Chapter 7

Postmodernists

Postmodern Post-Industrial Proletarians?

Notions of information revolution carry around with them, like a flickering aura, that most shimmering of contemporary concepts--'the postmodern.' Theorists of a "postmodern condition," such as Jean Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard and Gianni Vattimo, explicitly or implicitly base their claims about radical changes in today's society on the analysis of post-industrialism previously posited by Daniel Bell and other futurologists.[1] Indeed, so deeply embedded in postmodern theory is the belief that computers, telecommunication and other high technologies are a vital element distinguishing our epoch from the fading modern age that it can be seen as offering a new inflection of the earlier distinction between `post-industrial' and `industrial' eras, now reworked to stress the epistemological, philosophical and aesthetic consequences of this transformation.[2]

Given this, it is hardly surprising that Marxists' encounter with postmodern theorists has largely followed the trajectory of their earlier meeting with the post-industrialists--hostile collision. This is unfortunate. For although postmodern theory often accepts too easily the idea that high technology inaugurates a historically unprecedented era, it does not usually look on this prospect with naive enthusiasm. Indeed, it includes highly critical perspectives. Moreover, postmodern theory is a plural beast with several heads, some venomously anti-Marxist, but others much more conversational. Thus while there are very substantial issues at stake in Marxist /postmodernist polemics, such

arguments can also sometimes constitute a disabling fracture of intellectual forces antagonistic toward high-technology capitalism.

Recently, certain lines of theory, emerging from both the Marxist and postmodernist camps, seem to reach across this divide toward new dialogues, rapprochement or even synthesis. Such efforts have concentrated on identifying certain aspects of postmodern culture as manifestations of capitalist restructuring. However, they have had relatively little to say about the sine qua non of Marxist analysis--the possibility of opposition and subversion. In this chapter I suggest that certain lines of what can be broadly designated as autonomist Marxism, developed by theorists such as Antonio Negri, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, can supply this deficiency. They offer a sort of recombinant postmodern/Marxism that, without sacrificing the Marxist emphasis on class struggle, admits important postmodern insights into the variegated and technologically mediated aspects such conflict assumes today. In doing so, they open important perspectives on the postmodern proletarian condition--a disturbing and exciting scene of simulacra, cyborgs, net-nazis and rhizomatic alliances.

Hostilities: Postmodernity versus Marxism?

The hostilities between postmodern theory and Marxism have important historical roots. Many of the Parisian progenitors of postmodern theory--Jean Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Juliet Kristeva--were one-time Marxists for whom the defeat of the student-worker uprisings of 1968, and particularly the total failure of the French Communist Party to comprehend or respond to these revolts, were a watershed of disillusionment.[3] The theories they subsequently developed can in part be seen as an

attempt to understand the nature of conflicts apparently beyond the ken of orthodox Marxism--conflicts in which, for example, the leaders of dissent were not factory workers but university students--and also to comprehend why these new movements failed in their revolutionary aspirations. There was thus implanted at the root of postmodern theory an anti-Marxist tendency, which, although it in many cases turned in outrightly reactionary directions, also contained strong radical impulses.

In their attempt to grasp the problems Marxism had apparently failed to address, the dissident Parisian intellectuals turned, somewhat incongruously, to conservative American sociology, and concepts of post-industrialism. Just as, according to post-industrial theory, contemporary societies are passing beyond industrialism to informationalism, so, according to the prophets of postmodernity, we are now speeding past the limits of modernity, with its confidence in reason, progress, and universalist political projects, into unknown territory. Amongst the most important features of this postmodern world is its communicational texture. Signifiers are supreme over referents, images more powerful than substance, symbols trump things. The real is constituted by a play of texts, discourses, language-games, or codes. While this inseparability of world from word may perhaps always have been the case, what now intensifies and renders it apparent is the growing prominence of information technologies that saturate society with messages and images and break down the solidity of the material world into an immaterial flow of digits and data subjected to infinite processings and reprocessings.[4]

This result is an ambience mobile, multiplicitous and elusive in the extreme. The proliferation of media channels throws all stable and authoritative accounts of the world into crisis. This collapse of what Lyotard calls "metanarratives" may be seen either as

potentially liberatory diversification or as profoundly atomising and disintegrative cacophony, but it is in either case inescapable.[5] Indeed, its force is such as to explode the possibility of any unitary or totalling perspective on society as a whole, leaving only a contingent juxtaposition of incommensurable perspectival shards and fragments: "playing with pieces, that is postmodernism."[6] Lamentation for lost unities and stabilities is beside the point: all that is possible is clear-eyed acceptance of a transformation that has shattered pretensions to theoretical mastery of society and, with it, all grand projects of political emancipation.

