

THE OCCUPIED TIMES OF LONDON

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Editorial

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It seems somehow fitting that we began writing this editorial on the day that Margaret Thatcher died. After over thirty years of neoliberal governance, we are now being subjected to the next malevolent mutation of the state she revolutionised. The neoliberal project has rewritten many of the rules that British society took for granted during the Keynesian consensus of the preceding four decades: equal access to common public services and utilities; the right to a free education; guaranteed support in times of ill health. Equally embedded in this social contract was the understanding that a day's labour would be paid for with a wage.

With the implementation of the latest tranche of austerity measures in the UK, we've seen a fundamental shift in the nature of work. This wasn't instant. Accelerated by the crash of 2008, a series of incremental changes has led us to the situation we now find ourselves in.

Work under capitalism is increasingly disciplinary. It reproduces a relationship that holds the employee as servant to their employer, and has often exacerbated the precarity of both. As the thumbscrews of capital are tightened, and as welfare is eliminated, employers and employees are caught in a web of dependencies that disciplines both. Wage stagnation has (for most) been a reality since the 1970s, although it has been veiled by an increased reliance on credit and crippling levels of personal indebtedness.

The line between our working lives and our personal lives is increasingly blurred, with the discipline of wage labour now occurring almost entirely outside of the traditional factory setting. There is no clocking off at the end of a working day. Work emails, phone calls, or simply the thought that you are still on call, follow you around the clock. We are perpetually plugged in to the possibility, threat, or stress of work. We may not always notice it, but whole areas of leisure time are also now taken up by our work for capital: promoting agendas and brands across social media, creating vast, harvestable piles of data and social capital.

Our personal lives also feed back into the workplace. Zero-hour contracts leave even the employed in a state of quasi-unemployment: permanently precarious, without access to benefits, yet uncertain of a stable income. Finding work has itself become a form of employment: The number of hours the DWP now demand from "job seekers" (on pain of sanctions) is indistinguishable from the requirements of a low paid, full time job.

The Italian theorist Maurizio Lazzarato talks of neoliberalism as being characterised by a combination of both labour and 'work on the self'. The effects of this are evident in the obsession over CVs, the onus on the individual to 'sell themselves', and the moral judgements on people's lifestyles - especially those claiming benefits - that pervades political rhetoric and popular culture. Indeed, this new morality of work has individualised our relationship with public services and undermined the notion of the welfare state as a collective provision. Welfare now exists only as a multitude of separate contractual obligations. The postwar settlement of rights and responsibilities (itself flawed) has morphed into a world of social debts - surely only a brief stop-over before entirely private insurance. People are made to feel guilty for claiming the right to sustenance, even when in indisputable need. They are made to feel that they owe "the taxpayer", regardless of the fact that they also pay taxes. As a consequence, reliance on benefits now implies exposure to the state's disciplinary apparatus, something supported by many.

In an email recently leaked to The Guardian from the Jobcentre Plus in Walthamstow, middle manager Ruth King described how Jobcentre staff could look to short-change claimants:

"Do not accept the same job search every week, do not accept 'I dropped off my CV to shops like Asda or Sainsbury's', listen for telltale phrases 'I pick up the kids', 'I look after my neighbours children/my grandchildren' or just 'I am busy' - all of which suggest that the customer may not be fully available for work..."

Yet these "excuses" are the fundamentals of social reproduction: the day-to-day carrying out of all the caring, maintaining and providing roles that make the continuation of human life possible. Historically, this work has been, and still is, carried out predominantly by women, but its value has never been counted by standard economic indicators like GDP.

Instead of valuing this kind of work, we now rely on market solutions to globalise care-giving. Women travel from poor to rich countries, where they are paid to cook and clean for other people's families, often having left their own at home. Many women have simply subsumed the responsibilities of both social reproduction and working for a wage, working twice as hard and still being paid less than men. This contradiction is not resolved simply through labour-sharing arrangements agreed upon by members of a private household. Far more crucial is a move toward a more fundamental reconceptualising of work, value and gender.

Social reproduction is about social goods. The system cannot abide social goods, it has to discipline their function. If only there were legions of "workshy scroungers", as newspapers claim! That would surely be less damaging to society than participating in an economy that has little to no social value and in fact does a great deal of harm. What would be better for society and the planet: a person of 60 working ten more years for BAE Systems, or a person retiring to the hard graft of informed leisure: growing their own food; reading; babysitting; creating and sharing knowledge?

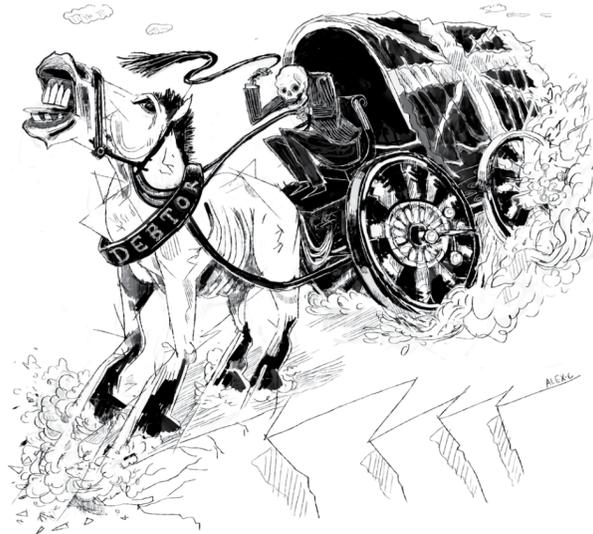
Often enough, work today is more about the reproduction of global administrative capitalism than it is about the production of socially beneficial commodities. While pockets of manufacturing remain, the bulk of the nation's work takes place in the service industries: marketing, research, consultancy and so on. Little labour time is invested in the production of food, life essentials, education, and community. Rather, we produce (and reproduce) a dying structure predicated upon outsourcing to the Global South, where health and safety

regulations are easily ignored and labour comes cheap. Meanwhile, workers in the offices of our cities become a second-chain precariat.

The labour movement in the UK has utterly failed to keep pace with these changes. The institutional weight of the big unions has made them slow to respond, if they are even trying to at all. Despite the Parliamentary Labour Party's fatal embrace of neoliberalism, institutional representatives of labour still attempt to represent a labour force of the past, betraying a nostalgia for the time when unions still held sway in the political economy.

Talk emerging from the anti-privatisation campaign at Sussex University was much more promising. 'Pop up' unions show an understanding of the changing nature of capital. You can't sit still and wait capital out; it will flow right past you. The key lies in horizontally networked organisation around labour exploitation. Indeed, capital has created prime subjectivities around which the Left can organise: the unemployed, the precarious, the "workfared", the indebted. These identities transcend more traditional lines of organisation, which often operate on the basis of traditional industrial sectors. A network like Boycott Workfare has the capacity, if it so wished, to become a truly post-Fordist union. It focuses on a key relation in this disciplinary phase of work and creates a harmony around it.

Perhaps most crucial of all is the debtor subject: our collective guilt, and our collective power, lies in our role as debtors. This reality intersects the lives of all our identities: the worker, the unemployed, the welfare claimant, the consumer, people from different classes and background. The creditor/debtor relation is the key power divide that underpins the neoliberal project, ever more deeply since the crash. The wage relation acts more and more as a form of social control, ordering our time and our social relations. Labour remains crucial to neoliberal discipline, but is no longer the main source of our power - nor is it as integral to the creation of value. Our debts are what the capitalist class use as leverage to inflate their bubbles of "wealth". Debt should therefore be a key site for organisation and the building of subjectivity. Debtors' unions and coordinated debt strikes pose a greater threat to the capitalist class than any TUC March or one-day public sector strike. They have the potential to change not just the "conversation", but the very rules of the game.



#MAR25 WRITE UP

Thames Valley
Plan C



The occupation at the University of Sussex began on 7 February over the university management's intention to outsource 235

jobs to private companies. Since then a "Sussex Against Privatisation" blog has received heavy traffic, and yellow squares - the adopted symbol of the campaign - which have become ubiquitous across the campus, adorning everything from coats to windows. After over six weeks of occupation in the conference centre of Bramber House, the campaign was escalated with a national call-out for a demonstration to be held on 25 March.

The day began promisingly, and it was clear the occupiers had been planning their actions meticulously in advance. Five campus cafes, all of which are being threatened with outsourcing, were occupied. This resulted not only in the closure of those workplaces but also of other food venues across campus. The response from the staff at the cafes was overwhelmingly positive, which is a testament to the success of the campaign in engaging and involving those who are directly affected by the privatisation plans. One café worker told occupiers, "Thanks everyone, we get a day off!"

From the 2000-strong opening rally at 1pm in Library Square, it was clear that much has been learned since the birth of the student movement in 2010. Banner drops were carried out in pre-planned locations. People used rope ladders to pass banners to the roof. A Labour MP was booed. It seems that in two and a half years, people have honed an idea of what a protest should look like, and what it should not: 'Communism' banners, yes; Labour MPs at rallies, no.

The final speaker was Alfie Meadows, the student who required life-saving brain surgery following a blow from a police baton in 2010 and has just been acquitted after a two-year long court case. Greeted by huge cheers, Meadows said, "We need revenge for the way students, protestors and the anti-austerity movement were brutalised by the police." This unequivocally set the tone for the demonstration. The rally was followed by a short march to Sussex House, the university's management and administrative hub. Fronted by a book bloc, the crowd voiced its anger towards Vice-Chancellor Michael Farthing - many wearing a mask of his face - before forcing the glass doors through. "We want his office, that's what we're after," said Amy, a participant in the anti-privatisation campaign. "It's tucked away down a corridor where he never has to face us."

After the initial breach of the doors and seizure of the building, a line of riot police in caps tried to get to the building, pushing and striking protesters as they went. This was met with fierce opposition and chants of "no justice, no peace: fuck the police!" Unable to reach the building's entrance, the police tried to turn back before they were pushed into their own little 'kettle' in a corner by the doors. Suffice to say, the mirth of the protesters - many of whom I suspect are now veteran witnesses to police brutality on demonstrations - was uncontrollable, with many shouting the familiar football chant, "who are ya?!"

A large group also made their way upstairs and attempted to hold a good old-fashioned "jazz hands" meeting. If a consensus to hold the building was reached, it was by no means conclusive amongst demonstrators outside. While some made efforts to secure the building, somewhat ironically attempting to block

the large gap where glass doors had stood just 40 minutes prior, others advocated causing as much damage as possible before moving on to another building in order to maximise the economic impact of the demonstration. Despite a degree of ensuing confusion, the preparations of the occupiers proved useful once again. Following the police retreat, demonstrators linked arms to form a human barricade stretching across the street and going back many rows deep. This prompted a standoff lasting about 25 minutes. Unfortunately, around 25 police were then able to enter the building by a rear exit, making re-securing the building virtually impossible without risking physical danger. However, it is noteworthy that the police avoided direct confrontation with the protesters for the remainder of the day.

Afterwards, beneath yellow fireworks let off from the roof of a university building, the group - now about 500-strong - made its way to the existing occupation at Bramber House. The increased numbers were able to expand the parameters of the reclaimed space, securing the entire top floor. Some smoked on the balcony, some tried to hold a meeting; others

campaign at Sussex has shown impressive creativity and experimentation, which has clearly come about through embracing difference and diversity. However, for every Sussex student who is relatively new to the world of student activism, there was present a self-styled "professional activist", created by the events since autumn 2010. While both were undoubtedly attending out of a genuine sense of outrage at the creeping privatisation across the university sector, the latter's motivations may be coupled with a desire to recapture the 'Millbank moment', a resentment towards both the atrocities committed by government and police, and the abject limbo within which their newly-formed subjectivity seems to exist. As I mingled among too many familiar faces in the occupied Bramber House, someone summed up the feeling with a glib remark, excitedly commenting: "It's like a 2010 reunion!"

There was a notable absence from the demonstration, which prompts my third observation. Scattered across the #Mar25 hashtag, we were encouraged with forced enthusiasm to write to our MPs, asking them to support the Early Day Motion



lamented the brevity of the occupation at Sussex House. Liberating some cake in the conference centre kitchen, I overheard one student say, "If we had got Sussex House, the university would not have been able to run!"

"Yeah," said his friend. "But we would probably have been, like, trapped." He replied, "Yeah, but trapped is kinda what we want..."

As a visitor to the demonstration, my observations on the composition of subjectivities present can only be based from my limited time on the Sussex campus. In writing three observations here, my hope is that readers can consider how this contemporary moment of excess relates to the student movement's condition in the present and its possibilities for the future.

The first thing which struck me was the confidence demonstrated by those present. Judging by their intuitive distrust of the police and the ease with which they held meetings, it would be fair to say most of the group were either seasoned student activists or had been influenced by their experiences of student-led occupations or the Occupy movement. The presence of 'black bloc' types was minimal and though Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Party paper vendors were out in force, they were generally sidelined. It seemed that most of those pushing down the doors or kettling the police could be summed up as angry and unaligned. This brings me to a second observation. As perhaps encapsulated by the vehement smashing of the doors before the frantic blocking of the threshold, or the conversation with our friend in the conference centre kitchen, a lot of the aims and ideas present were very clearly conflicting.

This is not to be dismissive: the campaign at Sussex has shown impressive creativity and experimentation, which has clearly come about through embracing difference and diversity. However, for every Sussex student who is relatively new to the world of student activism, there was present a self-styled "professional activist", created by the events since autumn 2010. While both were undoubtedly attending out of a genuine sense of outrage at the creeping privatisation across the university sector, the latter's motivations may be coupled with a desire to recapture the 'Millbank moment', a resentment towards both the atrocities committed by government and police, and the abject limbo within which their newly-formed subjectivity seems to exist. As I mingled among too many familiar faces in the occupied Bramber House, someone summed up the feeling with a glib remark, excitedly commenting: "It's like a 2010 reunion!"

