

Tired of pronunciation

Tired of critical approach

Tired of maintenance

Tired of discussion

Tired of status quo



Installation view, Art Point Gallery, Vienna, 2009

Instructions: match the image and *fatigue*
Based on *On Fatigue* interactive display and series of drawings.



Tired of production

Tired of imagination

Tired of investing

Tired of hygiene

Tired of adventures

Tired of health care

Tired of history

Tired of agitation

Tired of expectation

Tired of integration

Tired of programs

Tired of images



LABOUR & LEISURE: The Artist at (Non-)Work Branka Čurčić, Kristijan Lukić and Gordana Nikolić (editing and curating team)

The *LABOUR&LEISURE: The Artist at (Non-)Work* project (Novi Sad, 2010–11)¹ comprises a series of public discussions, exhibitions, and publications, focused on researching specific artistic and social practices that critically reflect on the contemporary concept of *labour* – the conditions of labour, the new social needs and relations produced by labour. The project is also aimed at elaborating a relatively unexplored field of art history that comprises those practices that represent the extreme on the trajectory of this exploration – the artist's decision to abandon art and the production of art.

The starting point of the research is the historical example of the practices of a number of artists whose work is associated with radical-modernist and conceptual art frameworks, but who decided, after an intense period of making art during the 1960s, '70s, and later, to end or significantly alter their current practices – by withdrawing from the production of art, from public life, or by propagating the concept of idling and "slacking".

Such *artistic practices* point to those critical capacities of art that are directed at re-examining and redefining the boundaries of the concept of art, to the self-questioning of artists' existential positions, as well as to the unrealised utopian projects of the 1960s avant-garde. The presence of unease, sometimes also of resignation, as a result of artists' inability to realize a social role that would lead to a transformation of life itself, emerges as a common denominator of these art practices.

However, only under today's general conditions, as well as partly from understanding the position of contemporary art practice, does it become possible to view quitting artistic production as an act that affirms the social dimension of art.

¹ Produced by: Muzej savremene umetnosti Vojvodine (Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, www.msuvo.org) and the New Media Center_kuda.org (www.kuda.org), Novi Sad, Serbia.

From that perspective, the activities of artists based on the paradigm of abandoning the imperative to work (Stephen Wright), on "minimising all action", call not only for a decrease in the (hyper-)production of artistic activity, but also for self-reflection. In that sense, one should view the concepts of (non-)work and slacking, in artistic practices and wider cultural production alike, in relation to specific historical and current socio-political environments (socialism/communism – transition/neoliberalism) and changes in the processes of production (industrial and post-industrial society / Fordism and post-Fordism).

For instance, during the 1970s in the former Yugoslavia, a number of artistic practices emerged, which carried the prefix of a new "form of consciousness", as a retreat from the unsuccessful avant-garde ideas of those years. They announced one version of the "post-avant-garde" interpretations of the micro-system of art (first and foremost the "labour" and "production" in art) and social macro-politics, through various forms of deconstructing existing paradigms, through critique, irony, idling, etc. *The End* (1973–76) is the title of the "work" by the Novi Sad artists Slobodan Tišma and Čedomir Drča, who profess to be ending their engagement with art and diverting from the avant-garde utopian idea of enforcing an artwork that partakes in changing the world. A somewhat different position within the framework of the practice of the "productivism of laziness" may be found in the work of the Zagreb artist Mladen Stilinović under the title *Umjetnik radi* (*The Artist at Work*), whereas Goran Đorđević in his *Internacionalni štrajk umetnika* (*International Artists' Strike*, 1979) called for protest against the system of the arts, repression of artists, and one's alienation from the products of one's own practice.

The artistic practices that were emerging during the latter half of the twentieth century should be viewed side by side with those that are emerging today, in the altered socio-economic conditions and transformation of the production process itself, taking into account the growing significance of communication, collaboration, creativity, the indispensability of networking, and also of the ubiquitous uncertainty (the precariat).

In fact, elaborating the historical practices of the 1960s and '70s leaves room to discuss the contemporary artistic and cultural production, which almost inevitably finds itself under pressure from excessive productivity and competition. Questions emerge: Could the artist's abandoning of her/his artistic production in fact become a gesture of radical critique and a new form of her/his sovereignty, beyond the



Slobodan Tišma and Čedomir Drča, *The End*, 1973-76

expected parameters of the neoliberal creative industries and reactionary national politics? Could abandoning artistic production serve as a means to challenge the dominant productivist paradigm today, when labour and leisure are no longer opposites but are transformed into a continuum, into a fresh option for the advance of capital? And could the practice of slacking as an “active idling”, unfamiliar as it is with the hierarchy and mechanisms of productivism and thus neither subject nor opposite to it, actually be opening a new chapter in the conception of labour and creativity?

In the context of this set of problems, we may note the practices of those artists who in their work examine the contemporary forms of post-Fordist, non-material labour, point to its sophisticated exploitative dimension, a labour that, under the conditions of network economy, often overlaps with the once clearly delimited time of the so-called passive or active leisure. Among the contemporary art works that deal with the possibility of a “break” with the usual practice of contemporary labour, we should mention *Web 2.0 Suicide Machine* by the moddr_group collective, *Ten Thousand Cents* by Aaron Koblin and Takashi Kawashima, and the *Sport Art Festival* by the Irrational.org initiative.

The axis of the current set of problems is one’s “over-identification” with the process of work. Artists and their human capital, creativity, and labour represent the last reserve in contemporary economy (Metahaven). It is no longer possible to distinguish between the hours of labour and the hours of leisure; today, labour is always bound up with improvisation, with the possible, the unforeseeable; the worker’s “soul”, personality, and subjectivity become a significant part of the organization of production (Maurizio Lazzarato). The dominant mode of labour today generates not only material goods, but also relations and, finally, social life itself (Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri). The social struggles of the 1960s and ’70s conceptualized and enforced, in the field of the arts and beyond, a radical critique of labour, and propagated strategies of “resisting” and refusing work that is absorbed into the generic liberal concept of popular sovereignty, which enables its peaceful coexistence with the relations in capitalist production (Mario Tronti). Post-Fordism is viewed as a sort of response to the then communist tendencies coming from the side of criticism, which opened the door to a kind of paradoxical contemporary “communism of capital” (Paolo Virno).

Translated from Serbian by Žarko Cvejić

Art and Labour

Marko Kostanić

The issue of labour, its organisation and division, its function in social reproduction and the ideologemes that surround it in its political articulation, are probably the most interesting perspectives one can take when approaching art practices. The very formation of the institution of artistic autonomy and the legitimating arsenal used in defence of the social function of art rely on specific distinctions regarding labour as the source of social wealth and a fundamental axis of the organisation of society. The early 20th century revolts against the bourgeois aesthetic, the autonomy of art, its social and political non-utility, and the ideological masquerade of the relations of production were indeed therefore dominantly articulated, more or less explicitly, through the issues of labour. Alongside instances of abandoning the zone of artistic production and directly joining industrial production and the organisation of everyday work, as in the case of Soviet avant-garde movements, another form of the constitutive treatment of labour was the demystification of the labour process of the production of art itself and the demythologisation of the art product. For example, the Duchamp gesture is founded in exposing the process of artistic production through demystifying the processes of the circulation, distribution, and consumption of art. Brecht's method of presenting the presenting, that is, of exhibiting all the normally hidden production mechanisms of a theatrical event does not only uncover the work of theatre, but also demythologises the product of theatre. Unlike Duchamp, who does not point to the problems of organising Fordist production, his use of products made through mass and standardised production notwithstanding, in Brecht that method also stands in direct correlation with the method of reading depoliticised relations of production and division of labour beyond theatre. Besides the intended and explicit methods of exposing the relations between art and labour and art as labour, the ideological treatment of labour as a non-political practice has indeed been present throughout 20th century art. The most visible link between art and labour is the first piece of the twentieth century's dominant art – film *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*. The absence of a cinematic record of the time that the workers spend inside the factory before leaving is one of the dominant factors of shaping the political imaginary of labour across the 20th century. In an attempt to reconstruct the history of cinema from the perspective of the relations between cinema and labour, Harun Farocki concluded:

The first camera in the history of cinema was pointed at a factory, but a century later it can be said that film is hardly drawn to the factory and is even repelled by it. Films about work or workers have not become one of the main genres, and the space in front of the factory has remained on the sidelines. Most narrative films take place in that part of life where work has been left behind... In the Lumière film of 1895 it is possible to discover that the workers were assembled behind the gates and surged out at the camera operator's command. Before the film direction stepped in to condense the subject, it was the industrial order which synchronized the lives of the many individuals.¹

The problem of labour in the arts is also always closely linked to the status that labour occupies in political debates and struggles. Also, the political positioning of artists on the Left entailed a productive forming of a stance on the working class as well. In many cases, that stance was based on justifying and expunging the sense of class guilt. The above-mentioned example of Soviet artists operated in the imaginary as a successful model of the artists' total inclusion into the work process. So great was its success that the dominant conception of the history of the USSR and the "betrayal" of the revolution coincide with the disappearance of the avant-garde tendencies and establishment of the regime of socialist realism. Although, truth be told, that tells us more about the dependence of art practices' progressive status on wider political progressivity, than about any influence of art on the degree of wider political progressivity. The specific historic trap, in which leftist artists and the wider Left itself found themselves regarding alienated labour, owes its emergence to the historical situation in the Soviet Union after the Revolution. In the post-revolutionary situation, the normative conception of a productive meeting between the artists and the workers was based on a "middle-of-the-road" logic. Following the revolutionary upheaval, the workers would break free from alienated labour and the social division of labour by participating in the creation and planning of organised labour, while the artists would enter directly into the production process, lending the collective their services of virtuosity and imagination, which had previously accumulated in the erstwhile separate aesthetic field. But the desired meeting did not occur, even though the artists did directly join in the organisation of labour and the everyday. The reasons are, as always, of a geopolitical and economic nature, not any cognitive flaws in the workers or the artists. Specifically, following the Revolution, the First World War, and the subsequent civil war, the Soviet Union was a completely devastated country, with no developed industrial manufacturing, and an overwhelmingly rural population, most of whom were illiterate. Also, the expected breakout of socialist revolutions throughout Western Europe failed to materialise. Faced with extraordinary geopolitical pressures, they had to plunge into a strong industrialisation campaign and retroactively create the proletariat as the carrier of the revolutionary struggle. The mode of production was organised on Taylorist principles. Lenin's elaboration of the selection of that industrialisation mode is well known:

¹ Harun Farocki, "Workers Leaving the Factory", http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/02/21/farocki_workers.html.

The Taylor system like all capitalist progress, is a combination of the refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation and a number of the greatest scientific achievements in the field of analyzing mechanical motions during work, the elimination of superfluous and awkward motions, the elaboration of correct methods of work, the introduction of the best system of accounting and control, etc. The Soviet Republic must at all costs adopt all that is valuable in the achievements of science and technology in this field. The possibility of building socialism depends exactly upon our success in combining the Soviet power and the Soviet Organization of administration with the up-to-date achievements of capitalism. We must organize in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and systematically try it out and adapt it to our ends.²

An organisation of labour and exploitation identical to those found in the West, only with an altered property structure, upset the imaginary horizons of labour not only in Western artists, but also in wider strata of leftist movements.³ The model and organisation of labour in the socialist countries induced those Western artists who were inclined to a change in the social function of art to join the faction that advocated the liquidation of the institution of art through the aestheticisation of the everyday, as opposed to the other option – that of including art into the production cycle. The reasons included not only their disappointment with the existing real socialisms, but also the situation in the West following the Second World War, the economic boom of the Keynesian welfare state, a remarkable drop in unemployment, and a huge increase in consumption. At that moment, the artistic struggle against alienation moved to the sphere of consumption, whether it concerned the production of new identities through increased consumption, or the saturation of the erstwhile protected everyday with the onslaught of marketing.

2 Vladimir Ilič Lenjin, *Naredni zadaci Sovjetske vlasti, in Izabrana djela Marx – Engels – Lenjin*, Book IX, Naprijed, Zagreb, 1963, p. 385.

3 It should be noted that the Fordist organisation of labour was also recognised for its perceived emancipatory potential. Artists recognised it as a tool of modernisation in Russia, where most of the peasant populace lived in pre-modern conditions. Its coincidence with the political revolution afforded it its status of necessity.

Alongside the disappearance of the artists' preoccupation with the sphere of labour, there also emerged the consensual diagnosis of the end of political art, that is, of the inability of art practice effectively to partake in the political field. What artists, curators, and art theorists missed was a political articulation of their own position and a productive political valorisation of art. But then a new theory emerged, which solved all their problems. All the problems and accompanying examples briefly noted above – the position of labour in the inaugural constitution of the autonomous art field; labour within the artistic procedure itself; and the 20th century economic and political history, through which the issue of labour was variously articulated or sidestepped – received in that theory their adequate answers. The theory in question is that of immaterial labour.⁴ On several levels, that theory secures for artists their desired framework for analysing their own political position – it puts them on the same economic level as other immaterial workers; they get to operate in the same production regime as others and are part of the eventual revolutionary subject, the multitude, after having sought throughout history for the most adequate approach and relation to revolutionary movements.

4 The theories of cognitive capitalism, the precarity of labour, etc. are also closely related here.

The basic problem of the artists' relation to the theory of immaterial labour is its functioning as identification, whereas identification always represents a symptom. What is symptomatic in this situation is the identifying subject – there must be something wrong with the theory of immaterial labour as an explanatory method for contemporary capitalism and a model of resistance if it is also the most lucrative theory in the field of art and most popular with cultural workers. The problem is not any political deficiencies in the artists or cultural workers as such, but their socially institutionalised position. The theory of immaterial labour owes its shape to the specific historical and geopolitical situation in which it emerged. During the late 1970s and '80s, the Italian left tried to articulate the specific situation of the de-industrialising of Northern Italy and the problems that that presented to the organised labour movement there. They precisely defined the new forms of labour that were emerging then and tried rationally to conceptualise models of struggle on those grounds. The theoretical problems and inconsistencies started emerging with the expansion of those theories on the global market of leftist ideas and through the ahistoricisation of their sources and criteria of usability. The first problem was the assumption of capitalism as an evolving system, whereby its post-industrial organisation of labour and its immaterial and affective character are an imminent stage that is as yet statistically un-predominant but is hegemonic and will gradually consume the entire global capitalist system. Such claims seem dubious already at the level of banal geopolitical

evidence. The deindustrialisation is happening not as an effect of the inexorable advance of capitalism, but is part of a clear class agenda of the centre countries' ruling classes. The most powerful countries, such as Germany, have not undergone that process, unlike Eastern-European countries, which, lacking their production capacities, function as open markets for European financial capital; to say nothing of China's industrial development and its trade surplus with the US. Also, from the historical perspective suggested by Giovanni Arrighi,⁵ this stage of capitalism is nothing new; rather, it appears cyclically, throughout history, at the end of a certain accumulation regime that is always hegemomically determined, at the present historical instance by the US, and, moreover, as the cycle nears its end, a process of financialisation always occurs. Therefore, what is fundamental to the recent history of capitalism is not the socio-technical organisation of labour, but the process of financialisation. Another problem is the assumption of the fundamental determination of the capital-labour relation through the industrial, factory organisation of labour and, consequently, the imminent essential changes to that relation today. There is a place in the *Capital* where Marx himself lays out an almost pre-emptive critique of thus founded theories:

If we may take an example from outside the sphere of production of material objects, a schoolmaster is a productive labourer when, in addition to belabouring the heads of his scholars, he works like a horse to enrich the school proprietor. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of in a sausage factory, does not alter the relation.⁶

Moreover, that assumption is also bound up with the dominant definition of the working class that is almost cultural. The historical coincidence between the greatest revolutionary shifts and a specific stage of industrial production has established the blue-collar male worker as the prototype of the working class. But, as Richard Seymour emphasises on *Lenin's Tomb*, his blog: "The 'working class' has never been defined by a particular skill set, a particular kind of consumption, a particular set of values, sartorial tendencies or gustatory propensities".⁷

5 Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, Verso, London – New York, 2010.

6 Karl Marks, *Kapital*, in Karl Marks and Fridrih Engels, *Dela*, vol. 21, Prosveta – Institut za proučavanje radničkog pokreta, Beograd, 1977, p. 448.

