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Philosophy Social Criticism 2008; 34; 877

DOI: 10.1177/0191453708095696

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Frédéric Vandenberghe

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Abstract Contemporary capitalism is in effect, if not in intent, Deleuzian. As a network of networks, it is rhizomatic, flexible, chaismatic, evolving, expanding. In the negativist spirit that characterizes the work of the Frankfurt School, this article shows via an analysis of the government of the self, the commodification of culture and the modification of nature, how contemporary capitalism does colonize not only the life-world but also life itself.

Key words biotechnology · capitalism · Gilles Deleuze · governmentality · immaterial labour ·

‘One day, perhaps, the century will be Deleuzian’ (Foucault, 1994: II, 76). What was supposed to be an anti-platonic compliment by Foucault to his friend and philosophical companion can be interpreted with hindsight as a sociological statement about the state of the world. Continuing and radicalizing the global trend of the late modern capitalism of the 20th century, everything seems to indicate that the 21st century will not be spiritual and dialectical, but empiricist and materialist, pragmatic and performative, heterogeneous and machinic, chaismatic and rhizomatic, hypercomplex and hypercapitalist. ‘Pluralism = Monism’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 31) – the magic formula of the becoming without end that Deleuze and Guattari were searching for on a thousand plateaux has been found, and almost realized, on a global scale and a single plane by contemporary neo-imperial capitalism.

1 The new spirit of capitalism

The machinic phylum that animates capitalism and flows through its unified body without organs is money. Money is always in flux and never rests. It is, as Simmel says in his *Philosophy of Money*, the objectivation of economic circulation in a symbol without substance that represents

PHILOSOPHY & SOCIAL CRITICISM • vol 34 no 8 • pp. 877–903

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and David Rasmussen

PSC

www.sagepublications.com DOI: 10.1177/0191453708095696

all possible goods and that, by substituting itself for them, speeds up the circulation of goods. Flowing through the subsystems of society, invading them from underneath, vivifying them from within, money is the blood that flows through the veins of capitalism and unifies the subsystems into the single market of the integrated world system of the world economy (Braudel's *économie-monde*). Marx famously likened capital to a vampire. 'Capital is dead labour which, like a vampire, only becomes alive by sucking out living labour, and the more it sucks, the more it is lively' (Marx, 1968: 247). Marx had obviously understood the internal connection between labour and capital when he predicted its enlarged reproduction on a global scale, but fixed as he was on the category of work, he could not foresee that production would become post-industrial and that capital could exist and reproduce itself without labour (Vandenbergh, 2002). But capitalism is inventive and productive, and to capitalize, it progressively leaves the factory and invades, like a parasite, all spheres of life and the life-world itself. At the end, it ends up, as we shall see, producing and consuming life itself.

The basic principle of rhizomatic sociology is that society is always *en fuite*, always leaking and fleeing, and may be understood in terms of the manner in which it deals with its *lignes de fuite*, or lines of flight. There is always something that flees and escapes the system, something that is not controllable, or at least not yet controlled. With their machinic analysis of becoming, Deleuze and Guattari want to encourage leakages and 'cause a run off – *faire fuire* – as when you drill a hole in the pipe or open up the abscess' (Guattari, 1977: 120; Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 249; Deleuze, 1990: 32). The intention is obviously anti-systemic – draining the system, digging holes, continuing the work of the old mole. Yet, today, the capitalistic system itself thrives on anti-systematicity, 'artificial negativity' (Adorno), or 'repetition and difference' (Deleuze). It feeds, as it were, on its own problems and in the process it changes itself and mutates. The 'repetition of the same' eventually leads to 'difference', which is tantamount to saying that the survival of capitalism means 'continuity with difference'. Capitalism explores and anticipates the de-territorializing lines of flight to capture them from without, enter into symbiosis with them, and redirect them from within, like a parasite, towards its own ends. Capitalism is inventive; its creativity knows no limits – 'it is of the viral type' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 580).

Deleuze and Guattari put their anti-capitalist hopes in the guerrilla tactics of the schizoid minority that refuses to play the game (Marcuse's *nicht mitmachen*) of the self-content majority. Although they know that the squirms of the dispersed minority accompany the war machine of the entrepreneurial companies like their 'supplement', although they realize that capitalism advances like a war machine that feeds on the lines of flight and indicated that capitalism knows no internal limits,

they nevertheless believed that capitalism would find its logical conclusion in the schizophrenic production of a free flow of desire: 'Schizophrenia is the external limit of capitalism itself' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972: 292). What they apparently meant by that mad statement is that the final crisis of capitalism would eventually be generated not by the regulation or domestication of capitalism but by the complete commodification of the desiring machines that we are. Only by accelerating the decadence of the present system, only through some kind of self-commodification in a consumerist potlatch, would the capitalist system be beaten by its own game:

Which is the revolutionary path, if there's one? To withdraw from the world market . . . in a curious renewal of the 'economic solution' of the fascists? Or might it go in the opposite direction? To go still further in the movement of the market, of decoding and territorialisation? . . . Not withdraw from the process, but going further, 'accelerating the process', as Nietzsche said. As a matter of fact, we ain't seen nothing yet. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972: 285)¹

A quarter of a century later, the process of accumulation has accelerated to the point that *capitalism itself has become Deleuzian in form, in style and in content*. This junction is not accidental. As usual, an ironic and profoundly perverse relationship exists between the romantic ethic and the spirit of capitalism (Campbell, 1987: 202–27). Needless to say that I am not claiming that Deleuze's libertarian critique of capitalism was anti-critical or phoney from the start and that Deleuze is somehow the Giddens of the 1970s: a neo-liberal disguised as a libertarian, or Thatcher on LSD. What I am claiming is, rather, that capitalism has progressively integrated the critique of capitalism into its mode of functioning, with the result that capitalism appears stronger than ever, whereas the critique of capitalism seems rather disarmed.

In their magisterial analysis of the new spirit of capitalism, Boltanski and Chiapello (1999: 241–90) have convincingly demonstrated that capitalism has coopted the postmodernizing critique of the 1960s and 1970s and used it as a way to reorganize itself and expand infinitely. The industrially organized capitalism of the 'golden thirties' (1945–73) was essentially Fordist. Bureaucratic, hierarchical, pyramidal and centrally controlled, planned and taylorized, oriented to the mass production of standardized goods, it was elephantine, rigid and alienating. The neo-corporatist arrangement between the state, the employers and the unions guaranteed job security, an indexed income, a steady career track and a pension, but this security hardly compensated for the employees' lack of autonomy. Attacking the dehumanizing and disciplining, massifying and standardizing nature of the 'capitalist-bureaucratic-technical-totalitarian society of planned exploitation and directed consumption' (Lefebvre) in the name of spontaneity, creativity and authenticity, the libertarian left

took over the ‘artistic critique’ of capitalism of the bohemians and translated their grievances in a language that was inspired by surrealism and the ‘masters of suspicion’ (Marx, Freud and Nietzsche).