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being introduced to Parliament by the Green MP, Caroline Lucas. On the ground at Sussex, tokenistic and shoddy attempts by the National Union of Students (NUS) to meet and reflect the desires and anger of its members was met with indifference, even laughter. Far from the historical attempts of the at-times Trotskyist-dominated National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts to lobby the NUS into holding another national demonstration, the propaganda and activity surrounding the anti-privatisation campaign at Sussex has had a distinctly independent character, often even hinting at ideas of autonomism or communism.

Above all, the campaign has been characterised by an unwillingness to be mediated. This is an interesting and welcome turn within the embers of the movement, which could well be the key to its reignition. Recent propaganda generated by the Imaginary Party points to the rejection of institutions such as the NUS due to its restraining effect upon activity, and the Sussex campaign has had an especially grassroots character. Incidentally, the Sussex students' union



has been less than vocal in supporting its students and their staff, opting instead for a technical intermediary role as has become so familiar with SUs countrywide.

Increasingly, students originally galvanised and radicalised in 2010 are finding their own feet and carving out their own, new, political identities. Having had two years to flirt with and become disillusioned by bureaucratic institutions and competing leftist factions, the Sussex occupation may mark the beginning of something exciting which will capture and better reflect the subjectivities created post-Millbank. In this light, perhaps one of the most interesting and promising developments to come from #Mar25 was the announcement of the 'Pop-Up Union', which is seeking to bring together workers from across the university whatever their relevant mainstream "trade" union may be, in order to coordinate industrial action in a democratic, inclusive and horizontal way.

At the end of the day, as the cold began to get to everyone, someone spoke through a megaphone at the bottom of Bramber House, clearly desperate for more action. "This is shit. Who's got any ideas?" I expect the answer is along the lines of 'more than we realise'. Certainly, it is promising that people are increasingly becoming confident in running with their own ideas rather than deferring to perceived 'higher authorities'. I left at 4pm, but I later heard that the occupation had extended to the entire building - a huge four storey conference centre, marking what has to be the largest occupation in recent British history. A national meeting involving around 600 people took place and, although slightly chaotic, a general consensus appeared to emerge to hold rolling national demonstrations on university campuses across the country. Watch this space.

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Izzy Koksal *Sussex Utopia*

At the Sussex occupation, a copy of *The Problem with Work* by Kathi Weeks lies on the floor. Some of the occupiers remark that they have not done any of their class work for the past six weeks, since they started occupying Bramber House. They don't seem worried about it. Instead they have been running an inspiring campaign alongside the 235 campus workers whose jobs the university's management are attempting to outsource. Living, cooking, meeting, talking, learning, plotting and taking action together, the occupiers' activities are meaningful, inspiring, and necessary; carried out willingly, collectively, and horizontally. No wonder they seem unconcerned at the weeks of missed class work - the very antithesis of what is happening here.

Their banners and posters declare 'the university is a factory - shut it down!'. They have been very effective: occupying and closing down all the cafes on campus to hit the university financially (as well as allowing the workers the day off), smashing in the doors of the management's building, bringing together both students and staff in Library Square to take over the campus, and withdrawing themselves from the assembly line of 'knowledge' production. Yellow squares and ribbons decorated the entire campus, banner drops hung from buildings and swung from tree branches - the university is more a playground than a

factory. When the police try to end our fun, we push them back off campus in order to defend our space.

The occupation and the wider campaign raise two key issues around work, which may seem contradictory but that can be resolved, albeit rather messily. The occupation and the shutting down of the university-factory is an act against our alienated work and existence, 'even if we didn't have the campaign, I'd still want to be in this space because it's a great social space' said one student. As Kathi Weeks' book on the floor of the occupation shows, in its rejection of work and its forms of organising, the Sussex occupation is anti-work in its nature. They are, however, also defending work in its current form in the face of worsening conditions through outsourcing. Cleaning and catering jobs are under threat - jobs which involve subordination and servitude, poverty pay, monotony, and the enforcement of a reduce identity - 'this is what you do, you are this'. Whilst this side of the campaign against outsourcing does not explicitly question the nature of work, it is somewhat radical to defend your conditions of work under a system which devalues everyone. The demand for staff and students to have control over their working conditions, and the formation of the "pop-up union," does, in fact, allow us to challenge and even move beyond work.

WORKFARE DYSTOPIA

"Work makes me..." - the cascade of possible endings to that sentence provided by a Google search makes for grim reading. Yet things are getting even grimmer. Sussex University's attempt to outsource jobs is one of numerous examples of the worsening conditions which people are increasingly forced to endure. At the same time, as work becomes even more unappealing, the attack on the unwaged intensifies, whether it be through rhetoric - the vilification of those who are unwaged and the supposedly redemptive qualities of work, or actual forced work itself. One Daily Mail journalist and the equally bigoted Salvation Army have both recently drawn from the chilling Nazi slogan 'Arbeit macht frei' (Labour makes you free.) The violence and the inescapable dominance of work, for the waged and unwaged, is becoming ever more explicit.

The rise of workfare, a new(ish) phenomenon that continues a long tradition of forced and unwaged work, for example women's unpaid housework and care work, vividly illustrates the horrors of how work is perceived and organised under capitalism.

A two day A4e workshop - 'finding and getting a job' - involved being spoken at by a man called Vince, wearing a metallic looking suit, who attempted to convince us all that we could get the jobs we wanted if only we believed that we could. The wider economic crisis and whether work was actually necessary in our lives was absolutely irrelevant. We should sell ourselves like iPods, write our CVs like we apparently would behave on a first date, "you don't tell them everything on a first date." It was taken as a given that we must all strive towards work, spending every moment working on getting work, fuelled by an unwavering belief in ourselves as desirable workers.

The Department for Work and Pensions' recent introduction of Universal Jobmatch re-enforces this relentless job searching. Through this mandatory scheme, claimants will soon be made to job search online for 35 hours a week. Searching for work is itself set to become a full time job, thereby robbing claimants' of the precious time they need to survive the welfare system and get by on impoverishing benefits. Imagining claimants stuck at computers for 35 hours a week searching for jobs that are not there, you could be forgiven for thinking that this was the stuff of some dystopian novel. Perhaps they would build special factories with rows and rows of computers, claimants sitting at them trawling through the web day after day in order to receive their meagre benefits (if they are lucky enough not to have been sanctioned.) Sadly, this is not some futuristic nightmare, but reality. When recently accompanying a friend to Work Programme provider CDG's office, we arrived to find a dimly lit room full of computers with claimants sitting at them, looking for jobs that do not exist.

MARINALEDA: UTOPIA - DYSTOPIA

The suffocating dominance of work in our lives, whether we are waged or not, is not something that we can escape on the left, even the more radical left. In fact, it is becoming ever clearer that this is one of the places where we are going wrong. We are failing to interrogate how we organise, and how we spend our days and our lives. The TUC's rallying call for a 'Future That Works' saw them fail to even organise a demonstration that worked. How can they claim to be plotting out a strategy for all of our futures when their vision is still so firmly entrenched in a romanticised notion of 20th century Britain?

Focusing back on the present, Dan Hancox's brilliant book "Utopia and the Valley of Tears" finds him in the small Spanish town of Marinaleda as part of his search of real living alternatives to capitalism. Here, with their practically decommmodified housing and infamous parties, it certainly sounds like "full communism." However, there is still work, in fact, quite a preoccupation with work, and a gendered division of labour too. Young people are leaving the town because a life of farming does not appeal to them. An outsider remarks, horrified, that they are forced to work on Sunday (although the mayor claims that this is volunteering). People are fleeing utopia.

ANTI-WORK UTOPIA

My most dreaded question is "What do you do?" A recent version of this question which I was confronted with was even more disturbing: "What do you do with your time then, apart from filling in job applications?" Despite it being such a commonly asked question, as if we cannot relate to someone without knowing what their paid employment is, or lack of, I still find myself in a sort of paralysis whenever I am confronted with it. Because I'm not engaged in waged labour, how do I explain and justify myself?

The violence of work is more and more intensely felt, yet our propositions of a world without work feel almost non-existent, despite most people daydreaming about such ideas on a daily basis. When I do hear such ideas put forward, they are the most wonderful sounds...a relief, inspiring, exciting.

Let's skive off work and smash the job centres and decide how we spend our time together.

This article was written before the eviction of Bramber House on April 2nd. After occupiers peacefully left the building, four students were arrested.



EUROPE'S OTHER CRISIS

Daniel Trilling

At times, it seems as if the events of the last few years are following a well-worn script: a financial crash, followed by recession, which leads to the re-emergence of old hatreds. In certain crisis-hit countries (Greece, Hungary), the downturn appears to be leading directly to the return of fascism. Elsewhere (France, Holland, Britain, Sweden, Finland and beyond), other kinds of far-right parties command sizeable

votes at election time or have been able to push their agenda via the national media. Their rhetoric, emphasis, and underlying beliefs may differ, but certain key features are the same: they claim to be sticking up for a "native" population betrayed by the political elite; they want to drastically restrict the rights of immigrants; they want to reverse the supposed incursion of a "foreign" culture into the homeland.

Yet to see all this as a simple function of economic crisis obscures what has actually been happening in Europe since well before the 2008 crash. Below are four long-term trends that have enabled a more profound drift to the right. (For these categories, I am indebted to a speech by Kevin Ovenden at this year's Unite Against Fascism conference in London.)

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ITS COUSINS

It's not as if racism has ever disappeared, but under the guise of "criticism" of the religious and cultural practices of Muslims, it has found a new emphasis. This was already brewing before 9/11, but the War on Terror gave weight to the claim that "the West" was locked in a civilisational conflict with Islam. What marks islamophobia out as something new is the way in which its adherents use the norms of liberal democracy - free speech, LGBT rights, even at times a rhetorical commitment to "diversity" - as a stick with which to beat Muslims. Such ideas come from the mainstream (witness how the manifesto of the Norwegian far-right killer Anders Behring Breivik quoted liberally from the likes of the Daily Mail columnist Melanie Phillips), but various far-right groups have taken them to an extreme. Britain has seen the emergence and initial rapid rise of the English Defence League street movement, which others in Europe have attempted to imitate. Yet it would be a mistake to think "cultural" racism stops at Islam. Anti-Semitic incidents were up 30% in 2012, according to one recent study, while ethnic Roma are the target of profound discrimination in eastern and central Europe; and when they flee west they are accused of crime or benefit scrounging.

THE PERSISTENCE OF NATIONALISM

As the eurozone crisis makes clear, nationalism did not disappear with a wave of the EU magic wand. Whatever their underlying aims, far-right and right-wing populist parties have prospered by advocating some form of national preference. Some, like the UK Independence Party, make this an explicit attack on the EU itself; all see immigration and ethnic diversity as some kind of threat to national cohesion.

Paradoxically, it may well be the march of globalisation that has intensified such feelings: capital does not respect national borders; people are forced to move in order to find work; "native" populations are drawn to blame new arrivals for their own identity crises. It's not simply a question of competition over jobs or scarce resources: economic and cultural insecurities play off one another.

Against this background, political leaders have joined in an assault on "multiculturalism": The UK's David Cameron, Germany's Angela Merkel and France's Nicolas Sarkozy have all made major speeches in which they proclaimed the failure of this doctrine.

ANTI-IMMIGRANT POLICY

Together, the 27 states that make up the EU (soon to be 28, when Croatia joins in July) have the world's largest GDP. Together, they constitute a major player in a world economic system where inequality is rampant and people must travel vast distances in order to secure a living. What's more, those EU countries that are NATO members fight wars which produce vast numbers of refugees. Europe, prosperous and peaceful in relation to large parts of the world, is and always has been a destination for migrants.

In the past two decades, amid various other anxieties about immigration, a powerful and poisonous stereotype has arisen: the "illegal" immigrant. As hostility to migrants has risen, openly encouraged by media outlets and far-right demagogues, panicking governments have reacted by introducing increasingly tougher controls, aiming for a co-ordinated borders policy nicknamed "Fortress Europe". Migrants find themselves trapped in a nightmare, whether in Greece, where the collapse of the asylum system has left thousands destitute and the target of neo-Nazi violence, or in Britain, where a restrictive and often brutal system of detention imprisons more migrants per year than any other country but Australia.