7 <http://leninology.blogspot.com/2010/06/working-for-capitalism.html>.

Perhaps the most pernicious political problem concerns the consolidating of the ideological field, in which the debate and political struggle around the labour problem are being waged. The neoliberal counterrevolution and the anti-working class offensive begun by two exemplary instances of strike suppressing – Thatcher’s suppression of the miners’ strike and Reagan’s suppression of the air traffic controllers’ strike – have, as their task, to depoliticise the field of labour on the discursive plane, through the academic system and media network, and with the full force of the expert community. The managers’ rhetoric is beginning to correspond with the analytic work of the leftist theorists of immaterial labour and the new economics. Despite some valuable insights in the analysis of certain contemporary forms of labour, their absence of an adversarial relation to the rhetoric of the new economics, creative labour, and human capital, with which the ruling classes have been legitimising themselves and trying to cover up the class struggle at the workplace, has presented a serious problem to the articulation of the leftist position in the present historical situation, in which governments throughout the world have been imposing austerity measures in what is the biggest consolidated attack on the working class since the Second World War. In the concluding chapter of his seminal study of labour in contemporary capitalism, *New Capitalism? Transformations of Work*, where he successfully tries to demystify conceptions of the new economics, new forms of labour, and globalisation in statistic terms and through ideological analysis, Kevin Doogan warns of the problem indicated above, with reference to the specific case of the recent speculative boom:

Every time mention is made of the new economy and the knowledge economy it is worth remembering that these were the buzz words the speculators used to justify massive investments in millions of miles of fibre optic cable that now lie largely underused in local networks and on the sea bed.⁸

⁸ Kevin Doogan, *New Capitalism? The Transformations of Work*, Polity Press, Cambridge UK, 2009, p.221.

The problems that the theory of immaterial labour presents to the analysis of contemporary capitalism and organisation of resistance are only roughly sketched here. Artistic work may clearly be analysed through the approach that that theory offers – from its product that is not material but represents a service, affect, or atmosphere, through the disappearance of the distinction between working and leisure hours – but that analysis does not represent a moment of an immediate politicisation of art. It merely works as a shortcut identifying solution to all the problems of the relations between art and work and between artists and the working class. At a moment when the public sector is being imploded globally and public resources are being privatised, the only politically productive self-articulation that artists and cultural workers are left with is to proclaim their own practices a public need and a matter of public interest, as well as to join a wider-front coalition of resistance to the brutal attack on public interest and acquired social rights. Art can be defended only as a democratic practice in the public interest.

Translated from Croatian by Žarko Cvejić

everybody's everybodys* Alice Chauchat, Mette Ingvartsen, Krõõt Juurak and Petra Sabisch (for everybodys)

* This is a re-worked version of a text written in 2006; a concrete case of building up on something pre-existing rather than creating from scratch.

"The Open Source Group" was conceived during a meeting in December of 2005, out of an interest to implement Open Source as an artistic strategy in the performing arts. A basic part of our motivation regarding "open source methodology" was to develop new ways to share knowledge and produce specific discourses on the performing arts in order to redefine the general conditions of work and the parameters of exchange, to produce heterogeneous works, to escape from the restricted accessibility of work, and to deviate from the traditional conceptions of authorship. In our second step, after setting up an internet platform for texts and discussions at <http://everybodystoolbox.net> and meeting at the PAF Summer University in August of 2006, we (an open group based on a shared interest) faced more problems and questions than we had initially started with.

Acknowledging the gap between performance and software development, and therefore the impossibility of a direct transposition of open source strategies onto performance practices, we decided to rename the project "everybodys". Our interest shifted towards an exchange of our works on a methodological level and on the creation of a database for production models. We started working on a Workshop Kit, encompassing tools and interview-games, in order to facilitate discussion on our work. This Kit is meant to be developed by the "integral feedback" of usage, in order to enhance its possibilities. We devised some games, amongst others the Root dictionary game, which is presented below. The Workshop Kit is on everybodystoolbox.net for all to use and further develop.

Why Open Source?

The free culture development model seemed to us an alternative to "collaboration" in the conventional sense, which requires people to be in constant communication and to negotiate each step of the artistic process. Using open source as a model for exchange allows us to share each other's ways of working, or "codes", without necessarily producing the same work, or even knowing each other personally. This is an alternative modality to the more typical means of exchange—i.e. geographic and social connections through institutions or close collaboration. Instead, everybodys develops horizontal and asymmetrical paths for exchange. Moreover, the Open Source model provides a research tool for learning about each other's work methodologies, which everyone can then implement in their own work. Open Source strategies allow us to share the work practice itself, and not merely its product; this provides an alternative to the authority of the artist's signature and the economic abuse of the romanticist genius-artist image. Furthermore, by cracking our personal "codes" of working, we learn how to fine-tune our own processes, generating more productivity and possibilities for work, which when shared, have the potential to affect the work practices of the global performing arts community.

everybodystoolbox.net is open for anyone to do whatever they want. Everybody has access to everything and can edit and delete all that is on there, but it is also an opportunity for everybody to claim the site and the engagement as their own, as a collective effort that can pay off in different ways in different contexts. Engaging in everybodys means engaging in a open-ended, discursive experimental practice.

We might conclude that performance practices still develop mostly in live situations, and that everybodys is a practice that happens mostly offline, in a web of personal relations that can offer no overview. And we will insist on maintaining our internet presence so that this practice may continue.

Examples from the Workshop Kit:

The root dictionary game:

from a text written by A, B underlines specific words or phrases for C to define, explain or comment on.

Source: This game was developed by the artist and producer collective Fernwärme im Ausland, Berlin.

"... which everyone can then implement in their own work. Open Source strategies allow the work, practice itself to be shared,..."

We strive for a multiplication of relations and ways to affect each other, based on an understanding that the work is the product of many varied influences, and thus cannot be evaluated in terms of originality. What the author of a work owns is the responsibility for a particular construction/combination of tools (methods, techniques, etc.) and items (actions, images, sounds, etc.). This is a specific realization with a specific aim. Everything that can be used to make a work can thus also be shared.

"Software development"

Since software is digital, it can be reproduced and transformed, and the steps of its transformation can be followed in retrospect. This enables developers to make changes and add elements to the programme that can in turn be evaluated and re-worked by others. Apart from those changes, the software remains exactly the same and is independent from its maker. Developers working on the same programme are not obliged to meet to be able to "work together": the products of their work can be objectively estimated, taken over, and used for any purpose; however, it remains intact and available for any other use.

"Open Source as an artistic strategy"

The Wikipedia: "Open source describes practices in production and development that promote access to the end product's source materials. Some consider it as a philosophy, others consider it as a pragmatic methodology".

Open source serves first of all as a metaphor, the function of which is to review artistic strategy as such from another perspective. Finding access to the sources is an ambiguous proposition when applied to the artistic process. Software has a completely different ontology from that of the performance body, which complicates matters in the sense that it wouldn't be possible to reproduce a code without any effort. Nevertheless, several OS parameters can be directly or randomly applied, which would raise the following questions:

- Can an artistic strategy become a piece of "software" to be developed and shared; what would be its practical or ideological benefits?
- How independent is the product from the "software", from which it was produced? How can a "source" be extracted? Does the "source" become a product in its own right?
- How may the methods be made available to the audience, exposing the relations between source – production – post-production.
- If a piece of software answers a specific "need" and has a function to fulfil, then what "needs" might we have in performance right now?

"horizontal and asymmetrical paths for exchange"

No predetermined path for the exchange as opposed to the standard "top-down" principle.

Or: any point of a rhizome can be connected to any other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order.

"to claim the site and the engagement as their own"

everybodys actually belongs to those who seize it. Everybody can sell everybodys workshops or perform everybodys performance *générique*, and use the platform for one's own writings. everybodys has no one central email address, but a multitude of loosely connected initiatives; it develops from the individuals, who give it a face (their face). For everybodys to gain more faces, we are currently announcing short but extendable online residencies where the "resident" can claim the site and the engagement as their own. The idea thereby is to underline everybodys' ambivalent need to be appropriated whilst continuously belonging potentially to anyone.

"pay off"

Over the last few years, everybodys workshop kit has expanded in various contexts: workshops, self-organized groups of practitioners, universities, in Europe and abroad; many dance and performance students and artists use it although nobody has a complete overview since not all of it feeds back to the website. This feedback takes place in workshop situations, where more time allows a more sustained engagement and where the frame is tight enough for the group to invest into a larger distribution of its work: tools developed and transcriptions of the games played.

Making books allows us to invite the community to focus on specific subject matters and on specific formats for collections that find a larger distribution.

everybodys' Practice.

On Immaterial Labour or the Art of Creating Relations
(Including 10 Statements on Relations)

Petra Sabisch

This article is meant to concretise the practice of everybody's, an open group and internet platform for articulating exchange between performing arts practitioners, for developing tools and spreading these very means of creative production to everybody who is interested in sharing them. The preceding article outlines how everybody's commitment to open up the sources of a performative "software" for an exchange of methods is itself a somewhat "immaterial" way of working together. As a practice, everybody's has a stance on the "immaterial", since it combines the development of tools and contents with their exchange. It is through this combination that everybody's playfully circumvents the classical separation of production/creation and production/distribution, and renders the distribution of the means of production into a different, collaborative production. By distributing the means of production as accessible means of production, the Marxist distinction between material and non-material labour collapses and the outcomes of its collapse cannot be fully evaluated here. But as long as these non-localizable distributive circuits actually generate a "creative commons" that is not yet locked up in capital and commodified territories, they may continue to resist material production as the dominant imperialist form of social relations.

I would like to address this issue of immaterial labour directly by playing one of everybody's' games, called *Ten Statements or How To*. With reference to the subject of this issue, I have written *Ten Statements on Relations or How to Understand the Immaterial Labour of Art as Experimental Creation of Relations*. The guiding idea was, on the one hand, to concretize everybody's' practice through another example, and, on the other hand, to radically reconsider *immaterial labour* within the conceptual framework of relations. Following my recent book on relations and my actual choreographic practice, I would like to offer an outline for a materialist use of the concept of relations by showing that it is relations that bear the potential for change without pre-defining the ensuing transformations as immaterial.¹

¹ Petra Sabisch, *Choreographing Relations. Practical Philosophy and Contemporary Choreography*. Munich: epodium/ Tanzplan Deutschland, forthcoming 2010, see in particular chapter 1.3 and the "Conclusion".

Ten Statements or How To

One of the many games that everybody's toolbox contains is the game *Ten Statements or How To*, which the website describes as follows:

History & Objectives:

The statements can be used to define a specific area of interest within performance, and to elaborate and develop thoughts on a certain topic. It relies on the form of manifesto where being precise to the point of excluding other possibilities is desirable. The statements do not need to have eternal value, but they should trigger you to think differently. The tool is about producing opinions & positions that can be productive within your work. The purpose of writing 10 statements is to clarify your own ideology and make it visible to others. It's also about daring to take a stand, exposing yourself to critique and put some fire in the debate.

Description:

1. Choose a topic that you would like to work on, for instance "statements on how to work", "statements on site-specific performance" [...]
2. Think of the format of writing and decide whether or not you want to use a formula. For instance super short & precise, long & descriptive or starting each sentence the same way, x is.../x must.../x is considered...
3. Write the 10 statements on the topic. Try to be as specific as possible and write them in a manner that is coherent with its ideological content and don't be afraid of being categorical...

Ten Statements on Relations or How To Understand the Immaterial Labour of Art as Experimental Creation of Relations

1. Without relations, things are essentially stuck.
2. A relation expresses the most minimal pragmatic concern about something.
3. Relations never come alone. They are already a pack, a multitude.
4. Consider everything there is as a relational dynamic assemblage.
5. Within this relational assemblage, change can occur through the dynamic interplay of different relations or through the qualitative transformation of a relation.
6. This is due to the peculiar ontological status of relations: the question, whether relations *are* or *are not*, cannot be preliminarily decided. It turns out to be more and more irrelevant for a philosophy of practice that asks what we *can do* with these relations. In this sense, one can cut a long story short by saying that nothing ever happens in a world of things, whereas relations matter for ontology even before they start to exist.
7. From the point of view of practice and according to the radicalization of empiricism of William James and Gilles Deleuze, relations matter because they are virtual agencies. In this sense, relations design the very potential through which something new can come into being. From this point of view it becomes evident that a concept of relation necessarily oscillates between materiality and immateriality, between logics and sensations, precisely because the relation's virtuality is not yet spelled out as either one or the other. Relations thus matter to practice, as well as they are a matter of practice, since they are potentially there but still remain to be made.
8. As a matter of consequence, one might conclude from these remarks concerning a practical materialism of relations that the concept of *immaterial labour* itself is somehow misleading, insofar as it does not simply signify the opposite of *material labour*, but rather that which concerns the conditions of change and the conditions of the new. For it is with these relations to the conditions of change that *immaterial labour* radically and exhaustingly deals with.
9. Form a conjunctive relation: if change is the qualitative transformation of relational assemblages and artistic practices are experimentation with qualitative transformations of relational assemblages, art is not only absolutely necessary for a society interested in change, but also utterly political.
10. Relations belong to everybody. Relate differently. Play games. Enter into composition with new relations. Redistribute the sensible of arts and politics.

Why is it Art? WochenKlausur

In the arts, immaterial labour often entails not only the effort to make art, but also the effort to legitimise itself as art.

Acting on invitations from various art institutions, since 1993 the artist group WochenKlausur has been developing concrete proposals aimed at small, but nevertheless effective improvements to socio-political deficiencies. Proceeding even further and invariably translating these proposals into action, WochenKlausur has posited its artistic creativity not as a formal act, but as an intervention into society.

So far, the group has conducted thirty international projects

Medical Care for Homeless People, Vienna (1993)

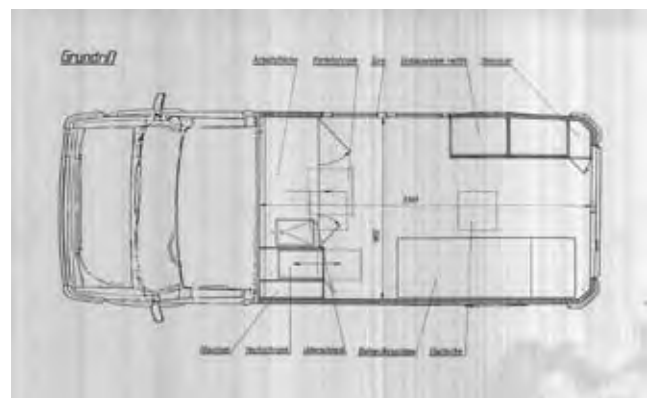
Upon receiving an invitation from the Vienna Secession – a gallery for contemporary art – a group of eight artists decided to carry out a project to improve the situation of homeless people instead of putting on an exhibition. At that time the area outside the exhibition building was known as a meeting place for homeless people.

Through meetings and talks with the homeless as well as with organisations and initiatives, WochenKlausur – as the artists' collective later named itself – learned that the homeless had nearly no access to medical care. In theory, homeless people are insured under Austria's healthcare system. In practice, the bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining treatment are insurmountable. Furthermore, doctors often refuse to treat homeless patients. Thus the group endeavoured to set up a mobile clinic for providing basic medical treatment. Within eleven weeks a donated van was converted into a mobile clinic, the city of Vienna was persuaded to pay the physician, and a relief organisation was found to take over the management. That was in 1993. Since then, each day the mobile clinic has been visiting one of the places in Vienna that are frequented by the homeless, providing health care to more than 700 homeless and undocumented people every month.

WochenKlausur's first project triggered not only further invitations from art institutions, but also a long discussion in the art scene about whether it has the right to be called an art project. Why? Because there were no results to be discussed or experienced on an aesthetic basis – no products or even "leftovers" of actions or performances to be displayed at an exhibition or placed in a public space. Why should a socio-political intervention be called art?

First, with every successful project that is recognized as art, intervention in existing social circumstances wins increased significance. The media reports less extensively on the most exciting social work than on the dullest cultural events. Therefore, the concept *art* is useful when one seeks to help realize a socio-political agenda.