At first, the capitalists reacted to the ‘artistic critique’ of the *soixante-huitards* in a traditional way. They negotiated with the unions about ‘quantitative demands’ and granted a pay-rise but, realizing that the critique did not abate in spite of the concessions, they opened discussions with the unions about the ‘qualitative demands’. To solve the motivational crisis among the ranks of the disenchanted workers, they started introducing changes in the workplace that granted more autonomy to the workers. As the increase of freedom was being paid by a decrease in security, the result was most ambivalent. ‘Through this change of politics, autonomy was somehow exchanged against security’ (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999: 274).

In the wake of the crisis of accumulation of the 1970s, the capitalists proceeded to a neo-liberal reinterpretation of the libertarian critique of capitalism of the radical left. Transforming the cultural contradiction into a sociological compatibility, they progressively introduced more and more flexibility in the organization via the application of market principles. The old bureaucratic elephant of Fordism started to dance to the neo-liberal tune, but the elephants’ keepers had to hold on firmly if they did not want to lose their jobs. As the Fordist regime of ‘heavy’ accumulation was supplanted by the post-Fordist regime of ‘flexible accumulation’, the organization became not only ‘leaner’ (decentralization of management, flattening of the pyramid, flexible specialization and orientation to niche-markets, rotation of tasks, lifelong learning, outsourcing and subcontracting, etc.), it also became ‘meaner’. The principles of the market were progressively introduced in the organization, unions were sidelined, wages were individualized, contracts liberalized and labour time flexibilized, with the result that, 30 years later, the individualized, casualized and contractualized flexi-worker is confronted with insecurity and delivered to a completely restructured, radically flexibilized labour market on which she or he has to sell not only her or his labour force, but also personality, self and ultimately perhaps also soul.

Together with the decline of the welfare state, the flexibilization, casualization and informalization of labour might well lead in the near future to a dualization of society and a ‘Brasilianization’ of the world (Beck, 1999: 93–110). Insecurity and vulnerability are no longer seen as a perverse effect of the dismantling of rigidities, but welcomed, valued and used to increase competition among the workers. Using old-fashioned language, we could say that insecurity is now ‘functional’. Disorganizing time as well as the career-track, flexible capitalism does not only apply the JIT (or just-in-time) approach to the punctual delivery of goods, but also to the workers and management itself. Conceived as

some kind of ‘standing reserve’ that can be hired and fired at will, managers and workers alike have to become flexible, adaptable and multi-skilled, disposable and at the disposition of a new employer, available and ‘at hand’, ready for the spot market and prepared to seize any job that might improve their situation. The emphasis that is put on adaptability and availability for the market transforms the worker into a performing ‘actor-networker’ who behaves strategically and constantly looks out for opportunities to enhance his or her social capital by making connections, always more connections, on which he or she can market his or her human capital, network and personality. The good networker who treats his or her person as a marketable asset is a master in self-presentation and decorum. Promising to give himself entirely in any project, he remains in fact unattached to the job and to his self in order to remain at the disposition of any other project that might come up. Redefining her self as the opportunity may require, the actor-networker treats her personality as a mask, reverting thereby to the original meaning of the term *persona* as the-one-who-speaks-through-the-mask.

Coincidence or not, the fact that the identity of the networker is variable and performed in and through the relations that he or she enters into chimes in all too well with the contemporary discourses on performativity, mobility, fluidity, complexity, topology, relations, networks, performances, displacements, multiple selves, etc., that follow the ‘post-modern flip’ in the human sciences.² In the mean time, those fashionable discourses have also been introduced in the ‘cultural circuit of capitalism’ and discovered by the consultant gurus, the hero-managers and the business schools (Thrift, 1999). Transposing metaphors of the body from biology and physics to economics and psychology, the post-Darwinian message of complexity theory is relatively straightforward: corporations, groups and individuals must become flexible and fluid, transformative and innovative, agile and nimble like complex biological systems that successfully survive in nature (Martin, 1994).³ Displacing the politics of distribution by a politics of identity, those discourses have started to infiltrate and infect society at large – like a virus.

With hindsight, we can now see that the hatred of the collective and transcendence, the pragmatism of connections and the disindividuation of the self that is the trademark of Deleuze and Co. is not accidental, but anticipates, expresses, accompanies and helps to perform the subject as actor-networker and to transform society into a network of transient associations. Chaos and disorder used to be enemies that had to be weeded out. With the transition from ‘heavy’ or ‘solid’ to ‘light’ or ‘liquid’ modernity (Bauman, 2000), order as such is devalued, while chaos becomes the norm and the means to rationalize and flexibilize the enterprise. Were it not for its celebratory tone, we might even have welcomed Deleuze’s and Guattari’s borderline description of schizophrenia as a

more or less adequate expression of the disorganization of time, the fracturing of life-narratives and the superficiality of relations that characterizes the ‘corrosion of character’ of the networkers the new economy (Sennett, 1998). As it stands, I am more tempted, however, to see the ‘Deleuze-effect’ as a syndrome and symptom of a countercultural ‘bad trip’ – or ‘the sixties gone toxic’, to borrow a phrase from Jameson’s (1991: 117) justly celebrated essay on the cultural logic of late capitalism.

2 Colonization, commodification and reification

From a systemic point of view, the flexible rationalization of the organization that transforms the worker into an actor-networker can best be understood in terms of the generalized introduction of market principles in the organization, with the result that the boundaries between the organization and its environment (markets and other organizations) are eroded and that the relations between the inside and the outside are radically transformed. Decentralization and segmentation of the organization itself, autonomization of its unities and marketization of their internal relations, increased self-organization of the unities and of the sub-unities, introduction of modes of financial calculation and budgetary obligations, translation of programmes into costs and benefits that can be given an accounting value, orientation towards shareholders’ value, all those structural transformations that accompany the introduction of the principles of exchange, competition and calculation in what was heretofore a hierarchical-monocratic-bureaucratic organization effectively convert the organization into a flexible and profitable network of enterprises pursuing a common project of sustainable capitalization. When intra-organizational networks are interconnected in inter-organizational networks that cut across sectors and when those start to network and become interconnected on a global scale in a machinic network of sorts, we become the involuntary witnesses of the rhizomatic spreading of networks across sectors and frontiers that marks the passage from the network enterprise to the global network society of late capitalism. The global economy is not made up of nations, but of transnational networks of companies that spread through the world in search of cheap labour and a quick buck. ‘Networks, not firms, have become the actual operating unit’ (Castells, 1996: 171).