In such postmodern theorisations, Marxism is depicted as fatally anachronistic-- usually elected as the exemplary case of modern thought, only to be immediately consigned to the dustbin of post-history. Lyotard catches the prevalent tone:

The mere recall of the(se) well-known guidelines of Marxist criticism has something obsolete, even tedious, about it . . . the ghost has now vanished, dragging the last grand historical narrative with it off the historical stage.[7]

The decisive influence of the "mode of production" is superseded by that of what Mark Poster terms the "mode of information."[8] Marxist claims that the economic sphere constitutes a ground-level base of which other cultural superstructures are mere epiphenomena expire as it becomes apparent that the real is made, not in the material transformation of the world, but in the immaterial play of signification. Consequently, the importance attributed by Marxists to class--that is, location within relationships of production--is dissolved in favour of concepts of social identity as de-centred, transitory

and heterogeneous. Furthermore, in a world now revealed as containing innumerable and incommensurable accounts of the real, the Marxist ambition to `grasp the totality'--that is, to gain a comprehensive overview of the societal whole--becomes not merely unattainable, but intensely suspect. It is seen as a manifestation of a dominative will-to-power deeply related to totalitarian schemes of social control--a megalomaniac theoretical dream that leads straight to the Gulag.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the first--and often last--response of many Marxists to postmodernism is withering hostility. Postmodernist tendencies has been denounced by Marxian scholars as a "mystique . . . which strives to cultivate ignorance of modern history and culture" and serves to "echo the ruling-class self delusions that it has conquered the troubles and perils of the past";[9] as a linguistic idealism that has "strafed meaning, over-run truth, outflanked ethics and politics and wiped out meaning";[10] as an irrationalism that "challenges the very notion of emancipation" and "produces an anxiety-ridden sense of chaos and isolation";[11] or as just "the smoked-out butt-end of . . . theory."[12]

Counter-attacking, Marxists have pointed to the many self-contradictions into which postmodern theory falls as it dismisses totalising theories while itself indulging in the most airily grandiose gestures of historical speculation. They have challenged the credibility of the information-society theory whose accuracy so much postmodernist thought simply assumes, with its implausible claims that capitalism has quietly succumbed to ineffable post-industrial evaporation. They have pointed out the lack of self-reflexivity postmodern theorists often display about their own class-situation. Alex Callincos, for example has tellingly suggested that the popularity of postmodernism owes much to the fact that it elevates to the level of general theory experiences and habits specific to particular strata of

intelligentsia immersed in cultural production and anxious to arrive at an accommodation with an apparently triumphant capitalism.[13] Others have effectively demonstrated how destructive is the belief--which some postmodernists certainly flirt with, and which Marxists generally ascribe to all of them--that it is impossible to know anything beyond the images dominating contemporary life.[14]

I tally this passage of critical arms as a bloody draw. Marxists have effectively ridiculed postmodern theory's hyperboles and inconsistencies. This, however, cannot cancel out the fact that such theories identify, often in intentionally ironic and provocative style, aspects of life in an information-intense, technologically-enveloped society that have previously escaped Marxist analysis. Foucault's concept of "panopticism," Baudrillard's discussion of "simulation" or Lyotard's account of "immateriality" all speak to phenomena that are neither immediately dismissable, nor already defined in the standard dictionaries of historical materialism. At the very least, they touch on crucial aspects of what Raymond William's called the "structure of feeling" of contemporary life in advanced capitalism.[15]

Moreover, while Marxists are right that the postmodern rejection of "metanarratives" is untenable (so that, as Jameson notes, the refusal of totalising theory simply results in its surreptitious and unacknowledged reappearance via the back door) this does not answer the postmodernists' point that something is seriously amiss with the specific metanarrative of classical Marxism--namely, that its central protagonist, the industrial proletariat, seems to have gone absent, missing in action in a field of robots, computers, and telecommunications.[16] Postmodern theory's undeniable insights into new mechanisms of power and new social subjectivities has thus been thrown up against

Marxism's equally unanswerable arguments about the persistence of capitalism and the implacable consequences of commodification, generating a profound theoretical impasse.