Second, experiences from completed projects show that in many fields an unorthodox approach may open doors and offer usable solutions that would not be recognized in conventional modes of thinking. In a project to improve the conditions of a secondary school classroom, WochenKlausur simply ignored the bureaucratic standards for school facilities, because they were completely unsuited to meet the pupils' needs; it was an approach that the experts, architects, and interior designers had never tried. In order to avoid difficulties in their jobs, experts must stick to the existing guidelines, even when they are clearly preposterous.



WochenKlausur, *Mobile Clinic for Homeless*, Vienna, 1993

A Vacant House for Students, Porto, Portugal (2010)

Following an invitation to participate in an exhibition at Culturgest, this recent project took place in Porto. On the one hand, a lot of buildings and houses in Porto's city centre are vacant. On the other, there are many students looking for cheap accommodation. The artist collective WochenKlausur thus decided to look into this problem. Since the city of Porto owns many of the vacant buildings, WochenKlausur contacted the appropriate city official and made him the following proposition: a couple of students would be offered to refurbish one of these empty houses; in return, they would be permitted to stay and live there for seven years without paying rent. WochenKlausur was able to convince the city to offer one of its vacant houses and a group of interested students was easily found. The details were successfully negotiated and a contract was prepared, which both the city and the students found acceptable. To keep the costs of the refurbishment for the students as low as possible, WochenKlausur found sponsors to donate some of the expensive construction material. The renovation process is scheduled to start in September 2010. This project is meant to be a model. Therefore, the city of Porto and the students will pass on their contract to other interested students.

Even today – though a lot less than before – there are parts of the art world that still want to keep their “sacred” art separate from the ordinary realities of everyday politics and social surroundings. This comes from the assumption that there is a *semper et ubique* determination of art. There is none. Art has always been open to such diverse agendas that not even their lowest common denominator may be determined. What matters is only who claimed or claims the right to define art. In the ancient world, for example, it was the free citizens (which excluded the women and the slaves) who took upon themselves to determine what was to be understood under the term *art*. The term *art* was used for subjects entirely unrelated to the present understanding of art, for example without any references to aesthetics: *art* signified only knowledge and capability. Maybe today's painters and sculptors are unaware of this, but up until the 16th century they were not allowed to call themselves artists, because they produced objects by hand. Nowadays it is the extensive complex of the art business that is constantly examining, negotiating, and reinterpreting the definitions of art. It is only a pity that art history still refuses to tell the history of the notion of art – many misconceptions could be cleared up if people interested in art were presented with its eventful history.

www.wochenklausur.at



WochenKlausur, office at Culturgest Gallery, Porto, 2010

Theoretical Practice: On the Material Effects of an "Immaterial" Labour

Dusan Grlja
Prelom kolektiv

The key point of this essay is to use the currently widespread term "immaterial labor" to discuss what could be the material effects of theoretical activity, following Althusser's insights on the subject of theoretical practice, in order to investigate the role and effects of theoretical production within the frameworks of contemporary art and cultural events. The essay's first section deals with the possibilities of conceiving the notion of immaterial labor within the Marxist theoretical framework by stressing the differences between mental and intellectual labor. The second discusses the conception of the material effects of doing theory as given in Althusser's move from his early theoretician determination of (Marxist) philosophy as "theory of theoretical practice" to the rectified and expanded one that conceives it as – in the last instance – the "class struggle in theory". The concluding section investigates the possibilities of a critical usage of theory within the framework of contemporary art events, which could eventually escape subsumption under the capital-relation.

The concept of immaterial labour, wherein immaterial labour is the labour which produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity. The form of "immaterial" production properly defined: audiovisual production, advertising, fashion, the production of software, photography, cultural activities etc. This immaterial labour constitutes itself in forms that are immediately collective, and, so to speak, exists only in the form of network and flow. Precariousness, hyperexploitation, mobility and hierarchy are what characterise metropolitan immaterial labour. Behind the label of the "independent or dependent" worker is hidden a true and proper intellectual proletarian, recognised as such only by the employers who exploit them.

Lazzarato¹

1 Maurizio Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labour", <http://www.generation-online.org/c/fcimmateriallabour3.htm>.

Immaterial Labour: Post-Fordism and the Contortions of Marxist Analysis

The concept of immaterial labour was coined in the specific historical – and even geographical – politico-theoretical context of the so-called post-operaist strand of Italian (post)Marxism, with Negri and Hardt, Virno and Lazzarato as its main proponents. During the 1970s – and especially after the events of 1968 – it was clear that the traditional Marxist privileging of the industrial proletariat as the only revolutionary subject able to realize a substantial change in social relations and bring about universal emancipation was undoubtedly wrong. The peasantry of the Russian Revolution, the various underclasses of the Third World, and the so-called new social movements stood as an irrefutable proof that the conception of the proletariat as the wage-earning manual workers, who have nothing to sell but their own labour-power, cannot be the sole bearer of the revolutionary task.

On the other hand, the changes in the structure and organization of production – subsumed under the term post-Fordism² – almost obliterated this classical industrial proletariat, or at least moved it from the core areas of capitalist system to the peripheral ones. Those changes, which loosened and flattened the traditional workplace hierarchies with project-based modular structures of labour, as well as general deregulation and delegating of state functions to lower levels of decision-making (and also to higher ones, represented by the international bodies) were and still are present in the dominant neoliberal discourse as a supposedly veritable sign of progress in the democratization of all spheres of social life. But in fact, that interpretation is in a glaring contradiction with the fact that the advance of capitalism has only succeeded in aggravating various social inequalities, enforced an asymmetrical distribution of wealth in favour of the rich and powerful, and deepened the gap between the instances of political decision-making in a way that the majority of relevant general issues is even further

removed now from the reach of ordinary citizens. It is precisely this purported democratization that the immaterial labour thesis is countering with its emphasis on the novel form of exploitation of the “intellectual proletariat”.

The main argument of the proponents of this thesis is twofold. On the one hand, there is the assertion of the post-industrial age, a system that is no longer based on the industrial productive potential, but, rather, on the symbolic potentiality and the preponderance of information, knowledge, and communication (even affect) as the key forces of production – what constitutes the exchange value of goods is no longer the simple materialization of the manual, physical labour invested in it, but the symbolical quality of the commodity. This means that the surplus-value is no longer exclusively an outcome of the corporeal exploitation of labour-power, but increasingly of the addition of a symbolic value to the products generated by the exploitation of the “creative” or “cultural” workers. Therefore, on the other hand, the following proposition of the thesis is that, due to those changes in the structure and organization of capitalist production, there is a new kind of collective, class subjectivity – what is nowadays often called the *precariat*. So, those workers with no permanent employment and whose involvement in the production is exclusively project-based, and who are the exclusive source of that symbolic surplus-value, are perceived as the potentially new revolutionary subject. The subjectivity of this intellectual proletariat is ripe for the transition from the class-by-itself to a class-for-itself, since their labour is always immediately collective by virtue of their operating within networks that are not predominantly business-based but rather involve friendship, solidarity, and emotional ties, as well as the fact that their labour-force is constituted by the symbolical capital belonging to the entire humanity, sometimes labeled the “general intellect”. It seems that this *precariat* only has to recognize itself as such a subject with emancipatory potential, so the only thing left for it to do would be to hoist a flag with the slogan: “Immaterial workers of the world, unite!”

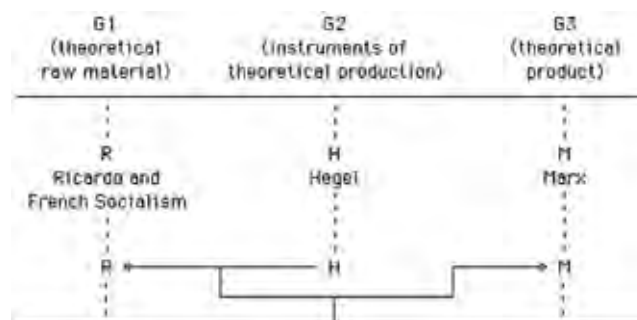
2 A slightly outdated and certainly schematic comparison of Fordism and post-Fordism can be found in Michael Rustin, “The Politics of Post-Fordism: Or, The Trouble with ‘New Times’”, *New Left Review*, Vol. 1, No. 175, May-June, 1989, pp. 55-56 (footnote 9):

Fordism	Post-Fordism
low technological innovation	accelerated innovation
fix product lines, long runs	high variety of product, shorter runs
mass marketing	market diversification and niche-ing
steep hierarchy, vertical chains of command	flat hierarchy, more lateral communication
mechanic organization	organismic organisation
vertical and horizontal integration; central planning	autonomous profit centres; network systems; internal markets within firm; out-sourcing
bureaucracy	professionalism, entrepreneurialism
mass unions, centralized wage-bargaining	localized bargaining; core and periphery; work office divided; no corporatism
unified class formations; dualistic political systems	pluralist class formations; multi-party systems
institutionalised class compromises	fragmented political markets
standardized forms of welfare	consumer choice in welfare
prescribed “courses” in education	credit transfer, modularity, self-guided instruction; “independent” study
standardized assessment (0 level)	teacher-based assessment (GCSE) or self-assessment
class parties, nationwide	social movements; multi-parties; regional diversification

Theoretical Practice: Philosophy from the "Theory of Theoretical Practice" to "Class Struggle in Theory"

In the complex, structured totality of different social practices, there is a distinct and (relatively) autonomous theoretical practice. Certainly, this distinction of Althusser's and autonomisation of theoretical production represented a form of rebellion against the instrumentalisation and actual debasement of the role of theory in the politics of the Communist Party. However, Althusser did not see it as the main and exclusive source of erroneous Communist Party politics. Still, it was stifling the possibility of conjectural analysis, which ought to inform all political decisions and actions. But the key role of theory was not to be exhausted in this immediate relation of it to politics, since theory, according to Althusser, has more indirect and mediated effects on politics – those that happen *via* ideology.

Althusser's starting point is directed against the traditional – both empiricist and idealist – separation of theory, as something purely ideal, from practice, the latter seen only as actual activity without the involvement of much systematic thought. Therefore, for Althusser, theoretical practice has exactly the same structure of production as any other human activity. There are raw materials (the already existing notions and concepts) and there are tools (the methodological arsenal of theory) for transforming those raw materials into products (knowledges). Thus the scheme of Marx's theoretical practice would be:³



Besides the more obvious problem of the status of that product as scientific knowledge proper – is it the true, objective, and impartial knowledge, or is it just instrumental for some purposes other than purely scientific? – there is also that of enclosing the theoretical within the realm of science viewed as almost completely autonomous (since Althusser rejects empiricism, stressing that the criteria of knowledge production are internal to the theory itself). Since the main stake of all of Althusser's thought is Marxist philosophy, defining it as a "theory of theoretical practice" would imply that Marx made his scientific discovery entirely within the realm of theory and solely by means of an epistemological break, which somehow inexplicably and almost mysteriously enabled him to transform and leave behind previous ideological constructions of social sciences.

Althusser rectifies this, in his own words, theoreticist or simply rationalist-speculative deviation by referring knowledge production – *stricto sensu* theoretical practice – to something that may be labeled the "constitutive outside" of philosophy, in line with the hegemonic post-Marxist theoretical vogue. This move on Althusser's part stems from

3 Diagram taken from Louis Althusser, *Politics and History*, NLB, London, 1972, p. 169.

Now is it reasonable at all to speak of immaterial labour within a Marxist theoretical framework? The only sensible use of the term would be in the context of mental or intellectual labour. But those two actually represent quite separate notions in Marx's theory. Mental labour represents just the expenditure of brain energy and is not for Marx only a property of some talented or smart people, but of all human activity, since any kind of work involves the mental capacities of imagining the product before it is made. In fact, those capacities are necessarily present throughout the whole process of the production of any kind of use-value. By contrast, in the case of intellectual labour only a particular social group is involved and its specificity is the outcome of the social division of labour, which implies power-relations and, consequently, class division.

This also means that the use of immaterial labour for describing the contemporary structure of production and, at the same time, for designating the basis for the emergence of the new revolutionary subjectivity might easily repeat and reinforce the global social division of labour between the core and the periphery. At this point one must very well keep in mind that the core/periphery distinction in geographic terms is becoming more and more obsolete with the consolidation of the globalized economy, in the sense that there are peripheries within core capitalist areas – for example, the immigrant workers, and vice versa – for example, the so-called comprador bourgeoisie. This becomes even clearer if one acknowledges the fact that a huge share of globally circulating goods for everyday consumption are being made in China, India, and other peripheral countries, which means that there still is a properly classical industrial proletariat.

So, the main question is how an immaterial, intellectual labour or, more specifically, theoretical practice, could be truly revolutionary or, at least, effectively critical, being linked, as it necessarily is, to the existence and perpetuation of class divisions?

the insight that the crucial moment in the development of Marx's theory – his decisive break with bourgeois ideology – happened when he experienced the real, political and economic, struggles of the working class and, consequently, adopted the "point of view of the proletariat" or the "proletarian class position". In other words, what Althusser overlooked in his first definition of Marxist philosophy was class struggle, and by bringing it back to the fore, philosophy was redefined – in the last instance – as "class struggle in theory". Although Althusser never ceased to distinguish between science and philosophy (the main difference being that science has an object, unlike philosophy, which has stakes, whilst they both state propositions or claims, which in the case of science can be true or false, while in the case of philosophy can only be correct or misleading), the role of theory in both was substantively changed from being exclusively related to the domain of theoretical practice proper to the complex field of ideological struggle – as a constituent part of the class struggle besides economic and political ones.

Now, what does the phrase "class struggle in theory" precisely mean for an expanded notion of theoretical practice or, simply, for doing theory? The answer has to be sought in Althusser's conception of the relations among science, philosophy, and ideology. Those relations can be summarized in a simplified manner, as follows: science produces objective knowledges – by breaking epistemologically with its own ideological prehistory; then those scientific claims, in order to become operative, are taken up and transformed by philosophies, which represent "theoretical laboratories for the construction of the dominant ideology". This means that theory is doubly inscribed, that it has two distinct but connected roles: one in the production of an objective, scientific knowledge of a specific object and the other – for which the former is just the starting point – in the struggle for the correct claims, which intervene in the field of theoretical ideologies that inform practical ideologies and, consequently, partake in the transformation and change of the real, existing social relations. Hence, there are no immediate effects that scientific knowledge, as the product of theoretical practice, exerts on the reality of class struggle (if that were the case, then theory would be purely instrumental). In order to take hold of the masses' imagination as well as their actions – in other words, for "ideas" to become material forces – theory has to pass through the medium of ideological class struggle, to immerse itself into the philosophical *Kampffplatz* and wage war on that terrain with other theoretical ideologies, so that it be able to change and transform the existing practical ones.

Therefore, theoretical practice as a form of immaterial labour has quite clear material effects, at least in the context of the Althusserian theory discussed above. But, the question remains: Are those effects always the ones we want and intend?

The Materiality of Immaterial Labour: The Critical Role of Theoretical Practice in Contemporary Cultural Production

I would now like to shift ground and approach the problem of the role and effects of a specific – or, maybe better yet, paradigmatic – case of immaterial labour, viewed as theoretical production within the framework of contemporary art events, from the viewpoint of an actor in the field of independent cultural production. That will also entail that I suspend my previous theoretical theorization of theory. Being, therefore, a cultural worker, my position, as well as anyone's within this "sphere", cannot but find itself on the always-already given terrain of neo-liberal cultural industries.⁴ The recent decades have witnessed an obvious neo-liberal effort to introduce and institute the principles of free-market competitiveness and entrepreneurship to the once privileged sphere of artistic and intellectual production. This means not only simply bringing market relations into the "sphere of culture", but also, and even more so, the establishing of the practices of entrepreneurship at the level of the subject. A new type of (self-)employer is thus emerging in the form of the "entrepreneurial individual" or the "entrepreneurial cultural worker". What is actually happening is that individuals educated or self-educated in the fields of art, theory, and culture in general have a certain privileged access to so-called "cultural capital" – a set of symbols, images, notions, ideas, representations of historical events and persons, artworks, etc. The cultural worker today has to be a cultural entrepreneur at the same time: one who "creatively" – meaning profitably – uses this "cultural capital" that is at hand. In other words, the cultural producer is supposed to be a "funky businessman" in contemporary "karaoke capitalism", transforming this raw material of "culture" into little more than temporary entertainment. This would obviously represent the reverse side of the otherwise commendable and emancipatory demand for free access.