Although the spread of networks might appear anarchic at first, it should be noted, however, that the centrifugal process of decentralization is balanced by a centripetal process of concentration and command. In the archipelago of networks, there is a mainland of power that commands the ‘decentralized concentration’ of capital. In the conclusion of the first and the third volumes of his trilogy on the rise of the network society,

Manuel Castells has drawn attention to the fact that the global network is geared to the extraction of profit and enframed by a ‘meta-network of financial flows’ that is operated by electronic networks: ‘Networks converge toward a meta-network of capital that integrates capitalists’ interests at the global level and across sectors and realms of activity’ (Castells, 1996: 506) . . . ‘Thus, global financial markets, and their networks of management, are the actual collective capitalist, the mother of all accumulations’ (Castells, 1998: 343).⁴ The virtual integration of regional, national, multinational and transnational corporations into a global network of networks is not only driven by the introduction of market principles (marketization as input); the thirst for profit is also what drives the expansion of the networks through the globe and triggers the colonizing process of universal commodification (commodification as output) that characterizes contemporary neo-capitalism.⁵

Unlike the imperial capitalism of yesteryear, which had to expand through space and integrate its non-capitalist environment in a colonial system of exploitation to guarantee the continuous extraction and accumulation of surplus value, contemporary network capitalism no longer colonizes the world. It colonizes the life-world instead and introduces the calculating and objectifying logic of the economy and the administration into everyday life, threatening thereby the communicative structure of society (Habermas, 1981: I, ch. 4). Having progressively integrated the markets of the periphery and the semi-periphery into a single world market, the logic of the market society progressively invades and colonizes the life-world ‘like the masters of colonization in tribal societies’ by commodifying culture, the mind, the person and, ultimately, life itself.⁶

Once capitalism has conquered the whole world and covered it with a financial network that eludes control by the states and captures the heterogeneous totality of monetary fluxes, capital starts to operate like a Deleuzian machine with a ‘general axiomatic of decoded flows’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 567) that functions on a single plane. This axiomatic is general, because it transvalues all possible goods into commodities and recodes all possible values into determinate prices,⁷ and it is global, because it de-territorializes the flows and operates in the smooth space of world-capitalism. Saying that capital operates as a general and global axiomatic system that functions on the plane of immanence is a convoluted way of saying that it rules the whole world and forms an empire that no longer has an outside and that can thus no longer be criticized from without, but only from within, through a subversion of the axiomatics of capital.⁸ When the lines of flight are sealed, or, what amounts to the same, captured and coopted by the axiomatics of capital, there is nothing that is not enframed by capitalism, nothing that escapes the global flows of capital, though that does not mean that there is no alternative. Only that the alternative has to come from within capitalism.

To survive and further expand, capital had to shift from colonization in the strict sense to colonization in a more encompassing sense. To overcome its dependency on labour, it had to shift from an extensive to a more intensive form of production and integrate the other spheres of life and, ultimately, the production of life itself, into its axiomatic. Indeed, having reached the limits of the exploitation of labour, capital transgresses them and starts to exploit '*immaterial labour*' – that is, intellectual, communicative, symbolic or emotional labour that is produced outside of the sphere of production.⁹ To continue the process of accumulation and overcome its dependency on labour, capitalism had to exploit the life-world and extract value from communicative processes that are not productive in the strict sense and that it cannot produce itself, but on which it is nevertheless dependent. The exploitation of material labour is no longer sufficient; intellectual labour has now to be exploited as well. Capitalism is innovative. To innovate continuously, it constantly draws on knowledge that it does not produce itself, but that is the result of individual and collective processes of communication, cooperation and learning that take place in the life-world. With the privatization of the commons, the boundaries between production and communication, production and consumption, labour and leisure, paid and unpaid work disappear. As the consumption of services, cultural goods and information during leisure time produces the knowledges and skills that capitalism needs to constantly innovate, the distinction between production and consumption collapses. When free time becomes productive, everything becomes work. By becoming the source of the production of values through communication, innovation and continuous improvisation, '*immaterial labour* eventually merges with the work of the production of the self' (Gorz, 2003: 20).

With the exploitation of immaterial labour, capitalism takes a 'linguistic turn' and extends its reach into the life-world. A double extension of capital takes place, which is both quantitative and qualitative. Echoing the Marxist distinction between the 'formal' and the 'real' subordination of labour under capital, i.e. between the extraction of surplus-value that operates by means of an extension of the workday and accumulation by means of the technological rationalization of the production process, cognitive capitalism accumulates not only more, but also differently. With Deleuze and Guattari, we can conceptualize the colonization of the life-world in terms of a progressive generalization of machinic control beyond the sphere of production and a concomitant interiorization of domination by the subject. When the machinic production of capital captures the subjects to control them from within, 'enslavement by the machine' mutates into 'subjection to the machine'.

Since the machinic production of capital has left the factory and spread to the whole of society, the capitalist machine reproduces itself

on an enlarged scale by producing the subjects that produce and consume the products they have produced. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that modern technology has successfully overcome the opposition between enslavement and subjection, domination and submission or alienation and subjectification. In the cybernetic ‘human-machine systems’ of advanced liberal capitalism, humans and machines have been coupled through a multiplicity of recursive processes and feedback loops and integrated in some kind of a living self-regulating mega-machine that operates globally on a single plane. When subjects are incorporated by the system as components of its own machinery, the subjects have become its living medium and mediation: ‘A small amount of subjectification took us away from machinic enslavement, but a large amount brings us back to it’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 572).

Using language that post-humanists self-consciously avoid, we could say with Adorno (1975: I, 391) that ‘reification reaches its limits with the reification of humans’. When the constraints of the system are no longer imposed on humans from without, but alienation is mediated through them, alienation is introjected and reaches its very limits. Overdramatizing a bit, we could say that the end of alienation coincides asymptotically with the end of Humankind. Indeed, when enslavement by the machine is no longer opposed to machinic, but both tend to coincide with the ‘becoming-machine’ of men and women, subjection becomes the mode of alienation. Subjected to a capitalist megamachine that produces willing subjects, the latter have been fully integrated into a living machine that functions not against their will, their thoughts, their desire, their body, etc., but *through* those.

Deleuze’s and Guattari’s dialectics of subjectification remind me of Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s dialectic of the Enlightenment. Although I have always opposed their bleak depiction of late capitalist society as a ‘totally administered world’ (*total verwaltete Welt*) on metatheoretical, methodological and empirical grounds (Vandenbergh, 1997–8), I am now tempted to consider their analysis as a brilliant anticipation of what was to come. At this point, I must confess that I am slightly afraid that the contemporary conjunction and coevolution of science, technology and neo-capitalism might well offer a belated confirmation of some of the most radical theses on reification, alienation and commodification that have been propounded by the first generation of the Frankfurt School.¹⁰ To flesh out my worries, I will analyse the structural transformations of contemporary capitalism and underline their alienating consequences. More particularly, I will present the ‘*government of the subject*’, the ‘*commercialization of experience*’ and the ‘*commodification of life*’ as three overlapping processes that undergird the current forms of societal rationalization and reification. Progressively invading the domains of the person, culture and nature in order to control and

commodify them, advanced liberal capitalism colonizes the life-world and life itself. It not only threatens the communicative infrastructure of the life-world, which is bad enough, but does worse: the conjunction and integration of capital, science and technology potentially puts the human race itself at risk and opens thereby, though probably not in the way that the structuralists had expected it, the perspective of the end of the human sciences.¹¹

2.1 Governing the self

Capitalism not only produces objects, but also subjects and subjectivities. To assure the conditions of its own enlarged reproduction, it has not only to produce goods and services, but also the producers and consumers of those products and services. Those processes of the production and reproduction do not remain constant, however, but are historically variable, as Michel Foucault has amply shown in his genealogical studies of the mid-1970s, from *Discipline and Punish* to *The History of Sexuality*. Analysing the epochal changes in the epistemic, normative and institutional constellations through the ages (Suárez Müller, 2004), Foucault used his study of the changes in the penal regime of the 18th and 19th centuries to theorize the different forms of production of subjects and subjectivities – from the ‘sovereign power’ of the *ancien régime* to the ‘disciplinary power’ of modernity and from there perhaps also, as Deleuze (1986, 1990: 229–47) suggests, to the regulatory power of the emerging ‘society of control’.