THE DEATH OF THE POLITICAL CENTRE

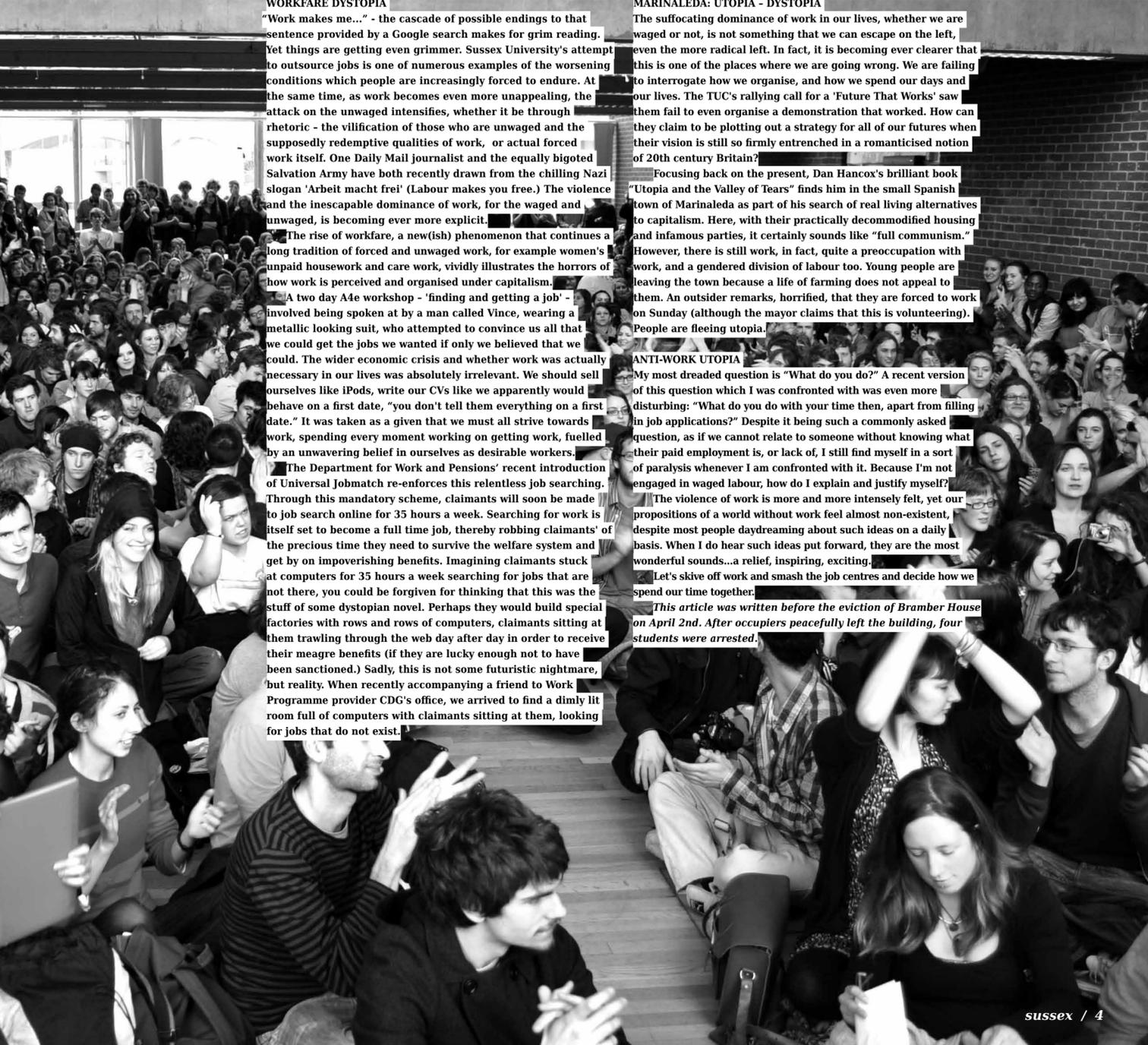
Governments of both centre-left and centre-right have bought into the neoliberal economic consensus - a move summed up by Margaret Thatcher as "there is no alternative". From the late 1970s onwards, we have seen disillusionment with conventional politics. The situation differs from country to country, but the hollowing-out of the mainstream leaves a void that far-right parties have been eager to exploit.

The austerity consensus that has seen governments from London to Lisbon enforce cuts with varying degrees of coercion, has further discredited political elites. In 2008, many predicted this would lead to a resurgence of the traditional left. So far, it hasn't. Instead, discontent has emerged in several other ways.

Most alarming, is that in certain cases it has enabled fascism to emerge from its hiding place and re-enter the political mainstream. Before now, fascists who wanted to win votes have had to clothe themselves in "respectable" language and imagery, hiding their innermost beliefs. With the success of Hungary's Jobbik and Greece's Golden Dawn, both openly neo-Nazi, that may no longer be the case.

Elsewhere, the "respectable" fascists (like France's Front Nationale) and other racist populists (like UKIP), have continued to prosper. They have been joined by newer formations like Beppe Grillo's "anti-politics" 5 Star Movement in Italy, which is not explicitly right-wing but remains ambiguous.

As for left-wing discontent, its expression has largely been in our streets and city squares. The methods of organisation, and the rejection of neoliberal dogma are an inspiration, but progress has been slow, fitful and fragmentary. It is crucial that these movements find a way to break through, but as much as we need economic alternatives, we also need to confront the racism and xenophobia prevalent across Europe, and to neutralise its political expression in the form of the far-right. If we don't, then the future risks being one of technocratic governments imposing yet more austerity, dismantling the freedoms of immigrants, minorities and political dissenters, with their rhetoric drifting further rightwards still as populists and fascists snap at their heels.



AFRICA'S HIDDEN CARE ECONOMY

Zo Randriamaro

WOMEN, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CARE IN AFRICA

The concept of social reproduction - that is, the process that makes it possible for individuals, families, and society itself to continue - provides the framework for this article, which is premised on the existence of a silent and hidden crisis that is affecting the invisible and undervalued realm of the care economy. A crucial dimension of the process of social reproduction, the care economy relies on the unpaid care work performed mainly by women in order to sustain families, households and societies on a daily and generational basis.

While care work is located in many different areas of the economy - ranging from the family to paid employment - and is performed on behalf of a wide range of care recipients, this article focuses on unpaid care work that is not classified as 'work' within the System of National Accounts (SNA.) This includes, but is not limited to, housework (collection of fuel and water, meal preparation, cleaning, etc.) and care of persons (children and/or the elderly, the sick and the disabled) carried out in homes and communities. Such work is a key component of social investment and is critical to well-being. It also fuels economic growth through the formation of human capital and reproduction of a labour force that is healthy, productive and possessing basic human capabilities. The monetary value of such work, according to UN researcher Debbie Budlender, would constitute between 10 and 39 per cent of a country's gross domestic product (GDP).

In this article, 'social reproduction' is defined as a multi-faceted concept that can pertain to a variety of subjects, including the labour force, the social fabric or capital. Of note is the social reproduction of primitive capitalist accumulation, which has taken the contemporary forms of land grabbing, and use of migrant labour by some transnational corporations to address the difficulties - resulting from the crisis of the social reproduction of the labor force - in the availability of a local labour force in the extractive sectors of mineral-rich countries like South Africa. In contrast to this type of social reproduction, very little thought and investment has been given by policy makers to addressing the crisis of the care economy, which mainly affects women.

This is the reason why the crisis of social reproduction on which I want to focus is the one that has affected African women for decades, and mirrors structural inequalities at both global and local levels. It is about the systemic crisis that started with the famines in the 1970s, and was later compounded by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Kofi Annan described this crisis like so: 'A combination of famine and AIDS is threatening the backbone of Africa - the women who keep African societies going and whose work makes up the economic foundation of rural communities.'

It appears that one of the root causes of the neglect of this enduring crisis by the powers-that-be is that the primary subjects of the reproduction process are women, who are not paid for their work, although this work is directly productive of value. As Mariarosa Dalla Costa put it, 'since housework has largely been unwaged and the value of workers' activities is measured by their wage, then, women, of necessity, have been seen as marginal to the process of social production.'

A political economy approach is required for a sound analysis of the current crisis of social reproduction in all its dimensions, in order to identify its root causes and to provide adequate responses. There is a need to address the limitations of the current human rights paradigm in recognising and responding to the dual crises of social reproduction and care. In particular, a political economy approach allows us to understand the link between these crises and relations of power and domination at local and global levels. Such an analysis avoids both disconnecting the problem from its underlying causes and consequences, and obscuring the share of responsibilities and obligations between states and other actors.

In contrast to conventional economics, a political economy approach highlights the interlinkages between the economic, social and political realms. It specifically considers how power operates through the structured relations of production and reproduction that govern the distribution and use of resources and entitlements within households, communities and society. This approach allows us to debunk the myth of the unitary household model, and to make visible the hitherto hidden linkages at different levels with power relations that underpin the global economic order and macroeconomic policies, as well as intersections with issues of class, race and other variables. The political economy analysis points to three key elements that affect both the depth and prevalence of the crises of care and social reproduction.

First is the sexual division of labour within the public and private spheres, which is underpinned by gender norms and ideologies that hold women primarily responsible for unpaid care work, thus creating inequalities in bargaining power in the household between men and women. Caring professions in the public sphere and labour market that are similar to the 'feminine' unpaid care work are also undervalued, while the detachment of unpaid care work within the human rights movement from the broader struggle for social and economic equality has led to it being perceived as a "women's only" problem.

The second element is the current global macroeconomic environment. Neoliberal policies and the quest for cheap sources of labour and maximum profit have disrupted local economies and dramatically changed labour markets through deregulation, flexibilisation and casualisation of work. Women from developing societies have entered into waged employment on an unprecedented scale, whilst the neoliberal policy environment has led to their increased workload both in the market and at home, and to the feminisation of poverty - especially unskilled and marginalised poor women.

The third key element highlighted by the political economy approach to care is related to the gendered impacts of globalisation. This has often involved the privatisation of public services and infrastructure, thereby regressing women's rights and placing greater burden on their labour in the household, as well as the establishment of political and legal systems with limited participation by women.

Time use surveys conducted in Africa during the last decade provide a strong basis for quantifying unpaid care work, and for providing estimates of its overall magnitude and distribution between men and women. In spite of the recent progress in terms of data collection, the paucity of information about the care economy in Africa and other regions reflects the policy gap in relation to unpaid care work as well as the absence of a coherent theory of the relationship between the family, the market, and the state.

This is partly due to the fact that most economists and scholars have overlooked the two-way connection between the local and the global, which is based on the assumption that global economic processes shape the

structure and economic functions of households at a given time. They have specifically underlined the increased importance of households to processes of social reproduction in times of global economic crisis.

In line with the prevailing trend in developing countries, the results of surveys conducted in a range of African countries, from Guinea, South Africa, Benin, Madagascar, to Mauritius and Ghana, show that adult women and girls work longer hours overall than adult men and boys.

Women's central contribution to agricultural production, especially for subsistence consumption, accounts for a large part of this pattern in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zambia. Women spend substantially more minutes per day than men in agricultural production, yet it's women's domestic responsibilities that seem to hamper their ability to earn income.

Since 2003, researchers have called attention to a growing crisis of social reproduction, most severe among the poorest segments of populations in developing countries, due to the fiscal crisis of the state and cutbacks in public provisions of social services. The dual processes of privatisation of state functions and reprivatization of key institutions of social reproduction (education, health and social services) are part of these ongoing neoliberal reforms.

These reforms also involve a new framework for resource allocation of social and individual welfare shared between the state, the family, the market and the voluntary and informal sectors. In this new framework, social life is marketised via the commodification of spheres of society that were previously shielded, with citizens now becoming responsible for helping themselves.

This marketisation of citizenship has resulted in crises and transformations in social reproduction, and has led to heightened insecurity with worsening struggles for survival among the poorest. In addition to the neoliberal policies aimed at the free movement of capital, these circumstances have required a return to community-based survival strategies that rely primarily on women's initiatives and labour.

The internationalisation of reproductive work has been part of the transnational response to the crisis of care, whereby women from developing countries migrate to provide care services for families in wealthier countries. As a growing number of women and girls - predominantly from the rural areas - are pushed into domestic and care work by the pressing need to supplement family income in the context of the multiple global crises, the availability of their relatively cheap labour enables middle and upper class families, including those in rich countries of the North and Middle-East, to provide market solutions to their care problems.

These care and domestic service workers, who cannot afford to pay for care services in the market, rely on unpaid family members to care for their dependents left behind, leading to the formation of transnational families who have to solve their own care needs. In many instances, it is girls who are removed from school to care for younger children and do domestic chores, at the expense of long-term education and employment opportunities.

The dominant development policies have failed to acknowledge that gender roles are continually challenged by social and economic changes as well as by political and legal reforms, and that women's reproductive labour

capacity is not infinitely elastic. In particular, policy makers have failed to acknowledge the crisis of care in Africa due to the heightened demand for and burden of women's reproductive work resulting from the cumulative effects of hunger, HIV/AIDS, cutbacks in government expenditures, economic downturn/crises, and fiscal austerity measures, just to name a few.

Current trends in family structures and gender division of labour, whereby women continue to provide most of the unpaid care work, are exacerbating inequalities in well-being between women and men, as well as the impact of wealth and income inequalities between and among the different categories of women.

As caregiving is essential for human survival, the burden of care work has been shifted back onto families, with women and girls often acting as the ultimate safety net. There are, however, serious limits to how far burdens can be offloaded onto the unpaid care economy without damaging the social fabric. The housewives living in the urban areas of several African countries who participated in the 2008 food riots have called attention to such limits: indeed, they went in the streets not only to protest against higher food prices, but also to warn about the fact that they were tired and unable to withstand the drain on their capacity to act as stabilisers in the face of the impacts of the economic crisis on their households.

And yet, this is a crisis that continues to be ignored, and one which the world continues to dismiss, even as its magnitude requires a global response. The new conditions of reproductive work, along with the changes in family structures and in the global macroeconomic environment require urgent social mobilisation and policy actions to overcome the crisis of reproduction. The prerequisites for achieving this goal include: the recognition of the value of unpaid care work, its reduction, and more equitable redistribution between men and women as well as between states, communities and families; a rethinking of the sites of social reproduction, away from the privatised sphere of the family and towards a socialised care system; the conscious decision to refuse to have women and vulnerable social groups - including children, the elderly, immigrant workers - pay the price for social reproduction; and, the engagement with the development of an alternative economic paradigm that fully integrates unpaid care work and that can ensure adequate social reproduction.

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THE FUTURE ISN'T WORKING

Joseph Kay

As a wage, these days, is increasingly hard to come by, and increasingly precarious when found. The proliferation of agency work, zero-hours contracts and underemployment is well-documented. Microtasking, where people are paid per task to work from home for tech giants like Amazon, is perhaps the most developed form yet of this tendency towards casualisation and income insecurity. The idea of a job for life - itself nothing to romanticise - has been decisively consigned to the history books.

And yet, at the same time, the imperative to work remains universal. Hundreds of thousands of people are being forced to participate in workfare schemes in return for their Jobseeker's Allowance. And with the new Universal Credit system, it is proposed to extend this so-called 'conditionality' even further, with mandatory 35 hours a week job searches, monitored remotely by Universal Jobmatch software. Even the unemployed are compelled to 'work'.