But while our critical stance alone might save us from becoming those cultural entrepreneurs, it cannot deny the material, legal, and organizational conditions, in which we have to operate. Although I belong to a collective bounded by mutually shared radical political tendencies and comradeship, our activities unfold in a definite material situation – at least in terms of having to have a legal subjectivity (an NGO) in order to apply for funds and in that way supply the means for producing our publications, exhibitions, conferences, etc., which aim precisely to criticize the present state of affairs (i.e. neo-liberalism in its manifold guises) and, accordingly, to point out possible emancipatory potentialities. Formally being a civic association – which is a legal equivalent of a private enterprise – the Prelom kolektiv has to obey all the rules of conducting business – which means, at least, having to employ an accountant to deal with the taxes and other fiscal obligations – and to have, at least formally, a legally stipulated hierarchy. All this is quite at odds with the principles of collective work and non-hierarchical structure that we had from the very beginning. It also means getting involved in the "business of fundraising", which in turn requires a substantial

⁴ The following line of argumentation is developed in Dušan Grlja and Jelena Vesić, "The Neoliberal Institution of Culture and the Critique of Culturalization", <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0208/prelom/en>.

amount of administrative work and what is nowadays called “networking”. This context features foreign foundations, as well as local government bodies and institutions of culture as providers of financial support for independent art and activist organizations, groups, and collectives, seen as indispensable local “cultural operators” for the creation of contemporary “culture” in the region. It includes dealing with the guidelines and keywords of international foundations as well as their obligatory emphasis on “trans-regional collaboration”, while at the local level it consists of the more perilous juggling with “national programs for culture”. It is precisely this institution of culture that has palpable effects on the material practice of culture production, not only in the sense of specific programming, but also with respect to the organizational structure and the internal material practices of the very “actors in culture”. This “NGO economy” – like the so-called “new knowledge economy” of media, fashion, and art in the “creative industries” – relies heavily on a US-style internship system to perform the necessary but routine gofer roles that keep it all together. Effectively, it represents a system of bourgeois apprenticeship and thus succeeds in precisely replicating the social division of labour into manual or purely technical and the intellectual. Therefore, our critical efforts must always be accompanied by self-criticism.

Theory apparently has a particularly specific role within contemporary art events. It is usually invoked in two cases: either to supply the interpretative matrix for the perception of artworks, or to offer a reflexive space for discussing not only the aesthetic aspects of art, but also the social and political ones. This is particularly evident in the practice of various discursive events, publications, and web-projects regularly produced on the margins of different art events. These supposedly have the task of opening up space for reflection and criticism, but in fact they become places where critique is fostered or, more precisely, “cultivated”, institutionalized and, finally, neutralized or appropriated. Theory thus becomes little more than a “decorative authority”,⁵ whereas its real critical potential is diminished.

Now in Althusserian terminology, critique would mean an intervention that “withers in its effects”. As theoretical intervention within the ideological class struggle unfolds on the terrain of philosophies or theoretical ideologies, one cannot set the terms or the weapons of this *polemics*, but rather finds them *in situ*.

⁵ “[W]e see a kind of overproduction of theory, as well as the staging of this theory as a decorative ‘appendix’ to artistic and activist events (i.e., theoretical conferences as discursive platforms for all manner of biennials, major exhibitions, social forums, etc.). We can observe numerous instances of the overproduction, commercialization, and ‘decorativeness’ of theory - for example, quite scholarly but secondary texts chockablock with citations of the most ‘fashionable’ names and texts, or all those thick but incomprehensible catalogues and ‘theoretical documents’ published in connection with art projects. [...] All this is crowned by a system of intellectual ‘superstars’, who, even when they take quite radical, critical stances, are unable to resist their quite decorative function as thinkers and ‘keynote speakers’ at an endless series of seminars and conferences.” (Alexey Penzin and Dmitry Vilensky, “What’s the Use? Art, Philosophy, and Subject Formation. A Chto Delat dialogue,” *Chto Delat?* no 01-25, March 2009, p. 2, also on: http://www.chtdelat.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=204&Itemid=282)

It is therefore necessary to fight, if not everywhere at the same time, at least on several fronts, taking account *both* of the principal tendency *and* of the secondary tendencies, *both* of the principal stake *and* of the secondary stakes, while all the time “working” to occupy correct positions. All this will obviously not come about through the miracle of a consciousness capable of dealing with all problems with perfect clarity. There is no miracle. A Marxist philosopher able to intervene in the theoretical class struggle must start out from positions already recognized and established in the theoretical battles of the history of the Labour Movement – but he can only understand the existing state of the theoretical and ideological “terrain” if he comes to know it both theoretically and practically: in and through struggle. It may be that in the course of his endeavours, even when he starts out from already established positions in order to attack open or disguised enemies, he will take up positions which in the course of struggle are shown to be *deviant* positions, out of step with the correct line which he is aiming for. There is nothing astonishing in that. The essential thing is that he should then recognize his deviation and rectify his positions in order to make them more correct.⁶

The material effects of the immaterial labour of doing theory are in fact those which in the first place make it material – the effects of the subsumption of any labour under the capital-relation. It is that which imbricates the vast range of human activities from the ordinary, everyday, simple reproduction of “bare life”, to the “highest” expressions of “artistic genius” or “heavenly wisdom” into the capitalist system of social relations. What can be done in spite of it – in trying to wrench out the critical potentiality from the material effects of cooptation and assimilation – does not depend solely on the theoretical position one strives to occupy in the battlefield of theoretical ideologies, but rather on an ethical act. Proper subjectivity – not the one interpellated by the capitalist system, but the one that traverses its phantasmatic structure(s) – always stems from the collective material practice of making an ethical choice in a given situation by breaking up with the dominant “rationality”.⁷ Autonomy, or the *Bildung* of that kind of subjectivity, thus can be achieved through a process of (con)testing the limits of a given “rationality”. It always emerges from an autonomising act – which is precisely an event – and the fidelity to it. Therefore, one must endure in her/his critique and remain faithful to the event of publicly stating the motives, insights, and experiences that brought one – at least – to speak it out. And one must never forget that whilst doing it, one must practically contest her/his own role as an intellectual in the social division of labour.

⁶ Louis Althusser, *Essays in Self-Criticism*, NLB, London, 1976, p. 143–144.

⁷ Cf. Dušan Grlija, “Antinomies of Post-Socialist Autonomy”, <http://www.red-thread.org/en/article.asp?a=16>.

The Curators' Piece

Petra Zanki and Tea Tupajić

The Curators' Piece project was initiated in 2009 by artists Tea Tupajić and Petra Zanki, who select exceptional performing arts curators and invite them to collaborate in a project. During their residency at the curator's home institution, Tupajić and Zanki work together with the curator to develop a performance about her/him, which s/he then performs at her/his own festival.

The Curators' Piece is about the chain of production and presentation in the performing arts and the performance as its standard product. Taking the most transparent part of the production chain – the artist-curator-audience relation – and comparing it to the manufacturer-retailer-consumer chain, the project is aimed at trying to understand the complexity of those relations and suggesting how they might be reconfigured.

While the labour and politico-economic roles of the artist and the audience have been one of the basic topics in the current discourse of the performing arts, the labour and position of the curator have so far remained on the margins. Broaching the issue of the curator's role and labour, the project deeply penetrates the mechanisms of the relations that condition artistic production.

The Curators' Piece comprises two stages: the research and the production. During the research stage (2010), the two artists go on residency at the place of work of each of the curators, or, alternatively, accompany them on their business trips. The main starting point of the research is the curator's role in the production of the performing arts and her/his responsibility for, and influence on, whatever art today may or may not offer to the society. Through series of conversations, interviews, and assignments, different specific segments of the curator's work are explored: the point of selection, contextualisation, and communication (both with the artists and with other structures to whom the curator is subjected). Also, a part of the research is based on talking to the curator's assistants, members of the audience, and the artists whose work is associated with the curator. The materials made during the residencies will be presented to the public in the form of an installation at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb. Another part of the project is Tupajić and Zanki's co-editorship, along with Florian Malzacher, of the *Frakcija* performing arts magazine issue "O kuriranju izvedbenih umjetnosti" ("On Curating Performing Arts"), forthcoming in the autumn of 2010.

As a final result of the project, the performance that will put the curators in coproduction and shared conception, of the show will be made by artists and performed by all curators involved in the process. The premiere is scheduled for mid-to-late 2011.

Mail to a Curator

Berlin, April 14th, 2010

Dear Christine,

While reading your last e-mail, we realized that we were now reaching the point where it was becoming difficult to explain things via e-mail. We've been spending uneconomically huge amounts of time trying to figure out how to respond to you in the most articulate and succinct way possible. Thus we've decided to focus on some basic issues where our motivation for making *The Curators' Piece* maybe hasn't been made sufficiently clear so far.

The Curators' Piece is a project that we develop in collaboration with select curators and that will be presented at their festivals or venues in the form of performance. In this performance, the different work methodologies and parameters that define the work of a curator (such as choosing, relating, communicating, contextualizing, etc.) will be examined and staged. The curators are at the same time performers, co-authors, and producers of the piece.

It is important to note that the project came out of our understanding of performance as a commodity. Because we hold that the role that market-oriented economy has in shaping the image of contemporary performing arts is crucial, we find it impossible to talk about art production without taking into account its production modes. *The Curators' Piece* focuses on the different work- and power configurations that exist within the production chain, by investigating the relations that exist between its various protagonists.

As our starting point, we take the artist-curator-audience relationship as the most graspable part of that chain and compare this relation by rough analogy to the seller-trader-buyer relationship. While the respective positions of the artist and the audience have both frequently been discussed in theater and dance performances, the curator has remained on the side and, so far, his/her work has stayed invisible.

We've chosen our contemporary performing arts curators on the basis of several factors we deemed important for their work. On the one hand, it was the curators' engagement, their interest in experimental art and willingness to make risks. On the other hand, it was the viability, visibility, and persistence of their work in the performing arts milieu. Moreover, the selected curators operate in the world's most developed economies (Western Europe and North America), which has enabled them, more than it has others, to create a cutting-edge scene and to influence other scenes worldwide. The curators who have joined us so far are mentioned on our webpage: www.curatorspiece.net.

Let us now briefly touch on the crucial question in your email: "What I really miss is an articulate standpoint, which reflects and defends your motivation from an artistic point of view – WHY NOW? WHAT'S AT STAKE?"

In order to answer this, we really have to go deeper. Our motivation is rooted in the very fundamental question: Why do we choose to be engaged in art in this day and age?

We cannot close our eyes before the fact that the production of art doesn't happen in a vacuum, outside of a concrete political and economic situation. It is, at the end of the day, production like any other.

Nevertheless, there is a reason why we choose to do art. Unlike most other fields of production, art is able to self-reflect on the very relationships established by the production of art itself. That allows for different inversions and reconfiguration proposals. (It could easily be that this need comes from our socialist background, but this again is a larger topic to be discussed.)

When we talk about our interest in the political, we are talking about our interest in the phenomenon of labour, its premises, modes, and, most of all: its consequences. The labour that interests us here is above all our own, artistic labour. In this project, we examine the possibility of action within our own "factory".

Or, in the words of Julia Bryan-Wilson: "What work does art do? How does it put pressure on systems of representation and forms of signification? How does it intervene in the public sphere? How does it function economically; how does it structure relations; how does it put ideas into circulation?"

It seems that, regarding the logic of an ever-smiling capitalism, these questions need to be addressed with even more care, more attention and seriousness than it has been done in the past century.

Since then, the questions you posed: "Can't an artist on his/her own make those things visible that feel important to him/her? Isn't there any other way to reverse the power play and act self-empowered?", have been circling in our minds a lot. Could you please elaborate on them a bit more, because we are not sure what you had in mind?

To evoke Marx, there is a difference between the representation of a problem or an action and a concrete attempt to change. In its nature, this project is an action: with us choosing the curators and not the other way around, we subvert the decision-making processes, rules, and structures. A new perspective is being imposed on performing arts, putting its very production in focus.

In *The Curators' Piece* we intend to create an artwork, in which at least for a moment the existing order is reconfigured so that another type of relation may emerge. Instead of inventing a new production system, we want to work with the existing one and weaken it by using its own self-empowering mechanisms.

Of course, it doesn't take long to realize that the curator is not the master of the performing arts world, or the production chain. There are bigger structures that affect curators' choices. Curators do not invest their own private money to present certain artists, but are responsible to their sponsors and funders. They are also responsible to their audiences, having in mind the concrete and local, not only the imaginary, ideal spectator. In this project we are, however, dealing only with curators and not other instances, since they are the ones who are told to be the closest to the artists and who have, at the same time, decision-making power in their hands – and who profess to be looking in the same direction as we are: to the benefit of the arts.

As you see, the whole topic is far too complex to discuss through email. Perhaps we'd better talk through Skype? We hope things are a bit clearer now.

Much love,
Tea and Petra



Notes on the Division of Labour Florian Schneider

DISCLAIMER:

The following is neither a fully comprehensive analysis, nor a definitively thought-through elaboration on the topic of the division of labour. Rather, it should be understood as an exposé for further research, discussion, and development. It reflects the results of a series of test- or trial probings into an extensive topic that might turn out to be enormously relevant.

In 1931 the Philips Eindhoven corporation commissioned the first Dutch sound film: *Philips Radio*, or, as it was also known, *Industrial Symphony*. It was a documentary shot by Joris Ivens at the peak of the economic depression, which coincided with radio technology's advent on the mass market.

The 36-minute film was supposed to show the modern production process of making radios at the factories and offices in Eindhoven. What we see is a celebration of images that aims to re-compose the industrial division of labour in the form of an artwork.

Most prominently, the film highlights the very notion of sound by deconstructing the industrial mass production of radio receivers as transmitters of sound. Ivens and his collaborator Helen van Dongen were using a sampling technique combining the noises of work, music, radio broadcasts, and abstract sounds.

The fascination with the abstract beauty of the machine processes on the one hand, and the concrete portrayal of the hard work carried out by the workers on the other, produced a cinematic piece, the ambiguity of which irritated both the commissioners and most critics alike.

The corporation reportedly refused to show the film in its original version, while the Christian newspaper *Het Volk* considered it a "document of inhumanity". Apparently, Ivens did not expose the assembly line as the worker's subjugation under the rule of the machine in the same way as Chaplin did in the famous opening sequence of *Modern Times*, or as René Clair did in a strikingly similar scene of his *À nous la liberté!*

Rather than a caricature, Ivens tried to make a "cinematic expression of a twentieth century production line manufacturer." Its non-complicity with the clichés of both the advertising of the success of the company as well as mere anti-technological propaganda may constitute a rather unexpected value of the film today.

Eyal Sivan, who, as a guest of honour included the film in a series of his favourite documentaries for last year's International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, wrote:

Instead of a valiant film parade through all the departments, he reveals the working conditions in a modern mechanized factory and captures the step-by-step development of radio parts along the way. Of course, Philips had a say in the social content of the film. Although Ivens understood Philips's point of view, he tried to compensate for his dissatisfaction by striving for great technical perfection. He exploited every tint of the glass and metal surfaces in the factory and moved his camera in a highly stylized manner. The sensual emphasis led Parisian critics to coin an alternate title for the film: *Symphonie industrielle*.

It is the precise depiction of a division of labour that is at stake: the specialization of labour that was necessary in order to sell, by the time the film was made, more than a hundred million vacuum tubes.

Ivens shows the entire chain from advanced glassblowing techniques to the assembly of complete radios, from the research laboratories to the typing pools with hundreds of secretaries and the packaging of complete radio sets.

The division of labour is a concept that was first systematically explored by William Petty, whom Karl Marx considered "the founding father of political economy". Petty enthusiastically observed how over the course of the 18th century specialization in cloth- and watch-making, as well as in shipping, was supposed to increase overall productivity by its cost-reducing effects:

Cloth must be cheaper made, when one Cards, another Spins, another Weaves, another Draws, another Dresses, another Presses and Packs; then when all the operations above mentioned were clumsily performed by the same hand.

In the making of a Watch, If one Man should make the Wheels, another the Spring, another shall Engrave the Dial-Plate, and another shall make the Cases, then the Watch will be better and cheaper than if the whole Work be put upon any one Man.