In the society of control, which regulates conduct through the continuous modulation of affects, disciplinary power is more economic and liberal, more subtle and indirect, more decentralized and capillary, micro and molecular, diffused and individualized, though not less pervasive and effective than the forms of power that preceded it. Unlike sovereign power, which is exercised through corporal punishments and decisions about life and death, disciplinary power is not repressive but democratic and productive: ‘It is a power that aims to produce forces, to make them grow and regulate them rather than block, submit or destroy them. . . . It is a power that is positively exercised over life, that attempts to administer, raise, multiply and exercise precise controls and global regulations over it’ (Foucault, 1976: 179–180).¹²

Targeting the self of the subjects through a host of panoptic and confessional technologies, the former operating through the external, the latter through the internal environment of the individual, it aims to produce docile bodies and responsible subjects. Disciplinary power does not destroy the subject; it produces it as one of its effects. In the original project of the *History of Sexuality*, which was initially to comprise six volumes and not just three or four, Foucault wanted to enlarge his

genealogy of ethico-political subjectification, from the Greeks to the Middle Ages and beyond, by illustrating how responsible, autonomous, free subjects are produced, not just in prisons, factories, schools and hospitals, but continuously and throughout society. Looking at his last investigations on the ‘care of the self’ from the perspective of his middle, more sociological period, we come to realize that what he was really after was a genealogy of the present society of control that shows, through a careful analysis of the technologies of subjectification and other techniques of the self, how disciplinary power produces subjects not against their will, but by adopting and coopting their will, thus precisely *through* their will. There are thus not two Foucaults, the one of the analytics of power and the other of the problematics of the subject, but only one who analyses power in terms of the government of the self and the others. As Foucault (1994: 223) himself says: ‘It is thus not power, but the subject that constitutes the general theme of my research.’¹³

Systematically extending the scattered remarks of the last Foucault on pastoral power, the police and government into a sociological theory of power, knowledge and subjectivity in advanced liberal societies, Nikolas Rose (1999a, 1999b), the animator and instigator of the Anglo-Australian school of ‘governmentality-studies’, has forcefully introduced the notion of ‘government’ over and against the notion of domination to theorize and analyse the multiplicity of theories and vocabularies, methodologies and technologies, instruments and techniques of rule (from the layout of buildings and the structures of timetables to the statistical methods of calculation and the psychoanalytic ones of interpretation) through which a heterogeneous network of governmental and non-governmental authorities and agencies (from the Ministry of Economic Affairs all the way down to the economist, the manager, the journalist, the teacher, the priest, the doctor, the counsellor and the psychoanalyst) seek to control and regulate, shape and modulate, the conduct of individuals that constitute a population by working on and through their aspiration and intentions.¹⁴

Government is a form of power referring to the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Foucault, 1994: IV, 237). To govern is not to impose directly a certain action, but to control it indirectly through the structuration of the possible field of options and actions of individuals. In so far as governing means governing through the freedom, aspirations and beliefs of the individuals rather than in spite of them, government does not annul the capacity of individuals as agents, but presupposes it and draws on it to further its own ends: ‘Personal autonomy is not the antithesis of political power, but a key term in its exercise, the more so because most individuals are not merely the subjects of power but play a part in its operations’ (Rose and Miller, 1992: 174). Appealing to the aspirations of self-determination and self-realization, the government of subjects passes through the personal

strivings of each and every individual for self-fulfilment. Power does not crush aspirations, but acknowledges and adjusts itself to them, while instrumentalizing and utilizing them for its own objectives.

In the same way as one should not identify government and domination, one should not identify government with the state and should avoid the paranoiac prism of conspiracy theories that seek the ‘hailing’ hand of the state in any of its ideological apparatuses. Rather than thinking of the state extending its power through its apparatuses, the analytics of power ‘decapitates’ the state and concentrates its analysis of the powers of freedom on the proliferation of a heterogeneous multiplicity of governmental and non-governmental, public and private, legal, scientific, economic, religious, educational, therapeutic and other organizations and institutions, authorities and agencies that seek to regulate, modulate and influence the internal worlds of organizations, institutions, families and individuals by shaping them in desired directions. Among the plurality of mediating instances that intervene between the state and the individuals while interconnecting, intentionally or unintentionally, the aspirations of the authorities and the activities of individuals, one finds, among others, bureaucrats and experts, philosophers and philanthropists, sociologists and psychologists, doctors and hygienists, managers and planners, priests and parents. Although all those different actors follow their own interests, confront their own problems and look for their own solutions, each and any of them can potentially be ‘enrolled’ by other actors who ‘translate’ their interests and bring them thereby into a loose alignment of sorts, forming a governmental ‘dispositif’ (Foucault), ‘assemblage’ (Deleuze) or ‘actor-network’ (Latour) of sorts:¹⁵ ‘Each of these diverse forces can be enrolled in a governmental network to the extent that it can translate the objectives and values of others into its own terms, to the extent the arguments of another become consonant with and provide norms for its own ambitions and actions’ (Miller and Rose, 1990: 10). Thanks to the continuous translations of the respective epistemologies, moralities and ideologies into common visions of the ‘good life’ and their materialization into concrete programmes of action, White Papers, reports, books, plans, etc., flexible and loose associations are established between a variety of agents that come to share a common language and common interests and that seek to shape, each in its own way, the practices of individuals by summoning them to become loving parents, ardent consumers, active citizens and enthusiastic employees. As networks form and relays, translations and connections are established to the mutual benefit of those who govern and those who are governed, power is disseminated through the whole of society and a machinic assemblage without exterior is performatively constructed that from within couples the political aspirations of the authorities to the individual motivations of the subjects.

Drawing attention to the fundamental role that theories, technologies, techniques, methodologies and methods of government play in rendering the practices of individuals, groups, organizations and populations thinkable, representable, calculable and administrable, or in short: governable, genealogists of the present insist on the importance of studying empirically the humble and mundane technologies, instruments and ‘inscription devices’ (Latour) by which all kind of authorities seek to instantiate government and rule ‘at a distance’:

Techniques of notation, computation and calculation; procedures of examination and assessment; the invention of devices such as surveys and presentational forms such as tables; the standardisation of systems of training and the inculcation of habits; the inauguration of professional specialisms and vocabularies; building design and architectural forms – the list is heterogeneous and is, in principle, unlimited. (Miller and Rose, 1990: 8)

In their detailed studies of the variegated techniques of social regulation, governmentality studies draw on several specialized subdisciplines like science studies, economics, accounting or architecture, but reconfigures their materials within the framework of a political sociology of power.