This presents a paradox: work appears to be both more scarce and more inescapable than ever. This contradiction says much about the present capitalist crisis, and about the possibilities for struggles within and against the conditions that led to it. We can begin with the concept of work itself. Even today, the iconography and imagination of much of the left remains haunted by the figure of the production line worker. Even as such traditional work has been automated away, or off-shored, or both, nostalgia for the post-war boom era of Fordist manufacturing and the welfare state is much in evidence, nowhere more so than the TUC's "rallying cry" for 'jobs and growth'.

One of the most powerful critiques of this narrow conception of work came from materialist and Marxist feminists, who drew attention to the silence regarding women's unwaged domestic work. These theorists argued that tasks such as cooking, childcare, and cleaning the house became work when they were done for others. That is, it wasn't so much the content of the tasks which made them work, but the hierarchical relations between sexes which saw the benefits of this unpaid labour appropriated by men and/or capital. Work then, was not defined by the wage, still less the factory, but by relations of quiet compulsion, which could include the wage but also patriarchal relations such as marriage.

Ecological feminist Maria Mies extended this analysis to critique the traditional Marxist focus on productive work. While it was important to understand how work produced surplus value for capital and reproduced capitalist social relations, she argued for a reconception of productivity as the production of social life. In place of the factory worker, she proposed the mother. Rather than making a virtue of work, we

should be redefining it on our own terms as something potentially rewarding, social, and self-organised. Instead, it is the breaking down of boundaries between work time and non-work time, together with the disconnect of work from wages and capitalist production, that characterise contemporary labour. What Mies saw as potentially liberatory has been generalised, stripped of any emancipatory content.

Benefits conditionality, both through workfare and increasingly onerous job search requirements, exemplify this move. In a context of mass unemployment, nobody can seriously believe that unemployment is caused by the unemployed not spending enough time job hunting. Whilst workfare provides a de facto subsidy to businesses, requiring 30 hours a week of job searching serves no productive purpose whatsoever, even on capitalist terms. Research by the New Economics Foundation has suggested that we could move to a 21-hour work week with no loss of living standards. In this context, the universal imposition of work seems to have more to do with social control than expanding production. No new value, no economic growth, is created by requiring the unemployed to put in 30-hours a week in the virtual panopticon of Universal Jobmatch. But in a society based on work, where gains in productivity relentlessly reduce the amount of work that's necessary, it plays an important role in regimenting and disciplining those surplus to the requirements of production.

This analysis suggests a rather different politics to the dominant 'jobs and growth' Keynesianism of the left. While the dismantling of the welfare state is certainly an assault on our standards of living, the conditions which made the post-war compromise possible - the long post-war boom, Cold War rivalry, the Bretton Woods system of capital controls - are long gone. Rather, as capitalism reverts to Victorian mode and the food bank queues lengthen, the welfare state looks more like a temporary blip, in a small proportion of countries, for a few short decades.

In place of a politics that calls for the right to work, we can reprise the call for freedom from work. The workplace remains an important site in this struggle, though we should be thinking as much in terms of resistance to speed-ups, casualisation, and the deprivations of temp agencies as more traditional trade union collective wage bargaining. We can see how the resistance to benefits conditionality - such as workfare - and the reimposition of caring labour (such as by the closure or privatisation of crèche facilities), represent other fronts in the same struggle to live lives beyond work discipline.

Once upon a time, capitalism promised material advancement and personal freedom. Today, we're told to be grateful for a Starbucks latté and an iPhone while being made subject to increasing police and bureaucratic control, be that from the cops themselves,

or the DWP, Atos, UKBA and workplace managerialism. When we fight cuts or outsourcing, we need not defend work as such, but rather insist that our standards of living are not expendable on the whims and calculations of our managerial overlords. And as work is imposed on the unwaged, whether as workfare or caring labour, resistance to conditionality and sanctions regimes similarly insist that our standards of living are non-negotiable.

If these demands are really as unaffordable under the present political economic system as we are so often told ('there is no alternative!'), then all the better. In a world where even Foxconn's notorious sweatshops are being automated by a million robots, the relationship between work and production grows increasingly tenuous. One way or another, the future isn't working.

The Importance of Work

Simon Hardy

Work, we can't really avoid it. Human civilisation has been built on work, the labouring of many billions of people throughout history has created the cities, farms, industries, armies and infrastructure which have marked our time on the planet. Even before human civilisation emerged, the role of labour and the development of different kinds of tools has been central to our evolution from the more primitive primates.

If work is so important, and has got us so far, why is it so terribly shitty most of the time?

In Britain today, the use of sick notes has reached record levels. More and more people are taking time off work with a wide variety of mental health issues: stress, depression and anxiety predominant amongst them. Morale in most workplaces - regardless of the economic climate - is often low. Our working lives are increasingly dogged by bureaucracy, targets, tick-boxes, key performance indicators and meetings about meetings. We are commanded to revel in the faux-hyper-excitement of the sales team who made another successful pitch.

This is the pathology of our times. Work is necessary, but it is also alienating. It is this way because our natural human endeavours to strive, to create, to design and build have been captured by the ruling elites; bastardised and turned in on themselves. We are confronted with our creativity but it has been deformed and rendered monstrous by the desires of capital - the relentless push for profit. We dream of a fulfilling life but instead we end up selling car insurance.

A genuine revolution against the current conditions of our cruel social relations will always confront the question of how we work and who we wish to work for. Revolutions which begin in city squares against a police line, will often see the fruits of their struggle develop in workplace occupations and the various attempts by workers to self-manage and regulate their own time and labour. These attempts have not always been successful, but they point to an urgent desire shared by workers, for collective control over their work.

As such, any revolution that seeks to change our social relations will have to confront and dissolve the divisions of labour that have emerged under capitalism, primarily between men and women, between "ethnic" labour and the culturally privileged sections of the class, and between physical and affective labour. In a number of industries, bosses cynically attempt to co-opt our desire to reconfigure work. They dissolve the distinction between work and leisure time, implementing policies which include higher levels of working from home, flexible hours and the proliferation of life/

work spaces. Just visualise the Google HQ with its relaxation cubicles and 'free thinking' space with billiards tables. The goal is to create the desire for employees to linger in their workplace, hopefully not noticing the longer working hours that might result from it.

Of course, for most of us, the regimented system of control and discipline which is the modern workplace - 'Why are you two minutes late to sign into your workstation?!' - remains as it ever was: a terrible reinforcement of factory discipline in a country where most of us don't work in factories any more.

Reconceptualising what work is, and how we can do it, is a key project of the utopian struggle for communism. We do want to abolish the life/work distinction but not on the terms of the bosses. We want to increase leisure time dramatically whilst maintaining the same standard of living. We demand meaningful jobs - not jobs which cause us to spend our Sundays in a state of misery, dreading the return to work the next day. Such an existence is not only possible, it is an absolutely necessary basis from which to establish any kind of harmonious society. The problem is that the capitalist class can't really organise their system any other way.

Occasionally, within some anarchist circles, people are quite scornful of work. They fight for "the right not to work" i.e. the right to not have to work under the tyrannical labour conditions of modern capitalism. Naturally, there is a lot to be said for the strength of this argument. But, we also have to put forward the positive case for work, that if we really want to develop civilisation and improve the living conditions for humanity as a whole then it will require more labour power to be expended.

The Marxist critique of work is more hopeful than the ideas of some post-modernists. Derrida believed that all work was automatically alienating, despite the social conditions in which it happened. From a socialist perspective, our work doesn't have to be alienating; it can be transformed and brought back into alignment with our humanity. It can emerge as an organic and natural component of who we are, a complement to our other natural desire - to relax and enjoy our leisure.

Revolutionaries today should be cautious of "post-work" talk, or unwittingly regurgitating the capitalist propaganda that 'there is no working class now'. We have to fight to acknowledge the importance of work in the development of our civilisation, to overcome the contradictions and pathologies of modern working life and re-establish a non-alienating work-relationship in society. An example is to use new technology, not to impoverish workers through unemployment but to augment our labour in a democratic way that improves working conditions and does not render human labour "obsolete". But again this points to collective, democratic control over technology and machinery, not its ownership by a ruling capitalist elite that deploy it in their interests and not in ours.

RISE OF THE VIRTUAL MACHINES

Jack Dean

Judgement Day, August 4th 1997. The day that the human race was wiped out by Skynet, a man-made advanced artificial intelligence which judged the continued existence of the human race as an unnecessary tactical error. The machines we built to save us, destroy us. This is the history of the world according to Terminator 2. The parable of out of control machines rising up against their human creators is one that has been told since the beginnings of mass industrialisation. Has this warning from our future selves come too late? Are we already enslaved by our machine overlords, trapped in a network over which we have less dominion than them? In the 19th Century, the Luddites - textile artisans - proffered similar warnings, realising that if they were to be able to ply their trade, the mechanical loom machines which were replacing them would have to go.

The age when the machines of Fordist industry dominated the factories of our society has long past. The industrial production line has been replaced by the call centre, administrative office blocks and vast warehouses. As immaterial production in the UK became the norm our interactions with the machines we work with became less mechanical and more abstract: assembly lines replaced by server farms and complex IT infrastructures. Post-Fordism is reliant upon the value that can be extracted from the production of complex, networked social relationships, and technological developments have greatly assisted this shift. Our economy is now almost entirely mediated through computers and software.

Software, no matter how complicated, is a virtual machine designed to perform a series of repetitive and simple tasks previously performed by people - the word 'robot' is, after all, derived from the Czech term for serf labour. Software programs arrange and analyse data, calculate results or make a series of simple decisions based on inputs and programming. Code is everywhere. It regulates stock levels in warehouses, processes video footage for distribution across television and online networks. Algorithms perform microtransactions, accruing millions on the stock market. They target us with advertising based on our browsing habits and make purchasing suggestions based on our previous consumer choices. Put simply, software is the Post-Fordist version of the automated factory, where labour time is gobbled up by a series of electronic decisions originally programmed by human hands, but once implemented, left to their own devices.

The development of computer technology is driving us up a cul de sac. Moore's 'Law' states that the number of electronic switches that can fit on an integrated circuit (microchip) doubles roughly every two years. This observation has held true for more than three decades and the trend is expected to continue for at least another ten years. To put the sheer scale of this into perspective: a microchip built today is capable of

over 65,000 times the performance of a device the same size built in 1979. These improvements in computational power are leading to vast swathes of labour time being swallowed up by the capabilities of software-based automation. This doesn't only reduce the need for workers, it also greatly affects the flow of capital. If work is being done by machines, the value of what is produced is affected. When a new, faster piece of software is implemented more can be produced with less human input. To recoup profit, the cheaper produce requires a larger market to trade within. This leads to the development of two inherent contradictions from both ends of the process: a permanent declining level of value, requiring fewer workers, and a permanently expanding market to absorb the lost value of the output.

The contemporary political economic orthodoxy doesn't really work if machines continue to replace human labour at such a rate. Capitalism is predicated on the insistence that we all trot over to the labour market and sell our time. We can't have machines stealing all of that time. Keynesian 'Full Employment' becomes impossible when all of our services and jobs are being replaced by cheaper software. Unless there is a fundamental shift in our society's mode of production, we are heading for a future where the best we can hope for is to be allowed to sweep one of the umpteen giant server rooms or occasionally repair a damaged component (until machines are built which can do this as well.)

This isn't just theory, it's lived experience. The broadcast/post-production industry over the past decade, for example, has seen roles increasingly becoming about the monitoring of automated workflows. As the speed and capabilities of computer processing chew through work at an ever increasing rate and IT systems become more and more stable, many people's jobs in this industry consist entirely of watching preset workflows go through the motions, entirely without human input. An employee's task in this field begins and ends with restarting machines when they crash, although this doesn't even happen every day with modern computers. It's the Luddites all over again, just with virtual machines.

Of course, this is not an argument for halting scientific progress for the salvation of wage labour. It's only within a capitalist mode of production that these levels of automation are problematic for people trying to make enough to live on. In a post-capitalist society, automation would be socially beneficial, freeing people from menial, dangerous and time consuming tasks to perform work of social benefit. Everyday, technology pushes us closer to an economy that is capable of organising the basic infrastructural work almost unaided. Based on current patterns, the choice may be taken out of our hands at any rate. In a battle between Moore's Law and Full Employment, Moore's Law will win.

LUDDISM

James Stanier

Technology is at the heart of contemporary social movements. Activists can bypass the corporate media and post their views via blogs. Police brutality can be easily captured and disseminated across the web to counter the lies of the establishment. I actually came to write this article as a result of an appeal posted on Twitter.

It might seem odd then to suggest that the movements of today have anything in common with - or could learn anything from - the Luddites, a group rarely mentioned other than as a term of disparagement in response to your grandmother asking you whether you tweet much on your Facepage. In actuality, the Luddites were English radicals and as progressive as any social group in history. They were not opposed to technology but rather to the societal problems caused by industrialist's application of it, to destroy working practices which were integral to many communities.

Britain in the 1810s was a place of real hardship. An economic depression was being worsened by the Napoleonic Wars - financial hardship and expensive foreign wars; it would surely be patronising to point out the more obvious similarities to issues facing us today. The first acts of machine breaking that signified the beginnings of the Luddite movement occurred in Nottinghamshire during November 1811. As the great Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm makes clear, industrial sabotage was an important part of European industrial disputes of the time.

As such, the Luddite campaign became the latest outpouring of machine-breaking in resistance to modern industrial practices. By the beginning of 1812, the Luddite's movement had spread to West Riding in Yorkshire and by March it had reached Lancashire. It is always important to recognise that the precise goals of many of the aggrieved workers in different areas of England at the time could no more be explained under one simple umbrella term than those of the varying left-wing campaigns opposed to austerity today.