Petty tried to explain the material basis of the contrast between the success of Dutch economy and the poverty in Ireland. In fact, he applied the principle of the division of labour, which he experienced in Dutch shipyards, to his survey of Ireland by putting into practice the very notion of a scientific division of labour. He divided the statistical tasks into those that could be easily done by unskilled soldiers and those that would require professional attention.

On March 13th, 2007, the Bank of England issued a new-style 20-pound note that has gradually replaced the old one featuring a portrait of Sir Edward Elgar on the back. Along with a different look of the note, the main change is the inclusion of a portrait of Adam Smith on the back of the note, along with the image of a pin-making factory and a summary of Smith's observations on the benefits of the division of labour, drawn from his major work, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. In the famous example of the pin factory, Smith explained how the factory workers' cooperation in dividing their tasks between them raised their combined output. He went on to explain how, by trading with others, both at home and abroad, we could specialise our own production, whereby society as a whole would benefit from higher incomes and standards of living. The banknote depicts the division of labour in the pin factory, with a caption based on *The Wealth of Nations*: "and the great increase in the quantity of work that results".

To take an example, therefore, from a very trifling manufacture; but one in which the division of labour has been very often taken notice of, the trade of the pin-maker; a workman not educated to this business (which the division of labour has rendered a distinct trade), nor acquainted with the use of the machinery employed in it (to the invention of which the same division of labour has probably given occasion), could scarce, perhaps, with his utmost industry, make one pin in a day, and certainly could not make twenty. But in the way in which this business is now carried on, not only the whole work is a peculiar trade, but it is divided into a number of branches, of which the greater part are likewise peculiar trades. One man draws out the wire, another straightens it, a third cuts it, a fourth points it, a fifth grinds it at the top for receiving, the head; to make the head requires two or three distinct operations; to put it on is a peculiar business, to whiten the pins is another; it is even a trade by itself to put them into the paper; and the important business of making a pin is, in this manner, divided into about eighteen distinct operations, which, in some manufactories, are all performed by distinct hands, though in others the same man will sometimes perform two or three of them.

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"The average man in a communist society would be able to go fishing in the morning, work in a factory in the afternoon and read Plato in the evening". According to the bestseller author Alain de Botton, Karl Marx must have imagined communist utopia as an "implausibly high-minded combination of activities". In one single work day one would enjoy unhurried peasant lifestyle, benefit from the efficiency of industrial production, and then turn to the blessings of brainwork. In such an idyllic scenario communism would be anything but boring.

As a celebration of the whole variety of human capacities, it would mark the unification of the body and mind in an integral approach. And isn't the utopia that Marx purportedly described in the 19th century precisely the reality for a growing number of highly skilled workers, namely in the "creative industries"?

There is only one little problem. The quote, whose author is most recently responsible for projects with titles such as *The School of Life*, which he calls the "concluding volume" of *The Capital*, is an invention of de Botton himself.

Unfortunately, Marx did not make any remarks like that in any of the volumes of *The Capital*. Instead, there are remarkably different lines in *The German Ideology*, a book he had written thirty years earlier:

In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic.

After that, Marx did not dare give any further hints about how one should imagine communism, although he was constantly pressured by the growing proletarian movement to reveal his vision of a communist utopia. Marx refused a religious, utopian notion of communism and insisted instead on the "scientific" character of his research.

Indeed, much more interesting than the distribution of concrete pursuits between hunting, fishing, and herding, plus some criticism after work, is the rather abstract Marx's thought that comes after that:

This fixation of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now.

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In the first volume of the *Capital* Marx introduced a sharp distinction between, on the one hand, a division of labour that is technical or economic and aims at increasing efficiency in the process of co-operation and, on the other, a division of labour that is socially constructed. The result is a double division of labour:

- the technical division of labour in the enterprise and in a particular industry that broke down the production process into a sequence of tasks and
- the social division of labour among enterprises, industries, and social classes that was mediated through commodity exchange in market relations.

The division of labour appears as a double relation along two axes or "connections", the specific combination of which constitutes the historical uniqueness of a mode of production (Althusser and Balibar in *Reading Capital*):

- 1 – a relation of real appropriation designates the structure of the labour process, that is, the relation of the labourer to the means of production by which the transformation of nature is undertaken. This relation constitutes the "technical division of labour" or the forces of production;
- 2 – a property relation designates the mode of appropriation of the social product. This relation, the "social division of labour" or relations of production, implies the intervention of an individual or a collectivity, who, by the exercise of economic ownership, controls access to the means of production and the reproduction of the productive forces.

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The success of Ford's *model T* ("a motor car for the great multitude") was made possible by the introduction of a new factory system that was characterized first of all by a new technical division of labour.

It was based on enormous increases in

- precision: only interchangeable parts were used in manufacturing;
- specialisation: breaking up the assembly of a car into 84 distinct steps;
- synchronisation: a minimum time spent in set-up between these steps. Motion studies by Frederick Taylor had to determine the exact speed at which the work should proceed and the exact motions that the workers should use to accomplish their tasks.

Model T was the first automobile that was mass-produced on assembly lines with completely interchangeable parts. Machines were used to reduce the complexity of the production process in 84 areas in order to streamline the assembly process of a car from 12.5 hours down to 93 minutes. Instead of skilled craftsmen, low-skilled or untrained workers were hired, each of whom needed skills and knowledge in only one of the 84 areas.

At the same time, Fordism triggered a dramatic expansion of a new social division of labour, from what was by then called productive to re-productive work: workers were not only supposed to produce products with much greater efficiency, but due to their relatively high wages, were at the same time targeted as consumers. The intensification and differentiation of the production process was partly compensated for by increasing amounts of free time and higher wages, which, in return, had to be spent on the enjoyment of the same products.

The intensification of the labour process was accompanied by moral regulation of the workers' private lives. Work and non-work life grew increasingly bound up. In his famous text *Americanism and Fordism* Gramsci argued that the new methods of work were inseparable from a specific mode of living and thinking and feeling life.

For Emile Durkheim, the founder of modern sociology as an academic discipline, the principal cause of the progress of the division of labour was what he coined "organic solidarity" – as opposed to primitive societies which were characterized by a "mechanical solidarity" based on resemblance.

"Each organ, in effect, has its special physiognomy, its autonomy. And, moreover, the unity of the organism is as great as the individuation of the parts is more marked."

Durkheim rejects the utilitarian explanation of the division of labour by gains in efficiency. Instead, he introduces the idea of a "moral density" between previously unrelated social units and the emergence of a new "conscience collective".

Besides the highly problematic analogy of society as a biological organism Durkheim's theory of the division of labour draws from two sources that seem constitutive of the emergence of the modern humanities:

- the binary opposition of primitive versus civilized society, which is inseparably linked with 19th-century colonialism;
- the direct transposition of Darwin's "struggle for survival" onto the idea of economic competition as the mediating mechanism between a growing social volume and advances in the division of labour.

[the problem of moral: The morals of the Enlightenment and the division of labour in the orgy: de Sade's Juliette (Horkheimer/Adorno), Goddard, teamwork]

The separation of manual and intellectual labour is constitutive of industrial capitalism: the separation of those who work "with their hands" and those who work with their "brains" is the fundamental proposition of the class society.

Alfred Sohn-Rethel sees the division of manual and intellectual labour as being in close correspondence with the real abstraction of the commodity form and the epistemological implications of a philosophical tradition that understands thinking as a product of thinking and ultimately separates theory from practice, thus opening the gap between conception and execution.

The exchange of commodities goes along with the abstraction of specific goods. Only the value of these goods is important. This abstraction is called "real abstraction" because it takes place without a conscious

effort; whether anybody is aware of it or not is of no importance. "People do not know it but they do it" (Marx). Sohn-Rethel argues that the real abstraction of the commodity form is the real basis of formal and abstract thinking. All of Kant's categories, such as space, time, quality, substance, accident, movement, and so forth, are implicit in the act of exchange.

Sohn-Rethel sees the transcendental unity of self-consciousness as an intellectual reflection of "the form of exchangeability of commodities underlying the unity of money and the social synthesis".

Adolf Eichmann, who managed the logistics of the mass transport of European Jews to the extermination camps during the Second World War, has been considered the personification of the specialisation of labour in industrial capitalism and the inherent collapse of morality.

Rony Brauman and Eyal Sivan edited the archive footage of Eichmann's trial in their award winning documentary, *The Specialist: Portrait of a Modern Criminal*. When Eichmann was brought to court in Israel in 1961, his line of defence was built on denying any legal responsibility for the deportations to the death camps, although Eichmann himself kept referring to his reputation as a "specialist" in his field, that is, in the logistics of the expatriation, expropriation, and deportation of Jewish people.

In her report from the trial, written for *The New Yorker* magazine, Hannah Arendt coined the phrase "the banality of evil". In Eichmann she discovered neither a lack of empathy, as many other observers did, nor stupidity; rather just thoughtlessness.

It seems that the specification of knowledge and its celebration in managerialism had coincided with a collapse of thinking, since fragmented action evacuates itself of any responsibility or even meaning.

Alongside the massive proliferation of all sorts of specialist-related subjectivities in culture industry (e.g. the TV-expert, the nerd, the Indian IT expert, to name a few), in the realm of production we encounter the opposite: a re-injection of individual creativity, overall responsibility, forced collective liability, group or peer-pressure in ever smaller, isolated units of production under the banner of teamwork and cooperation.

Facing its increasing political irrelevance over the course of the 20th century, the official Marxist debate more or less systematically shifted its focus from a materialist analysis of the division of labour towards phenomena of the superstructure: the culture industry, consumer society, society of spectacle, etc.

What we experience today as "creative industries" is a reintegration of all sorts of practices that have not been considered productive under the reign of a new social division of labour. Political theory and organizing practices have to re-address issues of political economy in a significantly extended version.

What would it be like if instead of reasoning about the essence of immaterial production or the very character of creative industries one investigated contemporary forms of the division of labour in post-industrial production processes?

- 1 – At first sight, an increased level of control appears to be the ultimate purpose of the technical division of labour today;
- 2 – whereas segmentation of the work process in industrial production has led to the evacuation of meaning, in so-called immaterial production it is the other way around: meaning needs to be re-assembled through the re-collection of isolated practices under capitalist command or, in more friendly terms, through co-operation. It is the proprietary code itself that does not only regulate access to the means of production and the reproduction of the productive forces, but also establishes itself as a goal in its own right.

The decomposition of the factory and the break-up of its theatrical units of location, time, and story line have produced a new social division of labour that reflects that decomposition. The technical division of labour is sourced out to individual mini-entrepreneurial units with various occupations that are split up and scattered across time and space.

The molar segmentations of the traditional division of labour that was based on reducing complexity, decreasing the knowledge that is needed for the steps of production, is replaced by a rather molecular segmentation. The linear dramaturgy of the assembly line has turned into a transversal organization of work without any ends or limits.

This should lead us to the research of other divisions of labour beyond the technical and the social. For example, the intensified Fordist production in the free-trade zones manifests a global division of labour that runs parallel to the 19th century colonial exploitation, by providing resources like cheap labour force on which the boom of the creative industries relies; or the gender-specific divisions of labour, which have overhauled the Fordist model of the small family, and hence demand new, migrant domestic labour.

If the “division of labour is limited by the extent of the market” (Adam Smith) and the number and relative density of the population are necessary conditions for the division of labour (Karl Marx), it is as urgent, as it is obvious, that an analysis of the social division of labour today needs to open up a new perspective on the effects of both migratory movements as well as new information and communication technologies that have emerged at the end of the 20th century.

The ongoing lament over the precarisation of labour provides if any, then only very superficial insight into the results of a massive reconfiguration of the work process. A radical political theory and praxis need to attempt at least to get to the root of the problem and investigate a new division of labour that is occurring as a response to the change in the mode of production.

At the same time, the booming praise and worship of the common appears as unadulterated kitsch. Instead of indulging in utopianism, rather than proclaiming an alleged commonality that would exist a priori to the hostile conditions of the postmodern workplace, a political project has to reflect how exactly one mode of production is superseded by another, how the division of labour is altered, and how the understanding of what constitutes fulfilling self-activity is redefined.

In the same way that the concept of proletarian solidarity was rising against the fragmentation and segmentation of the worker's subjectivity at the assembly line, an upgraded version is to be developed, which would be able to resist the new social division of labour in post-industrial production or even propagate a new workerism of the creative industries--a concept of collaboration, as a refusal of co-operation, based on the experience that the only thing we have in common might be the fact that we have nothing in common.

(Nietzsche's concept of negation, affirmation of the affirmation)

The concept of *imaginary property* is situated at the crossing of two axes: images on the one hand and, on the other, an image production that becomes increasingly a matter of proprietarization, since the expansion of capitalist accumulation towards image production is no longer limited to the frontiers of certain media or technologies (like film industry), but sets out to colonize the entire realm of the imagination. This axis intersects with a process of acceleration, in which the very notion of property itself becomes more and more a matter of the imagination (as we experience it today in the crisis of education).

In terms of the division of labour, that means that the real appropriation, the relation of the labourer to the means of production, by which the transformation of nature is undertaken, needs to be understood as an over-appropriation of the real (the production of images), while the relations of production, the exercise of economic ownership, the control of the access to the means of production become more and more imaginary or, in other words: indiscernible in terms of what is and what is not real.

In the field of design we encounter the possibility of virtually undoing the separation between intellectual and manual labour. It is not only because design may be situated in a grey zone between theory and practice. Rather, it is because of the double role that characterizes design in its intrinsic relation to both the technical and social divisions of labour, which are both subject to processes of design as well as formative of the very work of the designer. And this is by no means about an omnipresence and omnipotence of design; on the contrary.

Proposal

At the end of this very preliminary collection of material and associated thoughts, here is a concrete proposal:

The question of a new division of labour needs to be addressed at once both in a radically practical as well as in a radically theoretical manner. A framework needs to be invented that can facilitate a wide range of experiments from research to campaigning. It could be exemplified by a “design-union”, which would also be a think-tank for the future of self-organization in the creative industries directly connected to an organizing campaign. It is about designing a union and at the same time about starting a union for designers.

Law Facing up to the Dematerialisation of the Work of Art*

A Juridical Analysis of Contemporary Art

Judith Ickowicz

* This text is an abstract of a PhD in private law, submitted in 2009 at Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne. We are publishing it not only because it addresses the legal understanding of the dematerialisation of the arts and immaterial artworks, but also because we think that it opens a discussion on the material status of the current forms of immaterial labour in the arts, which result in neither material nor immaterial artworks (*Editors' Note*).

The notion *contemporary art* describes works that do not necessarily identify an object of art in the classical sense. The contemporary art scene which constituted itself during the 1960s has seen emerging radical gestures and acts of contestations that have shattered the traditional canons of art and the economical and institutional framework of artistic production. Artists conceived works that were as removed as possible from the criteria of the museum object or cultural heritage: instructions of use, ephemeral actions, and perishable or volatile media have all become the basis of their practice. These artists inspired the generations of artists who have succeeded them and profoundly revitalized the art world. And yet these forms have again disrupted the legal definition of the artwork.

The artwork was understood by the law as a concrete, material thing, a tangible object which could be physically appropriated like an easel painting. This model does not correspond to the reality of artistic production. Contemporary artists produce immaterial artworks. This has forced us to rethink the legal existence of the artwork and the conditions of its private appropriation, by questioning under what circumstances an artwork liberated from its physical underpinnings can be considered as an appropriable thing and how this appropriation is realised. These questions call up many branches of the law: Authors' Rights cannot be ignored, but also contracts relations, Property Law, Insurance Law, Personality Rights and Penal Law.

At first the difficulties induced by the confrontation between legal concepts and contemporary art were exposed. It appears that the problem of the dematerialisation of artworks became established in Property Law. The juridical concept of the appropriable object has thus constituted a driving principle. The juridical object has at its origin been considered as an intellectual production over this material existence. In order to characterize and classify the appropriable values, and thus to subject them to legal operations and financial transactions, the jurists formulate principles and produce an artificial reality with a radical distance from common experience. Yet, humanist and modern authors have often missed this rationality. The juridical concept of the thing has been progressively reduced to a corporeal substrate by the classical civil doctrine of the 19th century. A recount was given about the evolution that conducted towards exclusion any idea of immateriality from the definition of a thing. This exclusion responds to the promotion of the subject of law whose corollary it represents: an individual's power is exerted upon the world with the help of physical things, directly appropriable, and not with immaterial things which, by their abstraction, constitute a screen between the individual and the world.