Against this background, we can now analyse some of the major transformations of the mode of social regulation that have intervened in the last quarter of a century and that characterize ‘advanced liberalism’ (Rose, 1993, 1999b: 137–66). We have already seen that capitalism has been able to restructure itself and expand in the 1970s and 1980s through a neo-liberal cooptation of the libertarian aspirations to autonomy and authenticity that were voiced by the new left in the 1960s and the 1970s and by the new right in the 1970s and the 1980s. Translating and displacing the aspirations of autonomy, freedom, initiative, creativity, spontaneity, originality and responsibility of the individual into a political programme that aims to roll back the state and to ‘govern without governing society’ (Rose, 1993: 298), neo-liberalism has succeeded in turning the critique of alienation, domination and bureaucracy to the advantage of the market. Thatcherism, Reaganism and, in its wake, also Third Way-ism, have reactivated the anti-statism of classical liberalism and linked it up with a series of techniques that has rendered the criticism of welfare and bureaucracy ‘governmental’ and, thus, implementable. Through liberalization, privatization and budgetary restraint, it has paved the way to a system of ‘governance without government’.

Compared with the old labourist, Keynesian and Fordist mode of social regulation of the ‘golden thirties’, the new liberal mode is much more global though dispersed and multi-layered, much more marketized and consumerist and also much more accountable and controllable. Four aspects stand out. First, social regulation is now on the verge of becoming a global affair (Bayart, 2004). Globalization introduces a major change

of scale of government. Although local and national regulations are obviously still important, a whole series of governmental agencies is now operating not only below, but also, as the phrase goes, above and across states. Local, regional, national and international agencies and authorities, like the EU or the GATT, for instance, as well as transnational non- and quasi-governmental organizations, like the ILO or Greenpeace, are now increasingly coordinating their policies in the domain of health and labour standards, economical and ecological regulation or anti-terrorism, to name a few examples, and exerting sophisticated and effective pressures on states, organizations and individuals. The state is increasingly privatized (e.g. privatization of public services, but also of war – mercenaries making up 10 per cent of the ‘coalition of willing’ in the second Gulf War) while, conversely, private instances are publicized (e.g. creation of public law through contractual agreements, such as the multilateral agreement on investments [MAI] that spanned the battle of Seattle). What is emerging, therefore, is a decentered, dispersed and multi-layered system of government at the global level. Second, a whole range of marketized mechanisms (contracts and subcontracting, public–private partnerships, quasi-markets, internal budgeting, end-user empowerment, etc.) have been introduced into economic life to replace the rigidities of central planning and stimulate competition not only among private firms, but also among the public services. Through the introduction of competition in social services, the privatization of public services and the generalized transformation of clients into customers, the scope of economic rationality has vastly expanded. Third, the productivist logic of the enterprise and the consumerist language of choice have spread from the economic to the individual sphere. Through techniques of market research, advertisement, designing, branding life-styling and, not to forget, credit, individuals are seduced into consumption and summoned to become entrepreneurs of their own life, as it were, through the acquisition of goods and services. As Zygmunt Bauman (1995: 270) pithily remarks: ‘it is thus not only the gas industry but life in general that has been privatized’. This ‘privatization of life’ has now invaded all the spheres of life: production, consumption, education, leisure, health and even death. Fourth, to render organizations accountable, transparent and controllable, audits are now regularly used (as British academics trying to cope with the constraints of the Research Assessment Exercises [RAE] and the Teaching Quality Assessments [TQA] no doubt have noticed). If individuals are controlled through the ‘conduct of conduct’, organizations are for their part regulated through auditing, or the ‘control of control’, as Power has aptly called it (Power, 1994). Transforming organizations in order to make them conform to ideals of auditability, audits attempt to act indirectly upon systems of control rather than directly upon first order activities. In so far as the technologies of government of advanced liberalism embody a new receptivity to private sectors of management,

we can conclude by saying that they are political technologies that 'enter-up' individuals and organizations alike.

2.2 The commodification of culture

It has become a commonplace to note that late capitalism has taken a 'cultural turn'. This cultural turn in the economy should be understood in the context of the more general de-differentiation of the social subsystems that characterizes postmodern societies (Crook, Pakulski and Waters, 1992). The collapse of the boundaries between culture and the economy works in two ways: the economy interpenetrates culture and transforms it into a commodity (economization of culture), and culture is coupled in return to the economy, losing its autonomy in the process (culturalization of the economy). The dissolution of the autonomy of the domain of culture does not mean that culture loses its importance. To the contrary, it gains in importance and effectiveness. Conceiving of the dissolution of culture as an 'explosion', an astute observer of the post-modern scene has noticed 'a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life – from economic value and state power to practices and the very structure of the psyche itself – can be said to have become cultural' (Jameson, 1991: 48).

As a result of this 'shifting out' of culture through the social realm, culture assumes the role that was once imparted to the material forces of production. In so far as the whole production process has shifted from the production of goods to the production of signs, this shifting out is in line with the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial and post-Fordist mode of capitalist production. What are increasingly being produced and consumed nowadays are not material objects but semiotic objects or signs. As the aestheticization of commodities progresses, the design and branding of consumer products become more and more important. As objects are increasingly aestheticized and emptied out of their material content, the aesthetic form trumps the latter. Use-value becomes secondary, and at the end, everything happens as if it is now the exchange-value that induces the use-value. Even more, according to Baudrillard, the exchange-value simply absorbs the latter, becomes self-referential and turns into a simulacrum, that is, into a copy without an original. Although Baudrillard's influential theory of 'hyperreality' playfully, and at times cynically, exaggerates the extent of the dematerialization of reality, there can be no doubt about the fact that the 'spectacularization' (Debord) of commodities indeed characterizes contemporary consumer culture.

Contemporary mass culture is more and more commodified, but that does not mean that it is standardized and homogenized. To the contrary, commodification leads to diversification and heterogenization. Today's

mass culture is pluralist, heterogeneous, fragmented and diversified, or postmodernist, to use a vague word which summarizes it all. Diversity sells, and to guarantee a constant access to diversity, the margins of the sub- and counter-cultures of rebellious youth are constantly inspected for novelty. Counter-culture aims to subvert the mainstream, while the mainstream attempts to coopt the sub-culture. The idea that consumer culture is a form of conformism has become a commonplace of anti-consumerism. It obscures the fact that capitalism feeds on ‘negativity’ and ‘difference’ and that rebellion is actually fueling the carousel of fashion and, thus, implicitly complicit in the making of ‘fashion victims’. Consumer culture is hip. Advertising tells us that we are unique and different, nonconformist and not part of the masses, and sells us what we need to become what we are – a nose ring, a tattoo, the latest double CD of Paul Oakenfold, or whatever else might be needed to distinguish oneself from one’s fellow punters and to make an ‘artwork of one’s self’. The idea of conspicuous consumption has been outmoded by hip consumerism: ‘It’s no longer about keeping up with the Joneses, it’s about being different from them’ (Rutherford, quoted by Ray and Sayer, 1999: 11).

In the new age of cultural capitalism, it is not only popular culture – ‘folklore and proletarian art, plus sports’ (Kuper, 1999: 229) – that is commodified. Since high culture is no longer exempted from the free market, but considered as an upmarket niche on the high street, we can say that culture as such, understood as the totality of symbolic expressions that determines ‘the whole way of life, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep’ (T. S. Eliot), has become colonized and integrated as a profitable province of the economic system. Culture, which was once considered in opposition to the vulgar interests of the economic sphere, has become a commodity – and ‘nothing else but a commodity’ (Adorno, 1977: 338).