As with the various Occupy campaigns around the world today, for instance, there were some issues that united the people and their struggle became known under the single banner of Luddism. The term Luddite is derived from the mythical figure of Ned Ludd, a man who was purported to have angrily broken two knitting-frames a generation before his name was adopted by the machine-breaking movement. In his speech at the University of Huddersfield, Kevin Binfield argued that the use of language by the Luddites was reminiscent of modern Occupy movements. It was a malleable term in the hands of both the movement itself - Ludd swiftly became a verb; "to ludd" was to destroy a machine press - and the authorities who benefitted from having rebellious loom workers presented as a single threat to the established order.

This was a period when the British establishment itself was in deep turmoil: King George III's legendary madness and the 1812 assassination of the Prime Minister Spencer Perceval, by a businessman who blamed Percival for his failings in Russia, deeply shook the status quo. The Luddites' language gave the establishment further cause for concern: one letter sent to the Vicar at St. Mark's church from a self-confessed Luddite spoke of, "Bellingham the patriot", referring to John Bellingham, Perceval's assassin.

The Luddites were not the reactionary forces that we've been made to imagine. Instead, they were fighting for the things that many trade unionists and activists are fighting for today: secure jobs, a survivable wage and improved working conditions. Hobsbawm notes that the tactics favoured by the Luddites, "implies no special hostility to machines as such, but is, under certain conditions, a normal means of putting pressure on employers or putters-out."

And the people recognised this. Luddites were sheltered by those in their communities. There was an "overwhelming sympathy for the machine-wreckers," Hobsbawm tells us. "In Nottinghamshire not a single Luddite was denounced, though plenty of small masters must

have known perfectly well who broke their frames." The Luddites were true progressives because, like all true progressives, they were fighting for that most radical of goals: a future.

As the movement grew, the full force of the ruling class would be launched against the Luddites and other radical groups. More troops were deployed in industrial towns to counter the growing threat of insurrection than were ever sent to Wellington to the Iberian Peninsula to fight Napoleon; working-class revolutionaries at home scared the rulers of England more than the armies of revolutionary France. Habeas corpus was suspended in 1817 by Lord Liverpool and acts against "seditious meetings" were also imposed. As is the case now, it is when the establishment is most scared that it is at its most brutish; the cloak of liberalism is the first thing to be removed as the fires heat up. Today we must remember that police brutality and state surveillance of activists will only grow, and we should be encouraged when it does for it will show that those who are most frightened of change believe it to be in the air. The spirit of Ned Ludd is alive in anyone who directly confronts any system that seeks to render it worthless.



Federico Campagna

Sales Projections

I am a salesman, I sell things for a living. What I sell has no importance. Selling is always the same process, with only minor adjustments according to whether you sell cars or paintings, films or hams. What remains the same is the distinctive manner in which the consciousness of a salesperson tends to disembodiment itself out of the living flesh which hosts it, and to re-embody as part of an ethereal, immaterial entity. A new body, a new narrative made of numbers.

We all know too well how unfaithful our consciousness is towards the blood and guts that provide it with its physical nourishment. Any excuse is good enough for our consciousness to separate itself from our physical selves and find refuge in other, external bodies, may they be the celluloid characters of a movie, the invisible imaginations of an evocative piece of music, or even the neighbouring land of another human being with whom we feel a degree of empathy.

Consciousness is the self-reflecting activity of our thoughts, and in such self-reflection, in their looking back towards themselves, it often happens that our thoughts see themselves as belonging to different entities than our physical bodies. They re-embody elsewhere. Sometimes they see themselves as part of a pantheistic whole, sometimes as part of imaginary animistic creatures, sometimes as part of an abstract narrative.

As a salesperson, it often happens that your consciousness drifts away from its original place, towards a re-embodiment within the narrative of sales figures. Your thoughts look back at themselves, and see themselves as the tip of an iceberg made of numbers, targets, sales, losses, percentages. Your thoughts look back at their time, and they see their time expanding and contracting in the trench-war cycle of sales, torn between the anxious boredom of waiting and the frantic adrenaline of actual sales. They look back at their environment, at their peers, and they see a strange and silent land of abstract figures.

It would be enough to describe the dis/re-embodiment that typically occurs to salespeople as a brief psychedelic nightmare, were it not that such a process has more long-lasting consequences than a short-lived bad trip.

The dynamics of the embodiment of our consciousness are always highly flexible processes. It is only through a constant feedback between physical body and self-reflective thought that consciousness decides to locate its primary belonging within one's own human flesh. If such feedback is too often interrupted, or diverted, towards a different one (possibly, always the same one), then the identification of our consciousness as part of our biological organism becomes at first uncertain, and then dissolves into other identifications. This is typically what happens with certain mental disorders, but it is also what increasingly takes place in the lives and in the minds of an overworked population.

What is at stake here is not simply a conservative diffidence towards new embodiments of human consciousness. What is at stake is the possibility of maintaining empathy and responsible economics as defining characters of our lives.

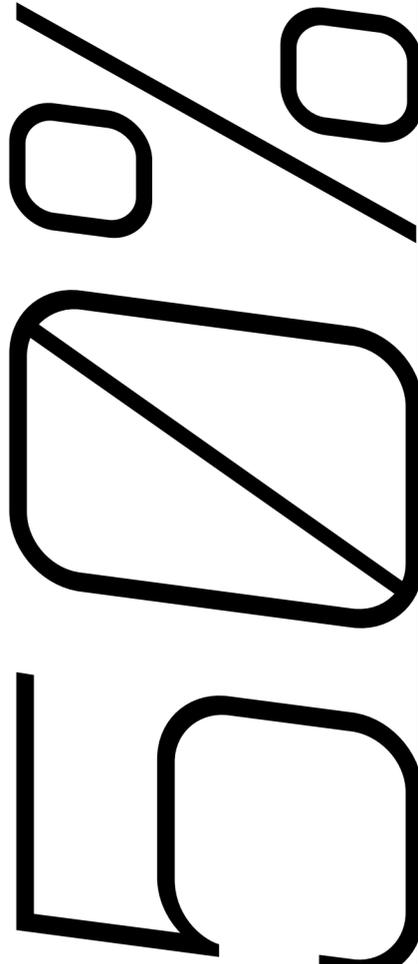
When consciousness identifies with a specific body, it simultaneously decides on the possible network of empathic connections, and on the available range of resources over which it has control. On the one hand, since empathy is only possible between bodies which are part of the same plane of existence, a disembodiment from the biological form (even from its representational, celluloid simulacra) towards a re-embodiment in the abstract immateriality of numbers removes any possibility of intra-biological empathy. Such dis/re-embodied consciousness

simply does not recognise the other biological creature, not even as an 'other' within the same plane of existence. On the other hand, different embodiments give consciousness different perceptions about the resources which it can master and of which it can dispose: any attempt at affective generosity vanishes as soon as our consciousness leaves the affecting body towards the translucent body of abstract numbers.

As our lives sink ever more deeply within fully immersive, numerical work environments, our consciousness (and consequently, our empathic and economic potential) faces a decisive challenge in terms of its bodily identification. And this is not just a matter of interest for stock-brokers, salespeople or programmers, and not even just for those workers defined as the 'cognitariat'. It's a challenge for everybody bound to the demands of the contemporary work regime, that is, for everybody in employment, as well as in the obsidian mirror of unemployment.

In our relationship with work, it is not just our freedom or boredom that are the stakes: it is us, who we are, what we can feel, what we can do, that we negotiate every day within ourselves. We often enter such negotiations without even realising, since it is exactly the anchor of our rationality and sanity, our own consciousness, which is affected by this game of changes and tides. Each one of us, in his or her working environment, can detect what currents are pulling their consciousness away from their physical body, form their human empathy and practical economy. It is for each one of us a different challenge, and a daily exercise of dancing through illusions, to decide what body we want to give to ourselves. And to live with the consequences.

NOW!



"there are no longer even any masters, but only slaves"

slaves commodities other slaves

SUFFERING WITH A SMILE

MARK FISHER

"I usually get up at 5 or 5:15am. Historically, I would start sending emails when I got up. But not everyone is on my time schedule, so I have tried to wait until 7am. Before I email, I work out, read, and use our products. ... I am not a big sleeper and never have been. Life is too exciting to sleep." "I quickly scan my emails while my son is taking over my bed and having his milk. Urgent ones I reply to there and then. I flag others to follow up on my commute into work. . . . I receive an average of 500 emails a day, so I email throughout the day." These two accounts - both taken from a Guardian article entitled "What Time Do CEOs Wake Up?" - might have been designed to illustrate the theses of post-autonomist theorists such as Antonio Negri, Paolo Virno and Franco 'Bifo' Berardi. Labour is essentially communicative. The boundaries between work and life are permeable. The incessant demands of semio-capitalism stretch the limits of physical organisms. Email means that there is no such thing as a workplace or a working day. You start working the minute you wake up.

These descriptions of a CEO's day also prove Deleuze and Guattari's claim in *Anti-Oedipus* that, in capitalism, "there are no longer even any masters, but only slaves commanding other slaves . . . The bourgeois sets the example . . . : more utterly enslaved than the lowest of slaves, he is the first servant of the ravenous machine, the beast of the reproduction of capital . . . 'I too am a slave' - these are the new words spoken by the master."

At the top of the tower, there is no liberation from work. There is just more work - the only difference is that you might now enjoy it (life is too exciting for sleep). For these CEOs, work is closer to an addiction than something they are forced to do. In a provisional formulation, we might want to posit a new way of construing class antagonism. There are now two classes: those addicted to work, and those forced to work. But this isn't quite accurate. Whether we are working for our employers (who pay us) or for Mark Zuckerberg (who doesn't), most of us find ourselves compulsively gripped by the imperatives of communicative capitalism (to check email, to update our statuses). This mode of work makes Sisyphus's interminable labours seem quaint; at least, Sisyphus was condemned to perform the same task over and over again. Semio-capitalism is more like confronting the mythical hydra: cut off one head and three more grow in its place, the more emails we answer, the more we receive in return.

The good old days of exploitation, where the boss was interested in the worker only to the extent that they produced a commodity which could be sold at a profit, are long gone. Work then meant the annihilation of subjectivity, your reduction to an impersonal machine-part; it was the price that you paid for time away from

"there are no longer even any masters, but only slaves commanding other slaves"

work. Now, there is no time away from work, and work is not opposed to subjectivity. All time is entrepreneurial time because we are the commodities, so that any time not spent selling ourselves is wasted time. Hence, like the characters in the film "Limitless", we're always seeking ways to increase the time available to us - via intoxicants, cutting back on sleep, working while we commute ... The unemployed do not escape this condition - the simulation tasks that they are now induced to perform in order to qualify for benefit are more than preparations for the futility of paid work, they are already work (for what is so much 'real' work if not an act of simulation? You don't just have to work, you have to be seen working, even when there's no 'work' to do ...) Being exploited is no longer enough. The nature of labour now is such that almost anyone, no matter how menial their position, is required to be seen (over-) investing in their work. What we are forced into is not



merely work, in the old sense of undertaking an activity we don't want to perform; no, now we are forced to act as if we want to work. Even if we want to work in a burger franchise, we have to prove that, like reality TV contestants, we really want it. The notorious shift towards affective labour in the Global North means that it is no longer possible to just turn up at work and be miserable. Your misery has to be concealed - who wants to listen to a depressed call centre worker, to be served by a sad waiter, or be taught by an unhappy lecturer?

Yet that's not quite right. The subjugatory libidinal forces that draw enjoyment from the current cult of work don't want us to entirely conceal our misery. For what enjoyment is there to be had from exploiting a worker who actually delights in their work? In his sequel to *Blade Runner*, *The Edge of Human*, K W Jeter provides an insight into the libidinal economics of work and suffering. One of the novel's characters answers the question of why, in *Blade Runner's* future world, the Tyrell Corporation bothered developing replicants (androids constructed so that only experts can distinguish them from humans). "Why should the off-world colonists want troublesome, humanlike slaves rather than nice, efficient machines? It's simple. Machines don't suffer. They aren't capable of it. A machine doesn't know when it's being raped. There's no power relationship between you and a machine. ... For the replicant to suffer, to give its owners that whole master-slave energy, it has to have emotions. ... The replicant's emotions aren't a design flaw. The Tyrell Corporation put them there. Because that's what our customers wanted."

The reason that it's so easy to whip up loathing for "benefit scroungers" is that - in the reactionary fantasy - they have escaped the suffering to which those in work have to submit. This fantasy tells its own story: the hatred for benefits claimants is really about how much people hate their own work. Others should suffer as we do: the slogan of a negative solidarity that cannot imagine any escape from the immersion of work. To understand work now, consider the pornographic practice of bukkake. Here, men ejaculate in women's faces, and the women are required to act as if they enjoy it, to lasciviously lick the semen from their lips as if it is the most delicious honey. What's being elicited from the women is an act of simulation. The humiliation is not adequate unless they are seen to be performing an enjoyment they don't actually feel. Paradoxically, however, the subjugation is only complete if there are some traces of resistance. A happy smile, ritualised submission; this is nothing unless signs of misery can also be detected in the eyes.

PREOCCUPYING: MICHAEL HARDT

Michael Hardt has combined his role as Professor of Literature and Italian at Duke University with political writings and activism. Together with the Italian Marxist Antonio Negri, he has produced an influential critique of our present time. Their trilogy of books - titled "Empire", "Multitude", and "Commonwealth" - have been described by Slavoj Žižek as a "Communist manifesto for the 21st Century".