The notion of creations of the mind does not escape this influence, as the 19th century doctrinal debates that gave rise to authors' rights show. Artistic production is protected by law only if it possesses a form. And yet, in the field of art, this form has been thought about in reference to art objects, fixed in materiality. The reference to the "artist's hand" in the juridical discourse has thus played a role as a confirmation that allowed the work of art worthy of granted Authors' Rights to be identified. Presence of the hand is seen as a guarantee of an individual and singular production. Only the hand appears to be capable of transmitting a spiritual supplement to the produced thing. The work of art that results directly from the hand of an artist leaves the strict domain of things and enters into the sphere of a person and of a personality.

Analysis, which was conducted as much from the point of view of the dispositions of authors' rights as from the point of view of civil law, reviews all the cardinal mechanisms of juridical protection of an author and its work. Developments in the notion of common things, in the perpetuity of Property Law, in the rapprochement of Moral Rights with the general theory of Personality Rights, or furthermore in the difficulties raised by the works of contemporary art at the hands of Contract Law and Insurance Law show with which theoretical and practical limits the protection of the immaterial creation of the mind remains confronted. Obstacles that result from a too narrow sense of the notion of creation of the mind and the slightly paradoxical importance given to the matter – when there is talk of protecting the products of the mind – consequently encourage a new juridical view on contemporary art.

In order to fully integrate contemporary art into the domain of law, I propose an intellectual approach to artistic production. This change of paradigm implies a new definition of the juridical notion of form that is capable of adapting itself to the modes of the actual artistic production; it also assumes that the modalities of its private appropriation be redefined, which can only occur through a real recognition of the authority of the artist. Far from challenging an idea about a personal expression protected by law, I would like to propose juridical solutions able to safeguard the artistic freedom and the singularity of the work of contemporary art.

It has been shown that immaterial works of art possess a form like art objects do, but this form is intellectual. Immaterial works of art can consequently be considered as a thing as long as one breaks with the material definition of the juridical thing.

Demonstration takes as its point of departure the ready-made that appears as a paradigmatic example of artistic modernity. With the invention of the ready-made, Duchamp accomplished a revolution by producing meaning in and appropriating a manufactured and non-modified object. The ready-made is a product of the change in an object's purpose: originally intended for practical use, the object is established as a work of art and enters as such into the world of art. In its most literal meaning – a simple object transformed into a work of art – ready-made is reduced to an idea that is not protectable: Authors' Rights protect ready-made only via the context of an exhibition, as an element within an elaborate cohesion. It is thus returned to a perceptible reality which is the only one capable of filling the condition of form required by the law.

Approaching the ready-made via the category of specification of *specificatio* enables us to consider another point of view. This technique allows us to explicate the basis of a thing: a thing can be defined by its form or by the material from which it is constituted, whereas law seems to give preference to the material. It seemed essential that this scheme be reversed and that a thing, and by extension, the work of art, begin to be defined through its form. Thus it becomes possible to explain that a new thing, in this case the ready-made, be created from an old thing, without modifying its appearance or changing its material. By defining the work of art through its form, the form of the ready-made is necessarily intellectual since only an intellectual operation authorises it to conceive a break in the status of the object and subsequently the birth of a work of art.

Examination of artworks conceived as complex ensembles and responding to the juridical qualification of the universality of fact have consolidated this analysis. Universality of fact draws its existence as a thing and as an asset, not from the isolation of the elements that compose it, but from the federative principle that organises and gives its coherence to the ensemble. It can be considered as an immaterial thing whose form is intellectual. Yet this intellectual form is appropriable in itself and can be an autonomous object of contract: in this case precise rules will be imposed on a purchaser in order to be able to maintain the unity of an ensemble. By radicalising the intellectual approach to artistic production, one can only uphold the principle of organisation of the origin of the artwork and turn it into a basis of Property Law, which leads us directly to Conceptual Art.

Once the definition of the intellectual form of an artwork has been stated, its general framework of appropriation must be revisited. The phenomenon of dematerialisation of assets provoked an in-depth re-examination of the basis of property by the civil doctrine. These analyses break with the dogma of a corporeal thing and allow us to determine a status for an artist that protects his or her freedom to produce. Property can be seen as a notion and framework that is able to adjust itself to the immaterial artwork. As an act of power, of domination, of authority and, technically speaking, of exclusivity, such analyses explain that an artist can claim those immaterial artworks that he or she produced and make decisions about their practical modalities of transmission and therefore about the form of their economic and social circulation. Freedom to produce begins to be more concrete in the domain of Property Law. It is here, first and foremost, that ownership of all kinds of things is made possible, including forms that an artist chooses to erect definitively into a work of art.

Juridical appropriation of immaterial artworks however implies that their authors can be fully acknowledged in the domain of law. In various capacities several actors can intervene in the process of production: artist, collector or producer. Identification of an author thus depends on the understanding of their respective roles. However, authors' rights uphold a meaning of this notion that has been put together under the twofold influence of the ontological idea of a juridical person and a romantic idea about artistic production that does not correspond to the reality of contemporary art. Any "natural" person that has participated in giving shape to an artwork is presumably an author, even if their creative contribution was accessory. On the contrary, the intellectual conceiver of production is considered as a simple author of an unprotected idea or, in the best case scenario, recognises a status of co-authorship with the real producer. Following the reflection about the notion of intellectual form, deadlocks of this solution have been presented, and re-thinking the notion of the author on new basis has been proposed.

Artists were inspired by law to assert their supremacy as creators. Juridical fictions have thus served as models when an artist's freedom of invention has been asserted. It leads to the origins of the modern notion of an author and his or her intrinsic relation with the notion of authority. Yet, to restore the idea of the authority guarantees the artistic and juridical existence of immaterial works of art. From this basis, the status of the artist and the notion of the author can be renewed based on efficient juridical criteria that are coherent with the evolution of artistic production and the philosophy of art.

An artist can create an artistic protocol and decide that the responsibility of its material organisation fall to a third party, for example to a producer. In this case, the artist does not limit his or herself to describing a work of art in an abstract way: he or she invents a frame of production that participates in its definition. The hypothesis of a delegation in execution requires us to clarify the position of the author and thus trace the limit between acts of execution that bear witness to a creative contribution and those that result from an "artistic subordination". Several criteria allowing for the revelation of a third party's submission to the artist's authority have been found. The artist has to unilaterally fix an artwork's conditions of production. He or she can pronounce the directives, control the execution and sanction the producer's breaches by refusing to authenticate a material format that contravened his or her demands.

The immaterial artwork thus finds its artistic justification and its economic value in a normative artistic framework with respect to which the work is defined as a thing and appropriated as an asset. As it turns out, its juridical appropriation can reconcile two constraints that are *a priori* contradictory: fixity of form and the dynamic of a continuous process of production, reactivated by each of its appropriations. The immaterial artwork can, in a way, find a place within a temporary continuum by preserving its proper identity all along.

Intellectual form is appropriable from the organisation set up by the artist, which tends to place the immaterial work of art in a relational frame that is at the same time a contractual one. I insist on the importance of this relational dimension and analyse, by drawing on case studies (Daniel Spoerri, Klein, Daniel Buren, Claude Rutault), the central role of the contract in the field of contemporary art. A demonstration is given according to the notion of the relational contract and contemporary contract law: development of contractual balance, of coherence and of good faith. Artists knew how to exploit the resources of a contract in order to organise modalities of circulation of their works within the art market and to find ways to give true authority to the intellectual form of their productions. It thus appears that, without necessarily meeting the conditions of special law or enjoying the scale of protection it confers, an immaterial artwork exists on the juridical stage as a thing that is appropriable and appropriated with respect to its singular existential modalities.

To conclude this treatise I will discuss body art. Body art can be understood as the ultimate dematerialisation of an artwork's physicality and its replacement by the body, which is both the work's canvas and aisle. The notion of the legal person can help us think about this practice in juridical terms. Appealing to this juridical notion allows us to explain how an autonomous artwork can be identified by revealing the possibility of identifying its author as well.

Differentiating a legal person from a "natural" person is an artefact, a fiction instituted for the purposes of the law. In authors' rights, the juridically recognised author is only an interpretation of the author, a fiction of the law. On one hand, the author does not consider all individuals, and on the other hand, the legal notion of an author is thought about in a certain category of discourse. Thus the body of the artist acts on two distinct levels: it points out him or her to whom the juridical personality and the status of the author can possibly be conferred, but, as an object of law, it is reified. Equally, in artistic practices where the body is taken as a medium, there isn't only a question of the physical presence of the artist, but also giving this presence a form, which implies a necessary detachment, a process of objectification.

Body art raises another series of questions. Works coming from a performative regime, to which body art can be attached, do not always possess a locatable author. Their transmission sometimes depends on the involvement of an interpreter who could possibly become an author. Only the juridical decision allows instituting the exclusive artistic authority of a created form, despite its continuous reinterpretation and recreation. The history of dance teaches us how choreographic works have been established as creations of the mind and appropriated as closed forms, despite their intrinsically processual nature, and demonstrates that it is because of the intervention of law that they can now be defined as appropriable things. Designation of the author of a performative artwork can result from law, but it also depends on a contractual relation. Contract law asserts itself, here again, as a tool capable of establishing and guaranteeing the authority of the artist.

The work of Tino Sehgal appears at this point as an exemplary case. Tino Sehgal is an artist whose education as a dancer and economist has influenced the whole of his oeuvre. He is as much at home in the conceptual art as in the performance art tradition and strives to escape the reification of artwork that conceptual art has not always prevented.

His works approach dance, singing and speech, except that he pushes the realisation of these acts to the limits of the bizarre. His work leaves no tangible trace: his artistic practice is unusual in that it excludes all materialisation. He has pushed this logic of immateriality so far as to impose a specific procedure for selling his works.

Tino Sehgal devised an acquisition contract, which he imposes and which is strictly oral. This contract is intended to assure him control over the form of the work and its modalities of transmission. The sold work consists of an oral protocol that defines the actions which will be carried out by one or several interpreters. Its content is specified orally: its demands for presentation, for duration, the number of interpreters required and the way in which they should be informed about the content of the work. This artistic dispositif wants to exclude any authorial demand by the interpreter. The instructions given by the protocol are precise and strict. In addition, Tino Sehgal took precautions. He pre-constituted the evidence of the work's content himself by inviting two witnesses to attend the sale.

Despite all these precautions, this work bumps into an irreducible dimension of the experience of the performative works. Tino Sehgal's works leave space for a possible reinterpretation and thus a possible transformation, loss, or even disappearance of the work. No written record has been made so the realisation of the work gives rise to a necessary process of recollection. The owner of the work has to picture it mentally in order to be able to pass it on orally to the interpreters, but also to subsequent buyers. The question of the durability of such work is posed in a crucial way. Though the question of how performative works are remembered is not exclusive to the work of Tino Sehgal, here it has a unique impact because of the absence of archives that could identify a stable corpus beyond variations in its execution. It has to be specified that despite the uncertainties raised by their strictly immaterial character, this body of work has found its way into the art market and art institutions.

Juridical markers that can be opposed to body art have also been analysed, in particular the concept of a person's dignity. After having tested ethical objections, an individualistic idea of human dignity has been adopted in order to protect the artist's freedom to produce.

Transversal and multidisciplinary approaches have been adopted for this research. By taking this path, I wanted to show that contemporary art needs law to spread into the social sphere and become more accessible, but also that law is all the richer for having confronted contemporary art.

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Translated from French by Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez

When Art Becomes the Enterprise

Vanessa
Theodoropoulou

etoy.CORPORATION is a controversial, but generally kind virus that penetrates a system without destroying or damaging it. Virus etoy modifies only the way the system functions¹.

In her essay on *Les Entreprises Critiques/Critical Companies*², a bilingual publication managed by Yann Toma – artist-researcher and an “artistic entrepreneur” himself (Cf. Ouest-Lumière), Rose Marie Barrientos sets up a portrait of the model of the object of her study. Capitalist corporations, Barrientos reminds us, appeared in the US towards the end of the 19th century with the rise of the market economy and mass culture. They spread rapidly throughout the world, “soon ensuring the quasi-totally of human work as well as organizing the production, distribution and consumption of most goods and services”.³ A corporation “exists to generate profit”; profit (as well as utility, progress and value of exchange) is its mandate, its “condition of survival”,⁴ notes Barrientos. All this is well known. What is perhaps less well-known and interests us in this brief commentary, concerns the type of “society” that the company incorporates, its legal and symbolic status:

Declared a “legal person” in 1888 by the United States’ Supreme Court, the corporation was invested with the same rights, privileges and liberties as any American citizen. (...); it unites several “owners” or shareholders, but exists outside and above the individuals that comprise it. The name of a corporation is its brand name, an identity and a signature that it has to promote and circulate at all costs to ensure its viability. Its brand name thus requires the construction of an image, a personality and a visual identity.⁵

1 Cédric Vilatte “Interview with etoy.CORPORATION” in Jérôme Sans, *Hardcore. Vers un nouvel activisme* (exhib.cat.), Palais de Tokyo, Le Cercle d’Art, Paris, 2003.

2 Yann Toma (managed by), with the collaboration of Rose Marie Barrientos, *Les Entreprises Critiques/Critical Companies*, CERAP/Art&Flux, Cité du Design, Advancia-Négoce, Paris – Saint-Étienne, 2010.

3 Rose Marie Barrientos, “Les entreprises critiques en perspective”, in *Les Entreprises Critiques/Critical Companies*, op.cit, p.147. See also the very well-stocked platform: Art&flux <http://art-flux.univ-paris1.fr>

4 *Ibid*, p.148.

5 *Ibid*.

Conceived as a nominal, disembodied and yet “material” identity, the corporation – not a factory, nor people, nor a multitude – is a “body” that is at the same time plural and unique, for some shared and for others decomposed, dispossessed. Its name establishes and signifies at the same time a community (the workers) and its mirror image (the shareholders), a duplication *sublated*, or overtaken by a spectacular image that rises above this rift, and that enables this entity to show itself as integrated, unified. In the extraordinary life of capitalism’s corporations, *image*, the label, has thus an almost superior value than that of goods.

The above should make the following self-evident: the kind of “micro-society” that the historical capitalist corporation (company or enterprise) embodies, as well as its mode of symbolic inscription into the public sphere of the *real* society, are political questions per se. Therefore, to deal with “the company” in a *critical* way means first of all to criticise the link that this entity establishes between the economy and politics, between the ways of administrating one’s home and of living and acting together. It also means to reconsider the *depoeticisation* and *depoliticisation* of (immaterial) labour and (immaterial) art in the post-Fordist enterprise just like in contemporary art, and consequently, the crisis of the ancient triad of labour-action-intellect (Cf. Agamben, Virno⁶) and its fusion into notions such as “creativity” or “practice”. To criticise means by definition and by tradition to suspect the rules that, in both fields, determine the contents of production, action and collaboration, to explode a vertical or horizontal structure that replaces antagonism (opposing subjects) by competition (opposing enterprises).

Reading Iain Baxter’s “Foreword” – Baxter being the recognised pioneer of this “artistic paradigm” whose historical precursor (for the authors of *Critical Companies*) is obviously Andy Warhol (and not Marcel Duchamp) – we realize that it is not exactly this type of a critical position (or of a critical artist) that the authors of this publication refer to. The artistic choice of Baxter who, in the beginning of the 1970s decided to dress up as an entrepreneur, seems to us more like a symptom of the depoliticisation mentioned above than an expression of a will to “join forces” in order to react to “the development of an underlying form that seeks to oppress the masses”⁷ as Yann Toma discusses. Instead of opposing the system from the margin, as a neo-romantic bohemian artist, Iain Baxter decided to integrate himself into it. He chose

6 Giorgio Agamben, *The Man without Content*, tr. Georgia Albert, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1999; Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the multitude*, tr. Isabella Bertolotti, James Cascaito and Andrea Casson, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2004.