The ‘webs of significance’ that human beings spin around themselves to make sense of the world have been systematically raided by the culture industries. This was already the case when Adorno and Horkheimer coined the phrase to refer to the American mass culture of the 1940s and the 1950s but, following the digital revolution, the commercialization of culture has progressed to the point that experience itself is now on the verge of becoming a commodity, and nothing else but a commodity. The integration of computers, telecommunications, cable television, consumer electronics, broadcasting, publishing and entertainment in an integrated communications network that is largely controlled by a few global corporations (Disney, Time Warner, Bertelsmann and Vivendi Universal) has given commercial enterprises unprecedented control over human experiences. With the transformation of the culture industry into an ‘industry of programmes’, human experience has become the consummate commodity of the new capitalist economy. The mind is more or less

directly plugged into the terminals of the multi-media: ‘The technical system that was up to now essentially a dispositif to transform material has become a system to transform spirit, operated by a whole network that transmits programmes’ (Stiegler, 2001: 136).

Integrating Leroi-Gourhan, Derrida and Husserl into a theory of external memory, Bernard Stiegler has argued that the transmission of television programmes leads to a massive synchronization of the individual consciences for the sake of profit. ‘When millions, perhaps hundred millions of people watch the same event on television, at the same time, live, consciences all over the world interiorize, adopt and live the same temporal objects at the same time’ (Stiegler, 2004: 51). This synchronization of consciousness is at the same time a programming of the mind. What is at stake is the control of the time of attention in order to control the information, the cognition, the volition, the affects, the drives, in short: the mind and the body of the consumer. In order to sell soap, sweets, laptops, mobile phones, plane tickets or dreams, one has to address consciences, and those consciences are markets, or perhaps even a ‘meta-market’ (Stiegler, 2004: 46 and 125) that grants potential access to all the other markets.

Jeremy Rifkin (2001) analyses the long-term shift from industrial to cultural production. He contends that hypercapitalism is entering a new phase, the ‘age of access’, in which markets are giving way to networks and ownership of goods is steadily replaced by paid access to interconnected supplier–user networks. Whether it is music, games or films, cuisine, travel or theme parks, sports or gambling, what one pays for and what is marketed is not so much the goods and the services as the cultural experiences one consumes. By connecting the mind to the market and selling lived experiences, capitalism has commodified time and culture. Slowly, but surely, it comes to resemble the ‘context of total blindness’ (*totaler Verblendungszusammenhang*) that Adorno had anticipated by exaggerating and extrapolating the dumbing impact of the culture industries: ‘Capitalism is making its final transition into full-blown cultural capitalism, appropriating not only the signifiers of cultural life and the artistic forms of communication that interpret those signifiers but lived experience as well’ (Rifkin, 2001: 144). As the culture industry gives way to the ‘experience industry’, there is hardly a sphere of life that escapes the reach of capitalism. By paying for access to experiences and for the experiences themselves, we become, so to say, the consumers of our own lives.¹⁶

2.3 The colonization of life

Having colonized the life-world, capitalism turns its attention to nature and invades life itself to modify and commodify it. Since the late 1970s, the large multinational corporations, which had closely observed the

developments in molecular biology and genetic engineering, began to invest substantially in biotechnology. Dependent on the universities for their expertise and on oil, chemical and pharmaceutical corporations for capital, the biotech industry rapidly enrolled the biosciences to redesign, patent and re-engineer life itself for commercial purposes. The first transgenic organisms appeared in the 1980s and, by 1988, Oncomouse™, a transgenic mouse, designed for research in cancer and marketed by Du Pont at \$50 to \$75 per piece, became the first patented animal in the world (Haraway, 1997: 49–118). Since then, the biosciences have made great progress and, using viruses as vectors for transmitting DNA between different species, they have fabricated and patented some of the most monstrous creatures for the sake of profit: tobacco plants with firefly genes; fish and tomatoes with anti-freeze genes; headless embryos of mice and frogs, dispensing with their superfluous heads so that they can harvest their organs; monkeys with jellyfish genes and human embryo cells merged with enucleated cows' eggs; cloned calves and sheep carrying human genes, cows producing lactoferrin, a human protein useful for treating infections; and not to forget, Dolly, sheep that are cloned, and Pollies, sheep that are both cloned and genetically engineered (Best and Kellner, 2001: 171–5).

Involved in a highly competitive race for the human race, the private corporation Celera Genomics and the publicly funded Human Genome Project announced in 2000 that they had completed a rough draft of the entire human genome. While the atlas of the genome can be consulted against payment, the question about the ownership of the human genome remains unsolved: does the human genome belong to the individual person with a particular genome, to the scientist or the company that has identified particular genes or nucleotide sequences, or is it the common heritage of humankind? The question is momentous: if the human genome is the collective property of humanity, deliberative intervention should never occur without collective deliberation. If it is not, then the genome can be patented, privatized and subjected to monopolistic control.¹⁷ Observing the ‘gene rush’, NGOs predict that in less than 25 years, much of the ‘genetic commons’ – the legacy of millions of years of biological and cultural evolution – will have been isolated, identified and enclosed in the form of intellectual property, controlled, for the most part, by a handful of biotechnological corporations without frontiers (or scruples) like Monsanto, Novartis, Du Pont or Aventis. What is seen as intellectual property is often, as Vandana Shiva says in her critical analysis of property rights, TRIPs and patents, ‘information “pirated” from non-western societies and indigenous communities’ (Shiva, 2001: 33).

Moving from the molecular to the molar body, we can now proceed with our analysis of the colonization of life and further inspect the commodification of the body and its parts.¹⁸ Enslavement, exploitation,

prostitution, body trafficking and other practices that reduce human bodies to a pair of hands, a pair of breasts, or a vagina are only some examples of the commodification of the body that precede the systematic objectification, fragmentation, modification and commodification of the body by modern medicine. Driven by a highly technocratic ethos, the medical sciences drive out the common sense conceptions of the body as a unitary object, as something that we 'are' rather than as something that we 'have'. Abstracting the body from the human being that is embodied (dualism of body and mind), as well as from the other human beings (individualism) and the cosmos to which it was once intimately tied through a cascade of homologies (disenchantment of the world), the medical sciences consider the body as something that exists in itself and functions like a machine, or, to quote Descartes, like a 'watch composed of wheels and counterweights' (Le Breton, 1990: 61–82, see also Leder, 1992). Objectivating the body by means of sophisticated visual techniques (such as X-rays, sonography, endoscopy, magnetic resonance imaging) that render the body transparent and thus also permeable, the medical sciences increasingly conceive the body as an array of parts, organs and tissues that can be repaired or, if needed, replaced by other parts, organs and tissues. Like the global economy, the body is now an open, complex, flexible machine, with spares and parts available from the 'body shop' (Kimbrell, 1993).