The Occupied Times: In your recent work, *Declaration*, you and Professor Negri identified four political archetypes or 'paradigmatic subjectivities', as you call them, that you believe will be crucial to any political change. These are: the indebted, the represented, the mediated and the securitised. In looking at the indebted, how can we transform what starts as consciousness-raising about the importance of 'the debtor' as a subject under post-Fordist capitalism, into a more viable means to challenge those who make us the indebted?

Michael Hardt: We intend for these names to identify subjective figures produced and reproduced today by capital and the crisis. This is what capital makes us into. Our assumption or claim is that capital functions centrally through the production of subjectivity. And these are also the figures, it seems to us, that many contemporary movements seek to attack.

Two core elements of being indebted are the individualising power and the moralising effects of the condition: you are responsible - even guilty - for your own debts. And yet, in the US, at least, you practically have to be in debt in order to live - to go to university, to get health care, to get an apartment, etc. I like Christian Marazzi's formulation that we have passed from welfare to debtfare, meaning all those things that used to be covered by welfare - education, health, housing - are now subject to personal debt.

So, movements that reveal the broad social nature of debt make one step to de-individualising it. And a second step is to organise debtors in a movement to make collective demands. I think Strike Debt, which has emerged in the US out of Occupy Wall Street, is an excellent example of the kinds of organising that can address the situation of indebtedness.

OT: What do you think about a fifth subjectivity: the stigmatised? Mentally ill, disabled and trans* people can be seen as "fair game" for discrimination by both the state and wider society. The stigmatised experience the kind of isolation you say is key to the formation of your other groupings, and are often forced to be more politically conscious and active as they are more likely to be on the frontline of the neoliberal state's attacks.

MH: Yes, that's great, and you might link that discussion to the tradition of analyses of the normal and the abnormal.

We by no means consider our short list to be exhaustive. We hope it might stimulate others to think of other subjective figures produced by capital

that we need to struggle against. The point is simply to identify the forms of the capitalist production of subjectivity and discover means to challenge or even invert them.

OT: So, do you agree with much of the recent theorising around debt by the likes of Graeber and Lazzarato? Are they correct in arguing that labour is, to a large extent, about social control, and it is through our debts that the bulk of capital accumulation now comes?

MH: I very much agree that debt is a central structural and subjective mechanism of control today. And I find David's and Maurizio's books wonderfully helpful and illuminating in that regard.

It would be a mistake, though, to assume that debt has somehow today replaced exploitation as a primary figure of domination, as if labour were no longer a central element of domination - and I do not read David or Maurizio as saying this. Increasing debt has added to and exacerbated forms of exploitation.

Along the lines of your previous suggestion, then, we should add the figure of the precarious to emphasise that any political focus on debt should also focus on labour. That would allow us to clarify some of the intersections of the indebted and the precarious and highlight the lines of control and domination.

OT: We've recently seen warfare emerge as a form of discipline here in the UK. Would you agree that a form of unionisation around new forms of capitalist exploitation could provide a successful post-Fordist alternative to the traditional union? What would be the potential outcome/result/change if the unemployed, the precarious, the indebted collectively organised themselves outside of existing trade unions, which tend to identify around specific forms of work?

MH: In my view, we have to work from both sides. As you say, we must create new forms of unionisation that can effectively organise the precarious, the indebted, the migrant, and the unemployed, experimenting with organisational methods adequate to confront the great challenges posed by their conditions. And, at the same time, traditional labour unions must break open their corporatist structures and transform themselves so as to engage and include greater labouring populations. These two processes can complement one another.

OT: To turn to an anecdote of yours: you once recounted that when in Latin America some years ago, activists there told you that you would be of more help



"Any political focus on debt should also focus on labour"



Jessica Lehrman

to the struggle if you returned home. Do you think there's an argument for us to overwhelmingly focus efforts on the local or are the exploits of the roving activist valid today, like they were in the Spanish Civil War?

MH: The point of that anecdote, in part, was that in the mid-1980s I had great difficulty imagining how to develop a revolutionary or transformative movement in the United States - and I don't think I was the only one. Since then, though, the situation has changed. Beginning with ACT-UP and Queer Nation, at least in my experience, and through the alterglobalisation movements, Zapatista collectives, occupy, and others, there has been a great deal of important experimentation.

I think that for movements to be rooted in the local territory is powerful



Andrea Bekacs

and important. The various encampments and occupations that emerged throughout 2011, particularly those in North Africa and Spain, demonstrated this in clear terms.

But it is certainly also important not to be closed in the local or national framework. Not just solidarity but also communicating and being inspired by struggles elsewhere is key - as well as developing an analysis that grasps the global nature of the forces and powers we are confronting. The alterglobalisation movements were very important in this regard.

And furthermore there is no reason for any of us to be limited to doing politics only where we are from. Think of how Argentinians and other South Americans played important roles with the Indignados in Spain, and how people from all over were central in the Zuccotti Park occupation. I imagine that your experiences with non-Britons participating centrally in the St Paul's occupation were very similar.

OT: If the manifestation of today's Empire is global, whilst most legal apparatus deal with sovereignty at a national level, are there currently any forms of institution that have a hope of holding this supranational Empire to account in any tangible or practicable way? If not, can they, or should they, be built?

MH: I am all for working through existing supranational institutions to challenge violations of international law, aid the poor, help refugees, etc. Much good can come, for instance, from working through United Nations structures to aid Palestinian refugees in the West Bank or to challenge violations of human rights.

At the same time, though, one should not expect too much from such supranational institutions. They operate under rigid political and ideological limitations. Necessary too are various forms of autonomous and direct political action. My point is simply that it's not a question of either/or.

MH: One important idea derived from the Italian Autonomist school is the notion of immaterial labour, or affective labour. David Graeber argues that immaterial labour relies on a "crude, old-fashioned Marxism" yet ignores a basic Marxist concept: that the world does not consist of a collection of discrete objects, but of actions and processes. This form of labour has traditionally been the work of women, as Silvia Federici points out, but has nevertheless always been a central tenet of traditional Marxism. What do you make of Graeber's argument? Where do you think the theories of immaterial labour stand apart from traditional Marxist theories?

MH: The most important idea that should be maintained as point of departure, it seems to me, is that in each era and each situation one should first conduct an analysis of class composition. All kinds of errors result when one just assumes that the composition of labour is just the same as it was in the past or as it is elsewhere. We have to ask, in other words, what do people do at work? How is cooperation among them achieved? How are they divided hierarchically by race, gender, and other lines? And how might they be organised politically?

In our effort to look at labour today in this way, Toni and I (along with many others) arrive at concepts like immaterial production, biopolitical production, affective labour, precarious work, and so forth. We are trying with these concepts to grasp what people do at work today and to respond to the questions I posed above.

So, if by traditional Marxist theory you mean continually going back to conduct an analysis of class composition as a basis for political strategy, then, yes, that is our method. But that method, of course, leads us today away from some traditional and orthodox Marxist claims about the centrality of the industrial working class, the subordinate role of non-waged female domestic labour or of peasant labour, and so forth. The point is to recognise, in other words, that class composition is continually changing.

OT: Federici claims in her essay "Precarious Labour: A Feminist Viewpoint" that the theory of affective labour strips the feminist analysis of housework and reproductive labour of all its demystifying power. Would you agree? Do theories surrounding precarious labour ignore feminist theory as Federici has claimed?

MH: In my experience, much of the discussion about immaterial and biopolitical production over the past decade, especially in France, has focused on "cognitive labour" and the new cognariat. I think much of this work has been extremely important, but it has tended to focus (sometimes despite the intention of the authors) on the intellectual work of the high level sectors of the workforce.

I have found that, in this context, focusing on the concept of affective labour has the potential to extend this discussion through various levels of the service sector and to highlight the gendered nature of these forms of work. For me and Toni, the notion of affective labour brought together two different traditions: one that derives from Spinoza's analysis of the affects and the other grounded in the Anglo-American socialist feminist analyses of care work, kin work, maternal labour, emotional work, reproductive labour, and the like.

Therefore, I very much agree that analyses of affective labour should highlight the gender hierarchies at work, and, when possible, point toward feminist political action.



Eric Walton

"in each era and each situation one should first conduct an analysis of class composition"





Brian Levy

Michael Richmond & Jack Dean

Media, Activism & Society of the Spectacle

Our ability to move into a collectively imagined future has been trapped in an ever-present now, composed of continually transmitted images. The spectacle accompanies us throughout our lives. News, propaganda, advertising, entertainment and social media present a continuous stream of imagery, projecting a constant justification for how our culture is formulated. When Guy Debord first published *The Society of the Spectacle* in 1967, the digital revolution was still decades away and the technological capacity to project images into every corner of our lives was far less developed than it is today. The spectacle is no longer simply *all of the time*; it is also *everywhere*. More than ever before, Debord's words apply: "Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation."

As with many things in recent times, the boundaries of systems have become harder to discern. In the media/entertainment industry the process of mediation, where a consensus on the 'nature of things' is imposed, used to occur within newsrooms, edit suites and copy editing offices. Today, much of the ingredients of the spectacle - press releases, YouTube videos and comment/blog pieces - are received and published almost verbatim. More adverts are increasingly populated by the consumers themselves. We donate, as consumers, our own commodified identities to the spectacle, to be sold back to us.

The developing power of the spectacle can be seen in politics: both in the halls of power and in the street. PR-perfect Prime Ministers like Tony Blair and David Cameron (who worked in PR before becoming an MP), more adept at constant self-representation, have an instant head start on the likes of Gordon Brown, whose persona and body language were more suited to the era of the telegram. It may surprise some people to hear that many comparisons can be drawn

between the extraordinary influence on public life held by PR figures like Alastair Campbell or Andy Coulson, and the suffocating imperatives of the spectacle seen within activism.

A press group in any "social movement" acts as its point of interaction for mainstream media and thus sets about shaping the movement's outward identity which, in the case of something like Occupy, is then projected on a massive scale. The press teams of protest movements, like the spin doctors in Westminster, have power precisely because of the power of the spectacle. A press team sees nothing incongruent between the culture of PR and "messaging" and a movement's stated rejection of "business as usual," often to the dismay of those who view this abuse of language and corruption precisely because of the power of the spectacle. A press team sees nothing incongruent between the culture of PR and "messaging" and a movement's stated rejection of "business as usual," often to the dismay of those who view this abuse of language and corruption precisely because of the power of the spectacle.

A seriously flawed strategy that seems pervasive among activist groups is the idea that by simply "exposing" something to public scrutiny or "showing the media" evidence of systemic injustice, a dent can be made in the daily reproduction of such injustice. Mass "public debate," hosted and framed by the mass media is a pre-decided, packaged commodity, ripe for consumption and replete with the media's essential ingredient "controversy". Chasing the news agenda and trying to keep its attention long enough for that to make a difference to your cause is like trying to get the Tasmanian Devil to sit still long enough to do a sudoku puzzle.

In the absence of the ability to control the spectacle, people often fall back on the trope of "We changed the conversation". But this is what you say when you have no actual effect. A change in the discourse is an acceptable achievement only if it forms the beginning of a process - not the end result or its highest claim.

Talk is cheap. Capital is a liquid process, a means of reproducing and consistently cementing class and power relations on a minute-to-minute basis - any change in the debate that surrounds this process dissolves into nothingness once the space is gone, the novelty wears off and the news cycle moves on. A social movement that fails to intervene in the production process or have a tangible impact upon political/economic power or, worse still, doesn't realise the importance of these two things is just a 'social', not a 'movement'.

The spectacle, instead of being a mediator of the actions that are taken, now becomes an active player in how actions manifest. We find it impossible to entirely escape the spectacle and its power to formulate subjectivity. Many direct actions are consciously staged and choreographed with the question "how will this play in the media?" in mind. The timing of an action is highly influenced by when it might fit into the news cycle. Locations are carefully planned, with thought given to the power of their symbolism. This makes a worrying amount of dissent little more than



a performance, whereby protesters pit themselves against the entirety of existing power structures not by trying to directly impact them but by taking the confrontation onto a different terrain - capricious old "public opinion". As Mark Fisher writes: "Protests have formed a kind of carnivalesque background noise to capitalist realism".

Spokespeople are chosen for their marketability to media audiences, largely consisting of the learned ability to utter banal, empty statements to fit with the discursive style of mainstream politics. All of this and more is present within perhaps the most perfect case study of the interaction between the spectacle and activism: Laura Taylor.

Laura was one of the self-appointed spokespeople of Occupy London. Except this spokesperson wasn't self-appointed; she had no self. Laura was a fictional being, concocted by the Press Team, who set up the initial Facebook page calling on people to occupy the London Stock Exchange on October 15, 2011. She makes one of her first appearances before the occupation even began with a long quote on the politics blog, Libcon.

This stalwart of Occupy London would go on to appear in national and international publications including Reuters, the Guardian, Morning Star, CNBC and the Daily Mail. She would invariably relay rapid pronouncements such as the following quote, in which she explains why Occupy London activists were handing out flowers to members of the public last May Day: "The flowers we gave to people this morning will be taken into offices all over the city. We hope they will brighten up people's day, but also provide some food for thought. May Day is a day for everyone who works, whether that be in the public or private sector, in an office or at home, unionised or not. Together, we can make this May the start of something really special. Everyone is invited."

Laura's sordid tale of fabrication and nothingness holds within it many lessons for us about the influence of the spectacle, media pressures on activism and the dangers of prizing mainstream media attention as the sole arbiter of achievement or success. Occupy

London wasn't like the other big horizontal movements of 2011 in Spain, North Africa and the US. It began with a Facebook page and a Press Team, with an idea, based on a single tactic yanked wholesale from Zuccotti Park: it was conceived out of PR and that's how it continued. Central to the planning of events was corporate messaging, press releases and marketable aesthetics. Actions were deemed as failures simply because they didn't garner enough column inches in the corporate press, let alone the even more vaunted television coverage.