7 Yann Toma, “Introduction”, in *Critical Companies*, op.cit, p.141.

to become an active element of the production chain, which became the production network, an *autonomous* and above all an *independent* link. "It is essential to free the artist from [the pressure of relying on the charity of those who wish to 'support' the arts] and allow the cultural knowledge he possesses to fuse with that of business, politics and education",⁸ claimed Baxter in 1971. His strategy has consisted of becoming a "humanist" version of his capitalist model himself, by maintaining values such as competence (skill) and efficiency, values dismissed by the post-war modernist critique. It is all about "making the economy work for the world of art and global culture",⁹ declares the artist today. Three decades later, the artistic company etoy.CORPORATION, which finds it "naïve" to separate the commercial from the artistic and ironically defines itself as an "entrepreneurial sculpture", uses similar terms, talking this time of "cultural substance" :

[etoy.CORPORATION] controls, protects, promotes and exploits the cultural substance, particularly the American proprietary brand "etoy" as well as the etoy.ART-COLLECTION. The company shares the cultural value and acts with the intention to re-invest all its financial profit into art.¹⁰

Superflex, another Art&Flux's "critical company" which intends to oppose capitalism by "selling" free products ("Freeshop") and which defines art as "a tool in the service for people"¹¹, claims that "all humans are potential entrepreneurs".¹² Yann Toma goes even deeper into the logic of the "ironic" integration: "[...] the operating company, he claims, [is] a structure that makes use of a team and a better division of labor to ensure greater productivity".¹³

8 Iain Baxter, in "Foreword", in *Critical Companies*, op.cit., p.140.

9 *Ibid.* This "Foreword" was written in September 2007.

10 "Interview with etoy.CORPORATION", in Jérôme Sans, *Hardcore. Vers un nouvel activisme* (exhib.cat.), op.cit.

11 "Superflex", in *Les Entreprises Critiques*, op.cit., p.391.

12 "Interview with Superflex", in Jérôme Sans, *Hardcore. Vers un nouvel activisme* (exhib.cat.), op.cit.

13 Yann Toma, op.cit., p.141.

For the General Manager of Ouest-Lumière, the critical dimension of the artistic companies is almost self-evident. When the society has taken on the form of a company, taking over the power of an entrepreneurial structure – real or fictitious – seems a politically valid project. But if his strategy – the artist becoming-a-company – claims to represent a break with forms of opposition that have marked critical art of the 20th century, his argument serves instead to legitimise them, curiously recalling "old" idealistic positions. Becoming a manager, or better, the leadership of a company, "gives us the legitimate means for becoming ourselves real actors in society", says Toma, whereas a critical company, by being a structure "anchored in the long term", "imbedded in time", provides us a means of dealing directly with the society and its issues. The artistic company "constitutes the manifesto of taking the future of world utopias into our own hands", by taking possession of the economy. To do what? To carry out our personal projects, and satisfy our personal needs and desires. Having a "universal reach", artistic companies finally open up "new fields" for artistic intervention, on the side of the sensible, the conceptual or even the spiritual, "a field in which art is concomitantly a company, the ensemble of its projects and the projects it generates"...¹⁴

Whereas for Yann Toma all truly critical art today is bound to situate itself outside the world of art¹⁵ and for etoy.CORPORATION the borders between art, identity, the idea of nation, fashion, finances and politics have been abolished, Barrientos insists on the (critical) importance of this shift within the world of art. It submits the company to the aesthetic regime wherein ethical criteria, meaning humanistic values, reign¹⁶. In order to participate at Etoy.CORPORATION or Ouest-Lumière, to share their name and their poetical substance, it is actually enough to donate a sum to its owners: to become a *shareholder* of a Critical Company means to become a *member* of this Critical Company. Just as it is enough to add an *R* to the Medef¹⁷ – the "old" *R* of Refusal, Revolt, or even Revolution¹⁸ – and the mRedef is born. A new "movement" which is definitely not one, but which, in the desert of the post-modern real, fights for "the real of the company". *Quid est?* Indeed, the creativity¹⁹.

Translated from French by Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez

14 *Ibid.*, p.141-143.

15 *Ibid.*, p.143.

16 Rose Marie Barrientos, op.cit., p.153.

17 Medef is an acronym for Mouvement des Entreprises de France (French Employer's Union).

18 Sébastien Juy, "La MREDEF", in: *Les Entreprises Critiques*, op.cit., p.195.

19 "Unlike the MEDEF, the mRedef [Mouvement du réel des entreprises de France] has no intention of becoming entangled in notions of 'business reality', which is a reality seen through the linguistic prism of marketing jargon. We are more interested in the tangible side of business. (...) To clearly mark the difference we have decided to give our acronym a feminine gender as opposed to the masculine MEDEF. This clearly positions us on the side of female creativity and not masculine marketing. So much for what is non-negotiable." *Ibid.*

Hybris Konstproduktion* Virginie Bobin

* This introduction was first written for the
Journal des Laboratoires, Sept. 2010

Hybris Konstproduktion stands for several realities: it is run by Anders Jacobson and Johan Thelander, both Swedish, choreographers, dancers, cultural producers, writers and consultants in organization and cultural policy development. Since 1998 the organization has been run in the form of a non-profit association, and in 2010 they formed a shareholding company in order to better facilitate their different activities and economic flows. The issue of forms of organization is one of the main interests of the duo. It is an investigation in how to develop tools for seizing one's own means and strategies of work in the economy and politics of art production. It is a proposal for alternative cultural policies, a toolbox, an agora. As such, discussion, conception and other processes that pre-exist to a "valuable" product cease to be considered as separate activities and every moment and form of work is equally valued.

When reading about HK's "values" (in the Manifesto they released on their website), the choice of running their business in the form of a shareholding company seems paradoxical at first, as it is generally assimilated to a strict market capitalism. However, after thoroughly re-searching the existing forms of organizational structure for the best way to channel Anders Jacobson and Johan Thelander's multiple activities into one entity, the shareholding company appeared to be the most suitable structure. It allows them to further concentrate on their work and to redistribute more fluidly the economy coming in and out of these activities. The resulting profit allows producing more competence to be sold.

HK's position is neither cynical nor a mere reaction against the laws of the cultural market. On their website, one can read about the services provided by the company: consultation and debate; working meetings and forums for discussion; lectures and presentations; coaching, project and organization development. Lists of "clients" are proudly displayed: they are public authorities, art and cultural organizations and institutions, schools, festivals and artists, in Sweden and abroad. Indeed, their in-depth knowledge of cultural policies, laws and systems of organization is as valuable to secure a powerful position in the debate with institutions and governmental agencies as to advise artists and non-profit organizations about pro-active ways of influencing the system or building ones at their advantage¹.

Using the form and structure of a company in order to criticize the economy of art production is no new idea among artists but it has often been limited to representation or parody. On another hand, many artists or cultural producers were – often – forced to create micro-companies in order to be able to invoice, declare salaries and thus receive social

security and so on – in one word, survive in this economy. Instead, Hybris Konstproduktion's presumptuous immoderation² seeks to provide tools for empowerment, relying on the structure of the company to create their own modes of operation and – more importantly – sharing knowledge with other actors in the art field.

Please do disturb – renegotiations in progress Anders Jacobson

What is artistic freedom or independence today? What does it mean to be autonomous in contemporary society? Could there be such a thing as a "post-autonomous" practice?

The following article is an excerpt from a longer text³, written for a Swedish anthology on arts and economy. The ambition of the text is to think through changing perspectives and positions within contemporary art production – more specifically dance and choreography – as well as arts relation to bordering fields of cultural politics, economy and organization. With the starting point in contemporary dance's changing forms of production and a parallel expansion of the concept of choreography, I aim to discuss how several concepts are currently being re-appropriated, in particular autonomy and artistic freedom.

In today's cultural debates, these concepts are used by influential practitioners in a way that I wish to problematise. Many still speak about art and cultural politics as if nothing had changed since the 1970s and base their arguments on conceptions that are no longer useful. I mean that rather than marginalize themselves in the quest for "freedom" and sentimentally linger in a forgotten time, art practitioners right now have a strong possibility to/could/should step into the centre of change and redefine arts contemporary relevance and social consequence.

¹ This second part is also irrigating many of HK's activities such as Prototype or More Opinion – read more on <http://www.hybriskonst.org/en/about-our-activities>

² This *hybris* – when men's pride and furor would lead them to defy the gods – was often denounced in Ancient Greece's theatre and literature.

³ The full text can be downloaded at www.hybriskonst.org

Post-autonomous practice and mutual dependence

I have recently been playing around with the invented concept of *post-autonomous*. The concept did, in fact, exist for a short while as a Wikipedia article, but was recently taken away due to the lack of references and relevance. What could a *post-autonomous* practice mean?

In its traditional definition, autonomy has, for me, connotations of a conscious choice of situating oneself in an imaginary "outside". Outside the system, society, institution, market, capitalism, and outside rigid thought-structures. Today, when these borders are almost impossible to detect, when it is no longer surprising at all that the state and capital find themselves together in the same boat, when the key to commercial success lies in thinking "outside the box", we must, most probably, reformulate our strategies.

One conclusion would be that we leave models of thought that are based on an inside and outside, either-or. We have to leave models of thought that suggest that "self-government" and mutual dependency are in direct opposition. Somewhere here perhaps a *post-autonomous* practice could emerge – in a situation where we, convinced about possibilities of change and thus with integrity, march straight forth to the centre of organization, policy production, lobbyism, economy and administration – the everyday "backstage" of ideology. In other (anti-quoted?) words; striving for freedom of action "within the system", in a continuous process where we constantly reevaluate our contemporary relevance as art practitioners in a dynamic society.

In this process the artist, civil servant, minister, producer, economist, programmer, researcher, student, audience member, amateur, semi-professional and professional build more and new types of relations with each other; as colleagues, friends, mentors and consultants, ideological opponents and critics. Here the possibility arises for new forms of cooperation, knowledge production, influence and productive conflicts. New alliances, temporary groups of affiliation and loose networks are formed, that are not necessarily based on field legitimacy, art form, academic status, or geography but rather on shared values and the cooperation's activist potential.

I am convinced that it is here – weaved through a multiplicity of relations that do not care for power structures in terms of political levels or artistic and academic prestige – that we can be most free to act. Here we can afford integrity, conflicts and "mobile loyalty"⁴. Here we can own our own questions and act toward change through new alliances. But to reach this point we have to take the risk to question and reformulate those dichotomies upon which we build our worldview.

4 . With "mobile loyalty" I mean that there is a tendency today to identify and remain loyal to specific subject matters, real and changeable circumstances, shared values and interests in process rather than with a static collection of opinions, a political party, a nation state etc.

Granted, I am still convinced that as people we need to produce definitions, divisions, contrasts and a certain amount of opposition in order to – in the long run – produce engagement, a possible mapping and action. I do not mean that everything can be a big soup of whatever.⁵

A further model of thought around autonomy has been brought forward by Frederic Jameson in *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, namely that arts "semi-autonomous" position hasn't disappeared, but rather "exploded" in and with society's aestheticization and the massification of cultural images. The autonomous room potentially exists everywhere, in ways that we are perhaps not yet capable of articulating:

What we must now ask ourselves is whether it is not precisely this semi-autonomy of the cultural sphere that has been destroyed by the logic of late capitalism. Yet to argue that culture today is no longer endowed with the relative autonomy it once enjoyed as one level among others in earlier moments of capitalism (let alone in recapitalized societies) is not necessarily to imply its disappearance or extinction. Quite the contrary; we must go on to affirm that the dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture is rather to be imagined in terms of an explosion: a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life – from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself – can be said to have become "cultural" in some original and yet untheorized sense.⁶

Jameson is also, with reference to Marx, into the idea of a necessity to be able to think seemingly contradictory thoughts at the same time:

In a well-known passage Marx powerfully urges us to do the impossible, namely, to think this development positively and negatively all at once; to achieve, in other words, a type of thinking that would be capable of grasping the demonstrably baleful features of capitalism along with its extraordinary and liberating dynamism simultaneously within a single thought, and without attenuating any of the force of either judgment. We are somehow to lift our minds to a point at which it is possible to understand that capitalism is at one and the same time the best thing that has ever happened to the human race, and the worst. The lapse from this austere dialectical imperative into the more comfortable stance of the taking of moral positions is inveterate and all too human: still, the urgency of the subject demands that we make at least some effort to think the cultural evolution of late capitalism dialectically, as catastrophe and progress all together.⁷

Just this, to gain the capacity to think development, change, and in this case society's economization as the best and the worst at the *same time*, is undoubtedly both an exciting and difficult thought experiment.

Translated from Swedish by Louise Höjer

5 . In her book *On the Political* (2005), political theorist Chantal Mouffe powerfully argues against the consensus and dialogue based forms of democracy that are currently being advocated and praised in the Western liberal democracies ("post conventional identities", politics "beyond" left and right, etc). She argues that society must provide mechanisms for legitimate political opposition based on commonly agreed rules, drafted on the basis of collective identities. She believes that politics must be based on the idea of a political *opponent*, not to end up in a supposedly "neutral" and often morally defined struggle against *enemies*. She believes that the current consensus and dialogue emphasized policy prevents this and thus gradually undermines democracy by underestimating the need for collective identities and the affective dimensions of politics, thus leaving the space open to populist forces that claims to represent "the people", appointing enemies such as e.g. "the establishment", "the immigrants" and so on. Indeed, today's discussions – in art and in politics in general – does not contain a particularly high degree of ideological clarification and confrontation. The challenge, I believe, therefore lies in finding ways to deepen democracy, which both can interact with fundamental processes of change (of collective identities, forms of organizing etc), while insisting on constituting clear ideological alternatives.

6 Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1991, p. 48.

7 *Ibid*, p. 47.

The Masochism of the Commodity Form: Queer Porn and the Fine Art of Paradox*

Matteo Pasquinelli

1. Desire at work and its capture

Today a common critique recognizes Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's two volumes work on schizophrenia (*Anti-Oedipus* written in 1972 and *A Thousand Plateaus* written in 1980) as a specular incarnation of post-Fordist capitalism with no political or revolutionary potential: their "capitalism and schizophrenia" project is dismissed as late capitalism is said to be already *schizophrenic*. According to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri only if their *desiring production* is framed within a *biopolitical production*, the crucial axis of contemporary economy and the exploitation of affective labour, immaterial labour and migrant labour can be properly understood. In a notorious passage of *Empire* (2000) they write:

Machines produce. The constant functioning of social machines in their various apparatuses and assemblages produces the world along with the subjects and objects that constitute it. Deleuze and Guattari, however, seem to be able to conceive positively only the tendencies toward continuous movement and absolute flows, and thus in their thought, too, the creative elements and the radical ontology of the production of the social remain insubstantial and impotent. Deleuze and Guattari discover the productivity of social reproduction (creative production, production of values, social relations, affects, becomings), but manage to articulate it only superficially and ephemerally, as a chaotic, indeterminate horizon marked by the ungraspable event.¹

The notions of *desiring production* and *biopolitical production* have, however, a common Spinozian genealogy. In the *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari's polemical target was the structuralism of Lacan and his idea of the unconscious organised as language (including also the whole Freudian theatre). Leaving the middle class sofa of psychoanalysis for the post-68 social movements, they wanted to shift philosophy from a critique of *representation* to a critique of *production*. On the other hand, in *Empire* Hardt and Negri's concern is to reverse Foucault's notion of biopolitics in order to restore a positive notion of *productive subject* against a claustrophobic notion of power that is said to shape any form of desire. Along the tradition of *operaismo*, Hardt and Negri have also expanded the Marxian definition of working class into the "multitude" to include the whole metropolis as a productive subject (the so-called "social factory"). They redesigned then the notion of labour itself to cover the general productive power of the whole *bios*.

¹ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2000, p. 28.

In their most recent book *Commonwealth* (2009) Hardt and Negri developed further the point of capture of *desire* by capitalism. They make a parallel between the production of social relations and Marx's definition of the commodity form as an incarnation of these social and economic relations, also known as *commodity fetishism*.

Although wealth in capitalist society first appears as an immense collective of commodities, Marx reveals that capital is really a process of the creation of surplus value via the production of commodities. But Marx develops this insight one step further to discover that in its essence capital is a social relation or, really, the constant reproduction of a social relation via the creation of surplus value via the production of commodities. Recognizing capital as a social relation gives us a first key to analyzing biopolitical production.²

Capitalism is said then to produce value capturing the production of social relations, that is the production of "the common" according to Hardt and Negri. This notion of capture refers also to the "apparatuses of capture" described by Deleuze and Guattari in a chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980)³ and it can be used to articulate the relation between desire and economy, if the commodity form is taken precisely as a conurbation of both *desiring flows* and *economic flows*.