Rapprochements: Beyond the Great Divide?

Recently, however, certain attempts to surpass this impasse have emerged, proceeding from both sides of the postmodern/Marxist divide. From the Marxist camp, the pioneering example is Fredric Jameson's now-canonical essay, "Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism."[17] In this essay, Jameson argues that the emergence of a distinctively postmodern culture, rather than marking a break with capitalism into a new era, corresponds to the `late' or `multinational' stage of capitalism analysed by Ernest Mandel.[18] In this phase, previously untouched domains of social activity are penetrated by the forces of a technologically integrated world-market. One aspect of this process is a surge in the commodification of cultural and communicational forms. Advertising, design, marketing, fashion, and entertainment become a primary focus of commercial activity. Consequently, the distinction--valid for earlier stages of capitalist development--between an economic base and cultural superstructure collapses. Capitalised culture envelops all aspects of the social in an omnipresent wrap of imagery whose multiple surfaces extinguish material reference or sense of history. Subjectivity becomes, as postmodern theory suggests, increasingly decentered and unstable--experiencing a condition not so much of alienation as fragmentation, induced by the fluctuating stimuli of electronic media and the malleable spaces of commercial architecture and urban design.

This analysis--whose boldness is indicated by the fire it drew from partisans of both Marxism and postmodern theory--has subsequently been elaborated in a variety of

ways, most notably by connecting postmodernity to the concept of a post-Fordist regime of accumulation.[19] The most impressive of these efforts is that of David Harvey, who relates postmodern culture to post-Fordist "time-space compression."[20] Capitalism, says Harvey, is periodically compelled to flee the risk of overproduction by both expanding the geographical horizons of the market and accelerating the circulation-time of commodities. At such moments, society undergoes a massive speed-up in the pace of daily life and a dramatic expansion in spatial horizons. Since 1972, the passage from Fordist mass-production to a post-Fordist regime of flexible accumulation has precipitated such a convulsion in North American and European culture, such that "spaces of very different worlds seem to collapse upon each other, . . . and all manner of sub-cultures get juxtaposed."[21] Postmodern culture--with its cosmopolitanism, eclecticism and volatility--is both reflective and constitutive of this shift: its emphasis upon "ephemerality, collage, fragmentation, and dispersal . . . mimics the conditions of flexible accumulation," and also stimulates the new images, fashions and styles of thought which are so central to the restructuring of production.[22] Although Harvey is fiercely sceptical towards postmodern theory, which he believes fails to critically distance itself from the transformations it records, he does allow that it recognises, albeit in mystified form, important alterations in the structuring of subjectivity and perception. Postmodernism registers a "sea-change" in culture caused by a "shift in the way in which capitalism is working these days."[23]

Jacques Derrida, the leading poststructuralist philosopher, has in a way met these lines of Marxist analysis from the other side of the hill. To the infinite dismay of many of his disciples, Derrida broke his decade-long silence on the topic of Marxism, not to issue one more declaration of its obsolescence, but, on the contrary, to affirm its unsurpassability

of a horizon of contemporary thought. In fact, Derrida suggests, it is precisely the

immaterial or "spectral" conditions of contemporary production, on which so many

postmodern theorists have dwelt so extensively, that throws into new salience certain

features of Marxist analysis.[24] In particular, the internationalisation of production through

telecommunication has made the issue of the world market, and with it issues of

exploitation and inequity in the distribution of global surplus, inescapable. Rather than

agreeing with Lyotard that "the (Marxist) ghost has now vanished," Derrida argues that the

"spectral" conditions of the new global economy, an economy predicated on media empires

and tele-work, in fact summons up the continuance of Marxism as a "spectral" presence, a

certain spirit of resistance against injustice which obdurately refuses to vanish from the

world stage.

These various postmodern/Marxist conversations are of considerable importance.