In any analysis of activism and the spectacle, it's incumbent upon those of us who seek to call a halt to the dominion of capital over our lives and our ability to live them, to ask ourselves a fundamental question: Are we having any direct effect on capital's ability to continually reproduce itself? Whilst a great many people are engaged in a lot of good work, it would be criminal of those of us with a desire to see another possible world to not

"Together, we can make this May the start of something really special."

take advantage of the recent crises facing capitalism.

This means using our minds, our bodies and our laptops to reach beyond the currently limited terrain, consisting largely of occupying/picketing branches of multinationals, tussling with the police and going on big marches or one-day strikes with little effect. The "beyond" we're trying to reach, that we rarely lay a glove on, is the terrain where power resides. Where existing power and class relations are continually reproduced.

Of course, the problem we face is that the terrain of real power is as surreal as the spectacle. There are the towering, phallic skyscrapers built to intimidate; and the impenetrable lexicon of financialisation whose facade bewilders but whose substance fails to add up. One statistic is particularly revealing: JP Morgan Chase has a derivative exposure of around \$70 trillion, roughly the size of the entire world's economy. Activists, with little budget and who are up against recent history and the status quo, can be forgiven for feeling overwhelmed, even hopeless. The complexity of the global financial system means that true power often resides not only out of reach, but outside of reality.

Back to Debord, who wrote: "Complacent acceptance of the status quo may also coexist with purely spectacular rebelliousness - dissatisfaction itself becomes a commodity as soon as the economy of abundance develops the capacity to process that particular raw material."

This describes perfectly some of the "activism" that you see nowadays. The activism of the ego, of the machismo. The kind that

could have been plucked from the Jay Z and Kanye West 'No Church in the Wild' video or that Levi's advert. There is the mimicry of imagined, nostalgic or historically lionised forms of protest, linked to romantic notions of "fighting the good fight". A group of the men at OccupyLSX even took to dressing in military camouflage and set out on marches as if an outmoded form of warfare was imminent.

This was a group of people who had been birthed into the world of non-institutional politics largely for the first time. They took their cues from the spectacle. They reproduced the imagery of dissent that had been broadcast into their lives, through countless adverts, films and images of war on rolling news. But they were unable to make it relevant for a completely different terrain. Towards the end of the encampments of the Occupy movement in London, the sites became a faithfully simulated boot camp, as if on the edge of a trench system of a continuing armed conflict - one or two even developed trench foot. People sat on the frontlines, waiting for a revolution that could only take place in the immaterial realm.

We're not going to stop reproducing these effects until we step back from them. We can't affect change within the glare of the spectacle and its very nature wards against it being a tool that we can control. Its function is predicated on its ability to subsume attempts to co-opt it or "change it from within." The bridge from the past to the future instead needs to be mediated by not only a more accurate and tangible present, but a present where genuine discussion can take place. We must provide a better, broader context to the present. It's only in constantly building a present contextualised to the past, that we can continue to transform the present into a shared future. This is the environment in which movements are built. It's not enough to develop tools of expression across new media and communication networks. It's also imperative that these organs are not fed by the same nervous system as the spectacle. Or, if we are to engage with it, to understand its limitations and engage in a suitable fashion.

We're in a period between spikes of action where we've seen infighting, burnout and selling-out. The UK movements of 2011 have run out of steam, the next concerted pushback is yet to materialise, but it's important that we have some way of recording things to mitigate the problem of the lack of institutional memory in contemporary organising. The juncture we have reached is too critical, the forces we face too powerful to keep on making the same, naive mistakes. Social movements need to break with convention, break the law and break us out of this desolate paradigm. The main lesson must be that if you only want to lobby capitalist power, appealing with insipid entreaties to the impervious spectacle: join an NGO.

Alex Charnley & Jack Dean

Dear VFX Worker

Politicians like nothing better than to do much about nothing. Thus, forceful opinions from Tory and Labour seem to intersect as indecipherable inflections of a consensual agreement. These two flailing political monarchs slip around on melting ice while grappling clumsily for some secure footing, agreeing on nothing, except an allegiance to the malleable platform they both share. There is only one respite in this feeble display. Periodically, they will imperceptibly move from a fray to a piourette, slip into each other's arms and call on the immaterial angels of Tech city and Soho to save them from their purgatorial crisis. The culture industry, or 'creative industry' as we're now obliged to refer to it, is pure light in dark times for the mean men of the ledger sheet; the specular that sings us out of the cold.

Thinkers such as Theodor Adorno once discussed the way soothsayers of capital captured beautiful moments and things. He understood what happened when a vision became another thing sold; how form and prose became the tools to invent wants and distractions. Cultural markets operate not only as fields of consumption but also help us believe that what we see all around us is all that there is and all that we are capable of. Whilst Adorno took aim at the reproduced and rebooted cultural commodities of the post-war western world in the fields of film, text, stage, opera and animation, he could not have envisaged a form that would straddle all such interdisciplinary boundaries: Computer Generated Imagery (CGI). That is, the algorithmic form that germinates in, around and between the moving frames and interactions of the screen. It is the game, movie, and the new imagery of post-fordism. For this reason, we must reconfigure the piourettes of the political class and claim the production of CGI as a commons. The field of Visual Effects (VFX) is one such important sub-terrain.

It is in the darkened theatres of the spectacle that the dreamy immaterial worlds of the hyperreal image help us forget about our degenerating material reality, whilst concealing the labour power consumed in their production. The VFX film *Avatar* is a fitting example of this paradoxical compact. A film that presents an anti-capitalist struggle, whilst simultaneously participating in capitalist accumulation. As a spectator, immersed in the highs and lows of this second order reality, it is impossible to comprehend the work of the computer animators, technical directors, riggers, compositors et al. who spend months irrigating the feudal acres of the virtual simulacrum for the barons of Hollywood.

Yet, in the bright green squares of social media platforms we are witnessing the first signs of global VFX solidarity. The green screen is the blank canvas of the VFX spectacle and has now come to represent the Facebook and Twitter profile pictures of all those artisans of CGI who are ready to show a collective face. This metaphor of the unrendered image has developed into a poetic resistance to the exploitation that exists behind the thin veil of the hyperreal, invoked by the protestations of the workers who brought *Life of Pi* from the green screen to the Oscars only to be unceremoniously expunged from their positions, without pay, after two of the largest production houses in the world went bankrupt. Now, without question, it has been made abundantly clear that the immaterial worlds of *Avatar*, *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings* and *WALL-E* do come from somewhere very real indeed. As a result, the artisans of this latest promontory of the culture industry have acknowledged the need to collectively organise and fight for better conditions.

This is, we all hope, a paradigmatic shift for a young artistic form so cruelly delivered out of the military-entertainment complex of capitalist production. But in order for this to be realised, we must consider it the beginning of a movement for all those who play in the sandbox of the virtual simulacrum.

It is the excluded for whom the mystique of the creative industry hangs like an ephemeral perfume. Great throngs of graduates hang on their reels in the hope that they will render out their dreams as unpaid interns, years before they have a chance to join those who now protest at the degenerative conditions of employment. If this is the neoliberal trajectory of global labour then what is left for the collective artisanship of VFX; the heaving edifice of the culture industry that forever mediates our dreams? The VFX proprietors reach out for tax deductions from the sympathetic hand of the slippery politician while simultaneously outsourcing work to the developing capitalist economies of India and China. Are we now witnessing the flagship Soho and New York production houses becoming little more than the reception areas for the sweatshop labour of VFX workers in the global south?

If we intend to extract great rhythms of change from this moment, then we must also consider the future of VFX as an aesthetic and practical concern. If for instance, we consider that all those who practice also have access to a network of production points, then must we continue playing musical chairs to the symphony of the proprietor? Moreover, what might we create with this unbounding form, if we were released from the market compulsions of the culture industry?

Perhaps, it is at this paradigmatic juncture that critical questioning of VFX as a form will be able to mutate out of material concerns. For instance, do we, as VFX practitioners, consider ourselves artists with the attendant responsibility to a society that the task implies? And if so, does forever pumping hyperreal consumables through the immaterial pipelines of the VFX industry tell us anything we didn't already know? Goya documented the disasters of war; Brecht brought us the epic theatre of the everyday; and Heartfield showed us the elite dipping their hands in our pockets. Yet the poetry of the VFX artist is cajoled into the cyclical reproduction of wants and dreams.

If the trajectory of global capital demands that we labour in an anxious state of temporality then we should be developing new constellations of practice together. Why are we still working within an industry based on the distribution model of the last generation when we all have the capacity to publish our work globally and instantaneously without the need for the command and control structures of capitalist cultural distribution? Have we not already witnessed the success of decentralised crowd funded projects and the capabilities of entire studios condensed into a single computer?

We know the potential for new content and insights when projects are free from market constraints. We already excel at collaborative work and operate as a single organism for the production of shared visions. The current exploitation relies upon that very conceit. Just imagine what we'd be capable of if we decided to dictate the terms of our own creativity.





Warren Richards

BE THE CHANGE Boycott Workfare

It has been over a year since The Occupied Times first invited Boycott Workfare to spread the word with an article in print. At the time, few people knew what workfare was, or why it mattered. Since then the campaign against workfare has come a very long way. It continues to grow and, importantly, to enjoy real concrete successes. People now know what workfare is and what it means. What started as a small group of unemployed people, union members, voluntary sector workers and activists at an open meeting in London has grown into a truly UK-wide campaign, which has now also taken on an international dimension. Boycott Workfare has worked with groups across the world, and will soon be taking part in an international unemployed people's conference in Austria. Not bad for a grassroots campaign run on a shoestring.

The relentless efforts of growing numbers of people campaigning has seen nine more organisations pull out of workfare schemes since the turn of the year: Sense, PDSA, Shoe Zone, Wilkinson's, Superdrug, Capability Scotland, Sue Ryder and the Red Cross. The Children's Society has pledged: "All volunteering at The Children's Society should be done by choice and under no obligation from any other agency." If there are no places to send people to carry out workfare, then workfare cannot exist.

There was the High Court victory in February 2013, in the case bravely brought by Cait Reilly who was forced to work in Poundland. It was a reminder that people faced with workfare also face sanctions - benefit stoppages which can now last up to three years. The High Court ruled that 300,000 people were unlawfully sanctioned on workfare schemes, and that £130 million had to be repaid to them. But to avoid doing so, the government pushed a retroactive law with the help of the Labour party. It is a bill that denies justice to those unlawfully sanctioned by the state. The DWP have said that even if it is repealed, the £130 million in compensation would come from brand new cuts to the social security budget. Collective punishment of the poor is the order of the day, with Jobcentre staff rewarded with Easter eggs for sanctioning people. Sanctions are a way of making cuts by stealth: 827,660 people were sanctioned between April 2011 and October 2012. It's a fact that on workfare schemes, you have a better chance of being sanctioned than of finding a job.

The greatest success of the campaign is that it demonstrates the goodness and kindness of people and their generosity of spirit. Faced with huge odds, people power can overcome government policy, vested corporate interests and big brands. This is because it is a campaign that puts people first. That means listening to people, not lecturing them. We try to help and empower people. If you take people as they are, they will give what they can. Christianity Uncut now also supports the campaign against workfare, which given the large number of Christian charities taking part in schemes, such as the Salvation Army and YMCA, could make a big difference.

With the introduction of Universal Credit, even those who are in part-time work or self-employed will be referred to workfare schemes - for the crime of not working enough hours or being

paid enough. Disabled people passed fit to work by ATOS are also being sent to do workfare. The idea has even been floated by one Lord that pensioners should do workfare for their pensions. Workfare replaces paid workers which means it affects everyone, unemployed and employed alike. Because this is such a wide-ranging issue Boycott Workfare works closely with other groups. Without this spirit of working together, the success we've had up until now would not have been possible.

Workfare has become a totemic issue, in which people see different aspects of neoliberalism in action. People focus on whatever ideological critique of workfare suits their political beliefs, but our message is simple: Workfare is wrong and you either oppose it, or you don't. Boycott Workfare works with anyone opposed to workfare and will not compromise on its anti-workfare stance. This has meant that at times it has had to contend with criticism from those that many would assume to be supportive - union leaders, Labour Party apologists and mainstream commentators among them. To us, unity comes from working together with integrity, not being told: "Shut up, don't criticise, and do as we say".

Ironically, the successful campaign against workfare represents as much a threat to the institutionalised way of 'opposing the government' as it does to the government policy itself. After all, if such a diverse array of individuals and groups can have such success then what does this mean for those with leaders to sell, party faithfuls to please, and career ladders to climb? Change is scary. When people don't need to ask what action to take and they can just take it, counting on others in the network for support, where does that leave annual A to B marches concluding with speeches from the usual suspects? If you had spent millions on 'opposing austerity' but had absolutely nothing to show for it, how would you feel?

It's about horizontal organising, not vertical. This is something Boycott Workfare took from London Coalition Against Poverty (LCAP), which is where the campaign evolved. LCAP's model of community organising has an emphasis on empowering people. People must always come first. We work together to learn legal rights and share practical advice, information and strategies. When this approach is combined with the tried and tested: demonstrations, leafleting, occupations, workshops; and the new: social media, crowd-sourcing, Tweet-walls, and online action, you get a successful campaign. Our keywords are: People, Empowerment, Outreach, Creativity, Collaboration, Dialogue, Flexibility and Fun.

Perhaps, and in a similar vein to Occupy and UK Uncut, the campaign against workfare represents the birth of a new campaigning paradigm, a new way of doing things.. The infographic later in this issue is an example: The Occupied Times and Boycott Workfare, working together to produce something practical to help people in their lives. It didn't take vertical central committees, party leaders or millions of pounds to produce. It took people working together collaboratively, not for personal or political gain, but for the greater good of others. A new paradigm. Be the change. Boycott Workfare.