The inner diagram of the commodity, however, is not symmetrical and frictionless. In this text a *conceptual diagram of masochism* is advanced as an attempt to articulate the basic form of the capitalistic capture by showing the paradoxical nature of commodity fetishism. The notion of masochism is employed then to spotlight both the paradoxical nature of desire and the paradoxical nature of commodity.⁴

² Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth*, Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA, 2009, p. 136.

³ See: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie II*, Minuit, Paris, 1980. Translated by Brian Massumi, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1987, chap. "Apparatus of capture", p. 424.

⁴ Applying a "diagram of masochism" to the commodity form is also an attempt to articulate politically Deleuze and Guattari notion of *machinic enslavement* introduced in the chapter "Apparatus of capture" in *A Thousand Plateaus*, op.cit.

* First presented at *Desiring Just Economies* conference at ICI Berlin, 24-26 June 2010. PDF available on matteopasquinelli.com

2. A molecular diagram of masochism

In the last decade the academic debate about *bios*, pleasure and desire seemed to have been polarised by three main tendencies: a Deleuzo-Guattarian jargon celebrating desire as absolute endless flow; a Lacanian jargon analysing just the ideological contradiction of any political economy of pleasure; and a biopolitical jargon indulging in the repression of “naked life” by evil forces. For sure, Deleuze and Guattari had the important role to re-introduce an energetic reading of desire and a materialistic plan of immanence where language, dialectics and metaphysics have no hegemony. Yet how to rethink the limit of desire without falling again in the temptation to use the limit of an external language or the limit of an external power to describe it? The question is how to imagine a new diagram of energy for the desiring flows, in which desire has to face its interior limits and its inner contradictions.

In his book *Félix* Franco Berardi noticed how in Deleuze and Guattari the third pole of depression is rarely mentioned⁵: psychopathology oscillates between paranoia (state) and schizophrenia (capitalism). Depression is clearly one of the intrinsic limits of the economy of desire, but its political potential is quite questionable. Apart from depression, can another (positive) intrinsic limit of desire be imagined? How to describe the diagram of the capture of desire beyond flow and code, infinite immanence and metaphysical separation? The definition of masochism could be useful as masochism is considered a notion of desire that includes its negation and its paradox.

Masochism is of course invoked in its conceptual form as it was described, for example, by Deleuze in his book *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*⁶ and as it has been used by queer theory beyond BDSM practices themselves. Inspired by these very practices, the definition of an economy of desire that includes its limit and negation does not refer to any transcendental framework. Here everything can be very immanent. Indeed we are still within a Spinozian ethics as masochism can be seen as an expansion of desire itself, as a *conatus* that expands its enjoyment, consciousness and control through a peculiar subjection. The masochist is stronger than the sadist.

5 Franco Berardi, *Félix*, Luca Sossella Editore, Roma, 2001. Trans: *Félix Guattari: Thought, Friendship, and Visionary Cartography*, Palgrave, London, 2009.

6 Gilles Deleuze, *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch: La Vénus à la fourrure*, Minuit, Paris, 1967. Trans: *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, Zone Books, New York, 1989.

3. Netporn: pornography as a biopolitical commodity

In his book *Profanations* (2005) Agamben describes pornography as the ultimate commodity and faces the problem of separation under the conditions of the society of the spectacle.⁷ Capitalism, like religion, is meant to bring each aspect of life (body, sexuality, language) into a separated sphere. The political gesture opposed to this separation is what Agamben calls *profanation*: not simply the gesture that abolishes and erases the separation, but the gesture that knows how to play with its constitution in a positive manner. Interestingly, Agamben is inspired by pornography as the ultimate example of capitalist partition. Pornography intervenes precisely to inhibit a possible “new collective use of sexuality”⁸, Agamben writes. The pornographic image should be *counter-profaned*, Agamben suggests, in the same way it profaned sexuality. A reverse profanation is not about censoring pornography but using it in a different way, claiming back the possibility that it captured. According to Agamben:

The unprofanable of pornography – everything that is unprofanable – is founded on the arrest and diversion of an authentically profanatory intention. For this reason, we must always wrest from the apparatuses – from all apparatuses – the possibility of use that they have captured. The profanation of the unprofanable is the political task of the coming generation.

Yet as Katja Diefenbach reminds in her essay on fetishism, queer culture started a long ago to play with and transform the pornographic genre:

As evidenced by the films of Kenneth Anger, Jack Smith or John Waters, or – as a late echo – by Fassbinder’s *Querelle*, beauty was directly combined with experiences and images of despair, violence, decay and fragility. These connections between beauty and dirtiness, or, in the tradition of the Theatre of the Ridiculous, between porn and scenes of failing, silly sex, are not made in order to provoke the guardians of normality, to shock the middle classes [...]. They are made to produce an immanent pleasure of non-naturalised, non-nurturing, non-love-dedicated, non-reproductive sex. In this sense postporn politics had already entered the present a long time ago, but due to the Marx-inspired anti-fetishism of the New Left and the essentialist threads in the feminism of the 1970s and 80s, it has been partly forgotten.⁹

Can this be a suitable form of profanation for Agamben? However, something new happened in the early 2000s when digital technologies and cheap cameras made these queer explorations join the big ocean of internet pornography and its “commodified” formats. The early 2000s

7 Giorgio Agamben, *Profanazioni*, Nottetempo, Roma, 2005. Trans: *Profanations*, Zone Books, New York, 2007.

8 “It is this profanatory potential that the apparatus of pornography seeks to neutralize. What it captures is the human capacity to let erotic behaviors idle, to profane them, by detaching them from their immediate ends. But while these behaviors thus open themselves to a different possible use, which concerns not so much the pleasure of the partner as a new collective use of sexuality, pornography intervenes at this point to block and divert the profanatory intention”. Agamben, *Profanations*, cit.

9 Katja Diefenbach, “Postporn politics and the deconstruction of fetishism”, in Tim Stütgen (ed.) *PostPornPolitics: Queer Feminist Perspectives on the Politics of Porn Performance and Sex Work as Cultural Production*, b_books, Berlin, 2009.

witnessed the rise of the so-called *indie porn*. Previously known as *alt. sex* in the underground of the old Usenet, in a decade it emerged into prosumer platforms such as *ishotmyself.com* and *beautifulagony.com*. The digital colonisation produced a short circuit between the dark underground of the internet and the mass media imaginary. The viral sex tape featuring Paris Hilton became the first example of the pervasive *pornification* of teenage culture too.

In particular indie porn was born out of the hybridization of the mainstream porn industry with the underground subcultures just to find a new life style to sell and a new market niche to exploit. See for example Vivid Alt, a branch of Vivid Entertainment (the world's largest adult video producer) dedicated to alternative porn made by Californian art academy graduates for their own subcultures (skaters, punks, gothics, and so on). Or take for instance *suicidegirls.com*, that for a short time was quite a success also among queer anarchists. Indeed some queer groups took this new pop wave as an opportunity to become more visible and to use the porn genre as a medium of gender performance. Other made business with a *sexually correct* spin. With these words the pay-per-view website *nofauxxx.com* presents itself:

No Fauxxx, established in 2002 by award-winning pornographer Courtney Trouble, is the basis of today's queer porn movement. Awarded "Best Queer Porn Site" of 2009. Featuring performers of all genders, sizes, races, sexual orientations, No Fauxxx gracefully mixes artistic queer erotica and hard core sex with an "alt porn" appeal. Things we love and have a lot of: Fisting, gangbangs, gender queers, butch dykes, femmes, tattoos alt porn stars, and trans men and women.

The exploration of queer porn or post-porn have been documented by many events (see *The Art and Politics of Netporn* conference organised in Amsterdam in 2005 or the *Post Porn Politics* symposium in Berlin in 2006).¹⁰ However this queer libertarian approach to pornography was criticised by many radical circles, by the neo-puritanism of *Adbusters* magazine, for instance, and the old puritanism of feminists against pornography. However also within the queer community these experiments were accused to be complicit with a regime of commodification as precisely the digital creates a continuum with the arena of biopolitical exploitation and spectacular capitalism.

After its "golden age" queer porn became less fashionable. How Florian Cramer noticed: "The contradiction of all pornography is that it destroys the obscene".¹¹ Queer porn had also to face the inflation of libido and the energy limit typical of any *desiring machine*, but more specifically it emerged as a very self-conscious genre. Being a self-conscious political gesture queer porn failed to cope with the paradoxical dimension of the pornographic commodity, that is it failed to fully embrace the obscenity of its capitalistic exploitation. Here a masochistic relation should be introduced to escape this impasse and to redesign this medium of queer activism keeping together the "unconscious" of the commodity. Obscene is not the content in itself but the incarnation of social relations within pornography as commodity, as Marx underlined in his notion of fetishism.

10 See: www.networkcultures.org/wpmu/netporn and www.postpornpolitics.com

11 Florian Cramer, "Sodom Blogging: Alternative Porn and Aesthetic Sensibility", in Katrien Jacobs and Matteo Pasquinelli (eds), *C'Lick Me: A Netporn Studies Reader*, Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 2007.

4. Warporn: the darkest side of the dark side

In the same years of "the rise of the netporn society" another global event – the Iraq war – affected the collective imaginary. When the pictures of Abu Ghraib scandal spread out on the web, they created another morbid short-circuit between mainstream media and porn underground. Hysteria about BDSM practices started to circulate on mass media¹² if also Susan Sontag wrote on the New York Times: "you wonder how much of the sexual tortures inflicted on the inmates of Abu Ghraib was inspired by the vast repertory of pornographic imagery available on the Internet"¹³. Warporn is the term introduced by Anglo-American journalism to describe the fetish for war adrenaline, military machinery and uniforms, footage of explosions and killings. With the Abu Ghraib scandal warporn became literally a new narrative genre. Queer porn could not compete with such a degree of obscenity. At the time the notion of *warpunk* was suggested to imagine a subversive aesthetics able to hijack this imaginary, like punk did with war imaginary already in the 1970s.¹⁴

In the video *I Like to Watch* (2001) by controversial transgender artist Chris Korda, porn scenes of oral sex and masturbation are mixed with football and baseball matches and with the images of the September 11 attack. In a literally "phallic imagery" the Pentagon is hit by an ejaculation, multiple erections are turned into the Manhattan skyline, the Twin Towers themselves become the object of an architectural fellatio. The video condenses and re-projects the lowest instincts of American society: a subterranean ground that binds together spectacle of war, pornography and sport.

Could indie porn or queer porn compete with such an obscenity potential and libidinal power of the Abu Ghraib pictures? Against warporn critical theory, left-wing circles and queer activism failed to elaborate the dark side of power, simply as they defended a very plain, *radically correct* and non-paradoxical notion of desire. If previously a new notion of masochism was invoked to cope with the capitalistic obscenity of the pornographic commodity, here a masochist art of image is advocated to deal with the dark side of the imaginary of power.

12 See: Margot Weiss, "Rumsfeld: Consensual BDSM and 'Sadomasochistic' Torture at Abu Ghraib," in Ellen Lewin and William Leap (eds) *Out in Public*, Blackwell, Malden, MA, p. 180-201.

13 Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others", *New York Times*, 23 May 2004.

14 Matteo Pasquinelli, "Warporn! Warpunk! Autonomous Videopoiesis in Wartime", in *Sarai Reader #5: Bare Acts*, Sarai, Amsterdam – Delhi, 2005.

5. The just masochism of imaginary

The uneasy relation of modernity with the image (and more generally, with the mediascape) has its genealogy in the neutralisation of the faculty of imagination originally conducted by Medieval Christian culture. In his book *Stanzas* (1979) Agamben identifies this distinct separation between phantasy and the “vital spirit” (or *pneuma*), which occurred nearly nine centuries ago in the Western tradition.¹⁵ Before this, the *pneuma* was considered a unique faculty together with imagination, or *spiritus phantasticus*. In Medieval psychology, in Italian poetry of the 12th century (Dolce Stil Novo) and also, in the conception of courtly love, Agamben recognizes a common and positive conception of phantasy that is strictly related to love and the “animal spirits” of the body. For instance, in his seminal treatise *De Amore*, Andreas Cappellanus introduced love as the “immoderate contemplation of an internal phantasm”.

Like modern times, the Middle Ages also had its temptations in the form of phantasies of “half-naked ladies”. It was quite usual to encounter medical and anatomical references in the religious and philosophical works of the Middle Ages. In Avicenna and Averroes, for example, it is simply impossible to distinguish between medicine and philosophy. In the same way, love and the imagination were usually described as deeply connected to the good and bad humours circulating in the body. The *pneuma* as *spiritus phantasticus* was the mediator between the soul and the body, before modern science definitively severed the body-mind relation. A hydraulic and topological description of the mind only re-emerged with Freud’s theory of the unconscious and, more materialistically, with Deleuze and Guattari’s desiring flows. In a famous passage of *La Vita Nuova*, Dante described the “metabolism” of love as the simultaneous stimulation of different spirits and their organs. Agamben defines this doctrine as *pneumophantasmology*, linking the vital spirits of the body (*pneuma*) and the images of love (*phantasmas*) together in an organic and harmonious way. Mental images were generally considered under a negative light, but the conception of courtly love and other profane currents struggled to develop a civilised and healthy discipline of the interior demons. With such a positive conception of desire and phantasy, Agamben defines this avant-garde of the secular culture in the Middle Ages as the proper “civilization of the image” (opposite to the contemporary society of the spectacle).

In fact the diagram of the *immoderata cogitatio* is about the relation with the image more than the relation with the content of that image. As Deleuze pointed out in his book on masochism *Coldness and Cruelty*, “There is no specifically masochistic fantasy, but rather a masochistic art of fantasy. The masochist needs to believe that he is dreaming even when he is not; sadism offers no such discipline in the art of the fantasy”. Likely there is no queer pornography to promote but a queer art of the pornographic commodity.

15 Giorgio Agamben, *Stanze. La parola e il fantasma nella cultura occidentale*, Torino, Einaudi, 1979. Trans: *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993.

6. Resistance as a constituent paradox

If pornography is taken as the ultimate commodity and queer porn as the ultimate form of activism on the biopolitical commodity itself – the issues that queer porn rarely managed to deal with are recapitulated as: the obscenity of the capitalistic relation incarnated in the pornographic commodity and the obscenity of the power relation incarnated in the pornographic mediascape. Indeed what is supposed to be considered *obscene* is the relation behind the image and not its very content. Like in Marx, fetishism is in the social relations embodied within the commodity and not in the commodity in se. Also Agamben’s profanation must be moved to this level, otherwise it remains ambivalent exercise. As Katja Diefenbach suggested, it is time to abandon left-wing anti-fetishism to reverse commodity fetishism into a political tool.

Here a masochistic diagram must be introduced to describe our paradoxical relation with the paradoxes of the commodity – the economic paradox and the power paradox – as *paradoxes seem to be the very productive core of capitalism and power*. How to grasp them and reverse them is the question, as everybody is immersed in these apparatuses as a sort of masochistic “victim”. Possibly, like in a masochistic practice, we should not be scared of the obscenity of command but we should be able to “profane” it (as in Agamben) or to reverse its capitalistic relation (as in Marx). Masochism is strictly related to fetishism and to an inorganic expansion of desire, as also Deleuze remarked. Then it is a matter to explore this inorganic extension of our desire in the folds of commodity fetishism.

In his book *The Communist Postscript* (2010) the art critic Boris Groys has defined commodity as “a paradox that conceals its paradoxical nature”.¹⁶ If the nature of the commodity is paradoxical, then instead of a fetishism of the commodity form Marx could have introduced coherently a *masochism of commodity form*. In order to reverse economic and power relations then an art of paradox must be learnt. If in the novel *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970) J.G. Ballard advocated *just psychopathologies* to survive the contemporary mediascape, a *just masochism* is suggested here to exceed the “schizophrenia” of late capitalism.¹⁷ If power and capitalism are paradoxical, then new form of paradoxical resistance, paradoxical aesthetics and paradoxical organisation must be practiced – that is anyhow the everyday life of politics since ever.

16 Boris Groys, *The Communist Postscript*, Verso, London, 2010.

17 James G. Ballard, *The Atrocity Exhibition*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1970. Notes by the author added in reissue, RE/Search Publications, San Francisco, 1990.

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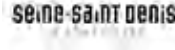
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