Yet they lack a crucial dimension. While all in various ways identify aspects of what might

be called `postmodern capitalism,' all are virtually silent on the question of opposition to

such an order. Derrida calls for a New International, but does not specify how or where

this might emerge. Indeed, as Adrian Wilding points out, Derrida's reasserted Marxism is

undermined by his insistence that the spectre of revolution can never be conjured in full

presence, that communism is an ever-deferred futural project, "urgency, imminence, but,

irreducible paradox, a waiting without horizon of expectation."[25] Jameson suggests that

postmodern culture has to be seen dialectically as <u>both</u> a mystificatory veil over the

realities of contemporary exploitation <u>and</u> a field of emancipatory potential, but says

almost nothing about how this latter potential might manifest.[26] Similarly, Harvey evokes a

revival of historical materialism but gives no indication of where this regenerated Marxism might find its protagonist or translate into political practice.[27]

These silences signify a major problem. For, if Marxism cannot under contemporary conditions locate agents of contestation and practices of opposition, its analysis of postmodern capital amounts only to a reiteration (albeit on a more political economic basis) of the chief point of anti-Marxist postmodern theory: that under postmodern conditions, the game is over. The struggle does <u>not</u> continue. What is therefore required is not just analysis of postmodern capital, but also of the subject(s) potentially antagonistic to it: an analysis of the postmodern proletarian condition. For at least some hints in this direction we can look to autonomist Marxism, and in particular to the work of Negri and his collaborators, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

Recombinancy: Postmodern Class Struggle?

To situate the autonomists within the Marxist /postmodernist debate, some historical perspective is again useful. As we saw earlier, the <u>autonomia</u> movement emerged from the wave of struggles that swept Italy during the 1960s and 1970s, starting in industrial plants but rapidly involving universities, schools, homes, urban squats, radio stations, transportation networks, cultural organisations and every facet of their society--struggles similar to, but more protracted than, the French student-worker revolts that provided the seedbed of postmodern theory. However, unlike both the official French and Italian communist parties, the Marxists of <u>autonomia</u> did not reject the widespread uprisings outside the factory as marginal and incorrect, but rather embraced them and tried to adapt their theoretical perspective to encompass these new points of conflict. Many

postmodern theorists--such as Michel Foucault, Paul Virilio, and, most especially Felix Guattari, who was actively involved with dissident radio in Italy--had sympathies with autonomia. When the movement was repressed and its leaders were put on trial, they joined in the international campaign against persecution. Negri, fleeing Italy, found refuge in France through the assistance of Guattari, with whom he has subsequently worked collaboratively.

Negri has in fact referred to his own work as a theory of "class antagonism in the postmodern world."[28] From what we have already seen of his work, it is perhaps not hard to understand why. For while Negri reaffirms the Marxist analysis of the war between capital and labour, he reinterprets this antagonism within a horizon which emphasises both the diverse sites over which this conflict is fought, and the importance to it of communicational practices.

It will be remembered that Negri, like other autonomists, traces class conflict through a series of cycles of struggle--from the "professional" or craft worker at the end of the 19th century to the mid-20th century "mass," industrial factory worker. Each of these cycles of conflict has driven capital to adopt successively more highly organised and technologically intense forms. This trajectory has today led to a situation where "the factory spreads throughout the whole of society . . . production is social and all activities are productive."[29] However, according to Negri, such a development only inaugurates a new cycle of struggle--that of the "socialised worker."

For, says Negri, capital's self-enlarging subsumption of society also multiplies the potential points of resistance. When the locus of production shifts from the factory to society as a whole, anti-capitalist antagonism is no longer concentrated in the mass factory,

but radiates out to manifest in households, schools, hospitals, universities, media, and so on. Struggles at each site manifest their own specificity, yet all encounter a barrier in capitalism's subordination of every use value to the universal logic of exchange. Thus, unlike the relatively homogenised, factory-based "mass worker," the "socialised worker" arises from a pluralistic, variegated form of labour power whose ranks include not only diverse forms of wage worker (in the service as well as industrial sector) but also the unwaged workers (homemakers, students) whose activities are indispensable for the operations of the social factory. As Negri puts it, in a formulation that clearly shows his convergence with characteristically postmodern themes of heterogeneity and diversity,

> The specific form of existence of the socialised worker is not something unitary, but something manifold. The paradigm is not solitary, but polyvalent. The productive nucleus of the antagonism consists in multiplicity."[30]