DO ASK, DO TELL?

(RE)TIRING SEXUALITY IN A 'BRAVE NEW WORLD'

Prof. Yvette Taylor

Researchers in sexualities studies have long contested the neat, 'travelling into place', of 'arriving' LGBT subjects, showing instead how victories won in a landscape of Equalities Legislation, Gender Recognition, Civil Partnership and Same-sex marriage, can be easily lost. Doors can remain firmly closed and the corridors of power can still follow fairly straight lines. And still heterosexuality is never placed or positioned as having to be announced or arrived at, instead it is circulated as the automatic, default destination. So who is propelled forward as the brave citizen-conqueror and what's at stake in claiming and feeling the often still strange spaces we inhabit as sexual subjects? And as variously placed LGBTQ and heterosexual subjects?

I recently gave a talk as part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) conference, 'Brave New World', in central London. Presenters and attendees were encouraged to think of the ways that 'we've arrived' as out, proud and endorsed queer citizens - now welcome in official 'seats of power'. Arguably, queer subjects have burst out of a 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' context as unspeaking subjects, to a telling, asking, speaking, arriving state. The feeling of 'arriving' on stage and on the broader social map of State recognition, societal value and cultural distinction is appealing, but also rather disturbing. What is 'staged' in these moments of 'arrival', where the pull into the room may discord with everyday realities of living and 'being brave'? What is rendered unspeakable in the telling of 'sexual citizenship'? It depends, perhaps, on who is inside and outside the conference space, where different doors contain and announce our arrival.

Inhabiting, indicating and identifying sexualized positions can still be difficult. Articulating these difficulties in a workplace context - still packaged as 'public', rational and 'objective' and disconnected from 'private', emotional and subjective lives - can result in the 'brave' subject being seen as out of place, excessive and inappropriate. My talk on 'Gay By Degree? Indexing Diversity' sought to question points of arriving on campus - as the queer campus was Stonewall-endorsed and promoted. The measuring of 'diversity' through the arrival of 'others' on campus, in 'scenes', is somewhat problematic: suggestive of a happy state of smiles, celebration and capitalisation. How to tell of other, perhaps unhappier, states?

ARRIVING: 'A young female lecturer starting out in her career sits behind her closed office door (observe her dangling on the bottom rung of academia, while ambivalently hopeful, if not expectant or certain of upward climbs). While students bunch and buzz outside, emails are monotonously checked, ever received and she pauses to reflect upon the space she now inhabits with its various freedoms and constraints. Snippets of student chatter are overheard; behind her door they are pausing over whether to choose her course this semester - who knows what she's really like (one of them, one of us)? How young is she (who does she think she is)? Where does she come from (funny accent)? And what about that hair cut, those clothes (a lesbian?!!). Suspicion, excitement and a dose of caution gather in the corridor; pens linger over her sign-up sheet - what has she and these students signed up for? An official 'diversity and equality' email arrives in her inbox, all mainstreamed and official. The university welcomes, actions, promises; an inclusive certainty, a new agenda, a line on 'sexual minorities'... While she reads and searches, a voice from outside authoritatively declares 'She IS a lesbian'. Her course, herself - a matter of fact? A threat? An absence? What should she do? She opens the door, heads to the printer, picks up the email, and a few looks along the way...'

APPEARING: 'What do you imagine of this 'young academic'? What does she look like, short hair besides? (It does matter, not least to her.) Dressing for work is mostly a casual affair, the wardrobe proud in its choice provisions: jeans, vests, jeans, vests. If this is dressing for success, should she hang up the vest, get another costume (are long sleeves safer)? She strolls along the corridor, outfit on, suited people pause in awe of her: a) hardiness ('a vest in winter, do you not get cold?!') b) stupidity ('you're a student no more') c) good taste (unlikely). In the comments, criticisms and doubtful praise, the feminism she knows is disappeared. She glances down, she IS clothed. This wasn't meant to be subversive...'



The queer subject is increasingly identified in diversity policies. In a workplace context, the messages about capitalising on a 'diverse' workforce, where the LGBT subject stands for diversity, is endorsed as making 'good business sense'. LGBT employees become 'diversity dividends'. But when subjects are required to 'stand-in' for university commitment to diversity, narratives of living a lesbian identity at work may chafe against university rhetoric that 'welcomes all through its door' in the name of inclusivity. Indeed, universities can be viewed as significant sites where neoliberal organisational discourses predicated on a politics of heteronormativity may be required and resisted.

We witness a 'domestication of difference', which makes diversity respectable and manageable, synonymous with normative, white, middle-class and professional forms of organising, existing, teaching and researching. For universities, the pay off for making queer 'respectable' is that sexuality is maintained as a private issue, but one which has profit potential. This also makes some queers complicit in rendering queerness invisible, as she shuts her door...

How might 'queerer' places to work and learn be created? Queering the workplace involves bringing to the fore those who identify as 'queer', and others who might be willing to labour at the process of queering within their everyday work lives. It is a labour. But one which potentially paves a way forward for addressing another focal point of concern: how we might understand and experience the workplace beyond that which seems obvious, rational, taken for granted, as markers even of promotion.

ANNOUNCING: 'At the end of her course she distributes module feedback forms, welcoming "constructive criticism" (Teaching Certificate now completed). How will they rate her? The service provided, polished enough? Or excessively threatening, a step out of place? Sociological analysis embodied as 'personal', academic authority condemned as 'niche'. Pressure and promotion, as a personal problem. She's read the guidelines 'Dignity at Work', but these words on the page are more insidious. Although she's situated feminism(s) in their political, social, historical context, teasing out complexity and tension, she sees that 'it' (like her) has been reduced as a conspiracy, as a conspirator, as anti-men (her all-female class protest and fear). She conspires, she challenges. And she gets tired.'

I prepared this piece as and for 'work'; when things are working, academics sometimes get the chance to pause, write and think, to 'ask and tell'. But sometimes working contexts themselves act as blockages to 'arrivals'; 'don't ask, don't tell' is still woven into the workplace. Let's not retire the queer worker/citizen to a happier state. Let's require and demand a broader social bravery for all our 'new worlds'.

ART & POLITICS

Isidora Ilić & Eleni F.

“The problem is not to make political films, but to make films politically” - Jean-Luc Godard
 Art is not political because of its messages, or because of the way it represents something. According to Ranciere, art is political because it participates in the division of the sensible - (re) distribution of times and spaces, places and identities, the way of (re)framing the visible and the invisible, of telling speech from noise etc. Art is politics.

What about art politics then? Whether we speak about art as art - art as/in institution, or art as life - art as a creative process/skill employed or placed in public space and outside institutional socio-economic frames, potentiality for (social) emancipation lies in the procedures of making art, not simply in its content or form.

CASE STUDY A: ART POLITICALLY INSIDE THE INSTITUTION

Politics, derived from the Greek politikos (meaning “of, for, or relating to citizens”), is not simply the exercise of, or struggle for, power. Politics is, first of all, the configuration of a space as political. Aristotle said that contrary to animals, which only have voice to express pleasure or pain, human beings are political because they own the power of speech and through it reveal what is good and bad, just and unjust. But politics is not the public discussion about justice and injustice among speaking people. How do you recognise that the person who is mouthing a voice in front of you is discussing matters of justice rather than expressing private pain? Politics is in fact about that question: who has the power to decide this?

After 2000, Serbia entered a painful and, what has now been proven, illegal process of privatisation. Many factories which had been socially governed were forced into bankruptcy and sold to private entrepreneurship. New owners ceased production or changed the factories’ primary industrial function. Workers lost their jobs and went on strike - the only political tool for resistance they possessed. The workers’ struggle was not recognised by the state or the media.

CASE STUDY B: ART POLITICALLY OUTSIDE THE INSTITUTION

Like all crises in history, the Greek situation has inspired a lot of local artists. Political artworks of critical, informational or emotional value are popping up in galleries, museums and art forums within and outside of Greece. Even in spaces which trade in art as commodity, the crisis has spread its shadow. Many artists have been happy to use the free ride of the art scene of Northern Europe that this crisis has offered them, seeking safety and recognition. Meanwhile, in the local art scene, the crisis has birthed a flush of networks with libertarian and self-organised characteristics.

I am Greek and I am an artist. So, when returning home after having spent some years abroad, I had elaborated on my practices as an artist and as a political subject. It was quite clear to me that in such crisis situations, political artworks are not enough to accelerate the pace of radicalisation. As long as they are contextualised in the art world, they simply reproduce its elitist relation to the public sphere and its dominant character¹. If artistic language is to be used for the conveyance of a political message related with social emancipation, it has to be reflected within the way it will be contextualised and not only expressed: it is not only a matter of what, but also a matter of how.

In the Greek context, art can be used for the enrichment of conscious and directed social struggles that do not seek an eventuality, but really investigate and exert



Ignorant Schoolmaster is a project developed by a group of artists and activists. It is hosted by the Center for Cultural Decontamination in Belgrade. In a self-educational format, the project organises discussions in which intellectuals, experts and workers take part by articulating their experience and thought. Politics begins when those who have ‘no time’ to do anything else apart from work, make time, in order to become visible and capable of voicing their experience as a common experience in the universal language of public argumentation. It is an emancipatory potential that art as art can enable, but only by following emancipatory procedures.

Although placed within the cultural institution, the project does not help raise the visibility of workers’ issues. Rather, it endorses workers’ empowerment by offering context and infrastructure. Periphery is chosen as a political position, the only one that can bring political subjectivation. This takes time.

Earlier, similar projects are not unknown to the global art scene, though, what is important to notice here is not the form or the content but the procedures this project employs. What matters is the way it is being performed.

Ignorant Schoolmaster is not activism in the system of art, nor is it engaged art. The project itself does not represent workers’ subjectification. Workers are not objects of artist’s research that will be conveyed in an art product and will address the system of art. Other artists, or elites, cannot consume it in museums or galleries.

Thus, the possibility of cultural capital for the organisers has been diminished. The frame of self-education rules out hierarchical division between workers and artists/intellectuals. Both artists/activists and the workers undertake a process of self-education. This art does not represent - it performs politics, enabling the participants to engage in a process of defining their political subjectivity.

The questions remain: could emancipatory procedures performed within the art institution bring social emancipation or does the context of an institution nullify the potential? Does an issue placed in the sphere of art and culture diminish the possibility of a real impact on political structures? And, does this mean that social emancipation is only immanent to the performance outside the institution so, in the case of art as life, procedures are not even needed?

the alternatives for a possible insurrection. The artistic perspective and creative process can be of an important value in the attempt to convey a political message and broaden the potential of political practices.

But let’s discard the division between artists and “the others”. We need to abandon the feeling of safety we once had; there is no such thing anymore. To move the struggles forward we need to practice applied resistance through structural changes in our lives, such as self-organised projects, enrichment of educational processes, applied solidarity, mutual empowerment and collective fermentations. The end goal is not a short-term social relief, but social emancipation.

I cannot and will not be specific to definitive individual practices which will guarantee our future. I have only pointed to a handful of possibilities here, as I don’t consider myself as “the enlightened” that can give solid suggestions of how this is going to be done in each case (and I tend to think that “how” is sometimes even more important than “what”). We all have different needs and surroundings, possibilities and potentialities that we should all elaborate on. How are we going to transform utopia into reality?

1. As Andrea Fraser bravely admits, “We are the institution of art: the object of our critiques, our attacks, is always also inside ourselves.” What is Institutional Critique, from Institutional Critique and After, JRP|Ringier, Zurich, 2006



HOW TO AVOID WORKFARE

1 BEWARE UNIVERSAL JOBMATCH



STOP THE JOBCENTRE SANCTIONING AND SNOOPING ON YOU

- In your Universal Jobmatch Account Profile:
1. Do not tick the box that gives DWP access.
 2. Do not tick the box that lets them send you email messages.

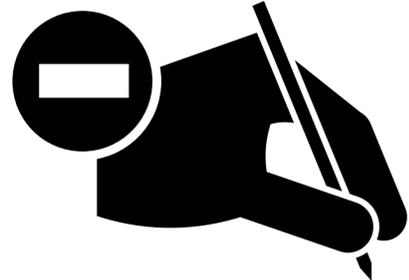
2 KEEP YOUR CV SAFE



YOUR CV IS YOUR PERSONAL DATA

1. Never give a copy to the Jobcentre, DWP, any training provider organised by the JCP/ DWP or a Work Programme Provider.

2. Only show it when asked, by holding it in front of them. Do not let them copy it. If they demand a copy ask them to put the request in writing, stating what benefit sanctions may apply if you refuse.



3 DO NOT SIGN

REFERRED ONTO THE WORK PROGRAMME WITH A4E OR REED?

Take someone with you. Do not sign any documents the provider gives you.

1. You are not legally required to sign any document they put in front of you.
2. By not signing any document, you are preventing the provider from being paid to harass you and you prevent your personal information being shared.



4 FORCED INTO MWA / WORK EXPERIENCE?

RESEARCH! Check out the guidelines to see how to avoid being sent on these schemes. Conscientiously object! Find an ethical problem with those you are referred to.

Sent to a Charity? Find out if they have pulled out of the scheme. If they have, and you are sent to do workfare for them let Boycott Workfare know, they will get them to cancel it.

Speak up. Tweet, Facebook, Blog, write to newspapers, email. Seek legal advice or a judicial review.



5 WORK WITH US TO END WORKFARE!

TELL PEOPLE ABOUT WORKFARE

Sleuth: When shopping keep your eyes and ears open for workfare

Boycott shops that use workfare: Argos, Poundland

Do not donate to, or shop in charities using workfare: YMCA, Salvation Army, RSPCA

www.boycottworkfare.org
 @boycottworkfare

**THE
ECONOMY
IS SUFFERING
LET IT
DIE**