The market of transplants (organs, tissues, or fluids from other bodies, living or dead) and implants (artificial organs or body parts made of plastic, metal, nylon, or other synthetic materials) has led to the fragmentation of the body and the breaching of its boundaries. In an interesting article on 'spare part surgery', Cecil Helman notes that the body has been reconceptualized as a 'machine' (and machines reconceptualized as 'people'): 'The body is now a collection of "parts" or "pieces", for which "spares" are available when they finally wear out' (Helman, 1988: 15). Through transplants and implants, the individual is permanently linked to the world of the market, industry and science and transformed into a 'potential prosthesis' for another individual (Le Breton, 1990: 234; 1993: 296). Whereas the implants and prostheses are mass-produced by the industry, the transplants and organs are available on the world market¹⁹ – or on the black market, as the bodies of innocents and poor people are now raided once again by organized body snatchers with links to the underworld.²⁰

Through the implants of mass-produced heart valves, pace-makers, artificial hip joints, prosthetic arms and legs, and synthetic lenses, the patient becomes effectively a 'cyborg'; through the transplantation of mass-marketed hearts, kidneys, lungs, lymph nodes, nerves, bone marrow and the infusion of blood and plasma, she or he becomes – like Frankenstein – a living patchwork of foreign bodies. Through implants and

transplants, the cybernetic organisms become a living node in the medical network of commercial relations between producers, suppliers, doctors and nurses. ‘Overall, it is the older members of this society who, as they emerge from the workforce, will be reincorporated into the world of industry through the ageing of the bodies’ (Helman, 1988: 15). Ageing, they become consumers of implants and transplants; sick, they become cyborgs, attached to a complex array of machines that keep them alive; dying, they become potential donors of organs. In all cases, the bodies have been invaded by the medical industry and linked to a complex, evolving transnational network of corporate actors and commodified actants.

The commodification of the human body transforms the body into capital. When the medical industry proposes the patient a transplant or an implant, it modifies and commodifies the body and transforms it into human capital. When the bio-industry proposes genetic tests and promises genetic cures, it speculates on life itself and accumulates capital within us. While posthumanists enthusiastically welcome the new bio-, cyber- and nano-technologies that could modify our inherited genetics, physiology, neurophysiology and neurochemistry, they forget the social relations in which those technologies are embedded and avoid the problem of capital in their grandiose projections of humanity. ‘Capital R us.’ Capital is within us and we are within capital. In this very specific sense, we can indeed say with Rikowski (2003: 143) that ‘we are already transhuman as a life-form within the social universe of capital: We are capital, human capital, humanity capitalized’.

Although capitalism tends to invade the totality of existence, one should not conclude all too fast, however, that reification has become total, that everything is commodified, and that there is no way out. If capital is already in us, then the class struggle can be waged in us and the body becomes the site of resistance and struggle. Even if our body has been objectivized as a material anatomo-physiological body (*Körper*) among bodies, the fact remains that for the time being, we still experience our body as a living body (*Leib*), that is, to use the phenomenological terms of Marcel, Plessner and Merleau-Ponty, as something that we *are* and not only a something that we *have*. Although we are always already caught in the tentacles of an integrated and integrating machinic capitalism, the omnipresence of commodification does not mean that in our everyday life, we have become mere appendices of the capitalist megamachine and thus, so to say, executors of our own life. In spite of everything and for the time being, we remain human. We communicate, empathize, rationalize, moralize and criticize. To avoid the totalizing closure of its critical analysis of the processes of reification, commodification and alienation, a critical theory of contemporary society has to take those anthropological constants into account. Having presented

elsewhere a metacritical analysis of critical theory (Vandenbergh, 1997–8), I am only too aware that a critique of domination presupposes a theory of emancipation to be effective. Yet, if I have insisted in this article on the colonizing and totalizing logic of capitalism, it is to flag the danger involved and in the hope of contributing thereby to an active critique of and a passive resistance to the imperial tendencies of the neo-capitalist system. There is hope. While capital goes transnational, resistance is globalizing as well. From Chiapas to Seattle and Bombay to Porto Allegre, the resistance against universal commodification is gathering momentum. All over the place, people are resisting the new world order that is emerging and are screaming for global justice. Naomi Klein (2001: 82), the Canadian activist and spokesperson of the anti-globalization movement, bears testimony to the dispersed actions of the multitude:

Thousands of groups today are all working against forces whose common threat is what might broadly be described as the privatization of every aspect of life, and the transformation of every activity and value into a commodity. . . . American students are kicking ads out of the classroom. European environmentalists and ravers are throwing parties at busy intersections. Landless Thai peasants are planting organic vegetables on over-irrigated golf courses. Bolivian workers are reversing the privatization of water supply. . . . Typically these anti-privatization campaigns get under way on their own. But they also periodically converge – that's what happened in Seattle, Prague, Washington, Davos, Porto Allegre and Quebec.

In all its extraordinary and contradictory diversity, the anti-globalization movement unifies the different new social movements of the last century (anti-capitalist, anarchist, ecopax, feminist, gay and lesbian, etc.) into a single social movement that counterfactually represents humanity and defends the general interest through advocacy. As such, it can be considered as the legitimate heir of the working-class movement of the 19th century. When activists and citizens manifest in the streets to protest and contest the hegemonic project of the leaders of the world, the spirit of the world manifests itself once again. Another world is possible . . .

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Notes

- 1 This is not an aberration, but a reiteration – as if we would get to the truth if only we would keep on lying through our teeth: ‘There has never been

a struggle against the society of consumption, this idiotic notion. To the contrary, we say that there has never been enough consumption' (Deleuze, 1990: 32).

- 2 For a general analysis of the many parallels between postmodernism and the more political-economic discourse of neo-liberalism, see Ray and Sayer, 1999.
- 3 Under the auspices of the Institute of Sante Fe, complexity theory is simplified and offered as one more strategy of innovation to business people. Here is an example of how the idea of the emergent order is sold to managers who are 'living on the edge': 'The suggestions of complexity theory for business practice are a flattening of the management hierarchy, distribution of control through the system with fluid networks of interaction between the parts, and the necessity of periods of chaos for the emergence of appropriate new order. The move towards a more anarchic, spontaneous dynamic is clearly threatening to the controlling managers, but it appears to be the path to creativity and diversification. . . . All the participants in this sector of social organization can then experience a higher quality of life, since they have greater freedom, more opportunities for creative play, and richer interactions – good for them and good for the organization' (Goodwin, quoted in Thrift, 1999: 47).
- 4 The transnational streams of money that irrigate the global financial system are muddy and bloody waters. The 'mother of accumulation' does not discriminate between her legitimate and illegitimate sons and daughters. The global network of networks also includes transnational networks of crime, like the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, the Colombian cartels, the Japanese Yakuza, the Chinese triads or the Russian Mafiyas. Adepts of dependency theory will appreciate that the *favellas* of Latin America are integrated into the global economy through the *narcotrafico*. While drugs traffic is the most important segment of this worldwide industry, trade in weapons, radioactive materials, human beings, organs, etc., is also highly profitable. At the heart of the system is money laundering, 'the mother of all crimes' (Castells, 1997: 260; see also Castells, 1998: 166–205) that connects the criminal economy to the global financial markets.
- 5 Radin (1996) reminds us that universal commodification is an ideal-type that can be understood in a literal or in a metaphoric sense. Although metaphoric commodification sets the scene for literal commodification, I am not interested here in the market rhetoric of a Gary Becker or a Judge Posner who apply the reductionist model of neo-classic economy to the whole world. Conceiving of everything (babies, body parts, etc.) as fungible objects and of every social interaction (love, marriage, even rape) as a market transaction, they know the value of nothing and attribute a price to everything, even where no money changes hands and no real markets are involved – as yet.
- 6 Habermas' theory of the colonization of the life-world by the subsystems of the economy and the state was meant as a reformulation of the Frankfurt School's theory of reification in the language of the communicative paradigm. The original formulation did hardly contain a word on colonization in the strict sense or on colonization in the broad sense. In fact, it is only as an unintended consequence of the so-called Sloterdijk debates on post-

humanism that he has recently analysed the colonization of life under the heading of 'liberal eugenics' (Habermas, 2001).

- 7 *Non olet* – in a more scatological vein, Guattari (1977: 17) compares the axiomatic reduction of all values to the lowest common denominator: to shit. 'When I talk about shit, it is hardly a metaphor: Capitalism reduces everything to shit, that is to say to the state of undifferentiated and decoded streams out of which everyone has to take its part in a private mode and with a sense of culpability.'
- 8 Integrating Marx's analysis of capital with Deleuze's and Guattari's analysis of machinic production, Hardt and Negri (2000) have systematically developed a few pages from *A Thousand Plateaus* on the imperial war machine and the axiomatics of capital (cf. Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 525–7, 566–8, 584–8, 613–14) into a full-blown theory of the global rise and the violent demise of the neo-capitalist Empire.
- 9 Taking up some passages from the *Grundrisse* on the 'general intellect', Italian activists like Toni Negri, Maurizio Lazzarato and Paolo Virno, who were linked in the 1970s to the 'operaist movement' (*autonomia operaia*), have worked out the notion of 'immaterial labour' and integrated it in a systematic theory of cognitive capitalism. In the following, I am drawing on Negri, Lazzarato and Virno, 1998 as well as Azaïs, Corsani and Dieudade, 2001.
- 10 The apocalyptic tone, especially when I deal with genetics, may suggest proximity to the first generation of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse). As my analysis is much more indebted to the second generation for its normative underpinnings (Habermas), it has, in fact, far more affinities with the more sociological research of the third generation of the Institut für Sozialforschung on the paradoxes of formal and communicative rationalization of late capitalism (cf. Honneth, 2002).
- 11 The end of the human sciences has been most crisply and brutally formulated by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962: 326): 'We believe that the ultimate end of the human sciences is not to constitute, but to dissolve the human.'
- 12 To stress that power produces and regulates life by targeting the body, Foucault has introduced the notions of 'bio-power' and 'bio-politics'. Although he explicitly mentions that biology is inflected by politics ('*le biologique se réfléchit dans le politique*' [1976: 187]), bio-politics is more concerned with the political administration of the life of populations than with the bio-technological production of life. Neo-Foucaultians like N. Rose, P. Rabinow and G. Agamben have updated the concept of bio-power so as to include the genetic modification of organisms and the commodification of the body.
- 13 Even if there is only one Foucault, there have been shifts in his analysis of power (Lazzarato, 2000). In the 1970s, modern, disciplinary or bio-power was analysed in the quasi-military terms of war and struggles as politics by other means, its aims consisting in the weakening of the resistances of the enemy; in the 1980s, the notion of government displaces the one of power and is internally linked to freedom, which is integral to the operation of power. Instead of the strategies of the battlefield, it is the communicative relations between the parent and the child or between the teacher and the pupil that become the ideal-typical loci of the exercise of power.

- 14 Foucault analysed ‘governmentality’ in 1978 in his lectures at the Collège de France. Meanwhile, the main texts on ‘government’ have been posthumously republished in volumes III and IV of the *Dits et écrits* (Foucault, 1994: III, 635–57, 719–23 and IV, 134–61 and 222–43). The journal *Economy and Society* offers concrete examples of the theoretically informed sociological and historical research that is the hallmark of neo-Foucaultian studies. In his introduction to the new subdiscipline of governmentality studies, Mitchell Dean defines government as ‘any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes’ (Dean, 1999: 11).
- 15 Funnily enough, the convergence of the theories of Foucault, Deleuze, Latour and Rose can also be analysed as an assemblage. Enrolling and incorporating some of the main concepts of actor-network theory (e.g. translations, *interessement*, inscription devices, centres of calculation, etc.) into governmentality studies, Nikolas Rose, the spokesperson of the History of the Present Research Network, has brought ANT to a new captive audience of francophile political scientists and forged a loose theoretical alliance between Foucaultians (Ewald, Donzelot, Rose, Osborne, etc. – see the journal *Economy and Society*), Deleuzians (Negri, Alliez, Hardt, etc. – see the journal *Multitudes*) and Latourians (Hennion, Law, Stengers, etc. – see the journal *Cosmopolitiques*) on both sides of the Channel.
- 16 For an affirmative, enthusiastic and almost chiliastic interpretation of the interconnection of markets and minds by a convinced Deleuzian, see Lévy, 2000.
- 17 Since the 1980s patents have become the oil of the bio-industry. To procure a patent on genetic material, it must be shown that, through the process of research, development and production, the ‘natural product’ has been transformed into an ‘invention’. Anything can be patented, as the Indians found out with horror, when they were informed in 1997 that the American company RiceTec had reinvented, patented and thus appropriated their Basmati rice. Another US company, Myriad Pharmaceuticals, has patented the breast cancer gene and has a monopoly on all diagnostic use of it. In 2001 the US patent and trademark office extended the boundaries of what can be patented to include single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs or ‘snips’) – the smallest unit of genetic variability.
- 18 For an exhaustive overview of the literature on the commodification of the body, see Sharp, 2000. Here I am concerned with the commodification of the body as a real, material object and not with the body of texts that consider the body as a text – though looking at the proliferation of books, dissertations, articles and even specialized journals that deal with the (politics of) representation of the (female) body (in films, novels, ads, etc.), I realize that I could have forged an argument as well about the commodification of the body in the academic industry.
- 19 Although the organs and human tissues that are ‘harvested’ are mostly ‘given’ and described as ‘gifts of life’, observers of the business have noticed

that recipients are usually shown a price sheet, which reveals that the gift of organs is paid for. The business of transplantation is, in fact, 'a multi-million dollar medical industry where clients in need pay steep fees for the procurement, preparation, transportation, and surgical replacement of body parts' (Sharp, 2000: 303–4; for a subtle critique of the 'gift of life', see Lock, 2001: 65–73).

- 20 The contemporary traffic in organs reminds us eerily of the theft of bodies from hospitals, the buying of cadavers from the hangmen and the profanation of tombs for the sake of anatomical dissection that Le Breton (1993: 113–68) has described in detail in his 'nocturnal history' of western medicine. Although there is now a global economy in body parts that flow from poor to rich countries and from the young to the elderly, a good many of the macabre stories about cannibalism, vampirism and the theft of bodies and body parts are often nothing but rumours. Reconnecting the occult economies of the post-colonial countries to the global market, the Comaroffs (1999) suggest in a nicely crafted article that the urban legends should be read as so many symptoms of a fear of the creeping commodification of life itself that reflect on the level of the imaginary the violent abstractions of real capitalism.

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