Moreover, Negri argues, the social expansion of capital gives both its operations and the struggles against them an increasingly communicational nature. Avoiding the base/superstructure metaphor, whose baggage of mechanical materialism has so plagued Marxism, Negri's rests instead on Marx's observations about the importance of "labouring co-operation." For Marx, a central feature of capital's enlarging organisation was its attempt to impose despotic managerial control over a workforce whose activities depended on "collective unity in co-operation, combination in the division of labour."[31] Developing this theme, Negri says that the advent of the "social factory" produces

a specific social constitution--that of co-operation, or, rather, of <u>intellectual co-operation</u> i.e. communication--a basis without which society is no longer conceivable.[32]

To co-ordinate its diffused operation, business must interlink computers, telecommunications and media in ever-more convergent systems, automating labour, monitoring production cycles, streamlining turnover times, tracking financial exchanges, scanning and stimulating consumption in the attempt to synchronise and smooth the flow of value through its expanded circuits. It is only through the elaboration of this vast information-system that "advanced capitalism directly expropriates labouring co-operation;"

> Capital has penetrated the entire society by means of technological and political instruments (the weapons of its daily pillage of value) in order, not only to follow and to be kept informed about, but to anticipate, organise and subsume each of the forms of labouring co-operation which are established in society in order to generate a higher level of productivity. Capital has insinuated itself everywhere, and everywhere attempts to acquire the power to co-ordinate, commandeer and recuperate value. But the raw material on which the very high level of productivity is based--the only raw material we know of which is suitable for an intellectual and inventive labour force--is <u>science, communication and the communication of knowledge</u>.[33]

The pre-eminence of "communication " as a category in postmodern theory, Negri claims,
registers this process. In the Grundrisse Marx explains that the discovery of "labour" was
an historical event. Although the category "labour in general" represents an "immeasurably
ancient relation valid in all forms of society," nevertheless it had to await formulation until
capital's forcible "abstraction" of labour power--technologically reducing craft skills,
homogenising the workforce, stripping workers of all attributes other than as a factory
`hands'--gave it "practical truth."[34] Today, Negri suggests, the incorporation of a variety of
informational flows and interaction into production is imposing a similar "abstraction" on
the concrete variety of communicative practice. This is perhaps most readily recognised in
the creation of a universal digitalised idiom into which all forms of communication can be
coded and transcoded as `information'--a quantifiable flow of bits and bytes which can be
measured and monitored as the stuff of workplace productivity and pay-per services.

However, Negri says, this development has a double face, each side of which is
recognised by a different branch of postmodern thought. One side is the harnessing of all
sorts of communication to ever-expanding commodification, the reduction of social
relations to a series of exchange relations, and the consequent hollowing out of meanings
and relations;

> In the circulation of values, every commodity has become money, every
>
> reference appears in a circuit of equivalents . . . every singularity has lost
>
> all significance and the sense of being has become pure paranoia.[35]

This is caught by what Negri calls the more "banal and pessimistic" version of
postmodernism, in which the novel features of the age lie in "the total disintegration of
received language, of its meanings and expressions . . . the tectonic slippage of all

foundations."[36] This negative moment of postmodernism arises from the sense of immersion in capitalist subsumption--a vast apparatus whose sole purpose is, in Marx's terms, "production for productions sake." This situation, Negri says, produces "a painful . . . perception of the total insignificance of the being in which we are immersed; a being whose framework and directions we no longer perceive."[37]

However, Negri suggests, there is another aspect to capital's extraordinary development of its informational apparatus--namely, that its channels can potentially be used for purposes quite other than those for which it was intended. It is these creative openings that are glimpsed by what he regards as the more "sophisticated and positive" versions of postmodernism, attuned to the "plurality of languages, the uncertain role of judgements, and the becoming-ever-more absolute of the horizon of communication."[38] At its best, Negri says, such postmodern theory:

> presupposes not merely an enormous, fluent universe of communication, but throughout every stretch of this mass of communicative threads it identifies contradiction, conflict, and, above all, new power.[39]

In this version, postmodernism constitutes "a primitive but effective allusion to the . . . new subjects which appear in the Marxian phase of general circulation and communication."[40]

In Negri's view, the negative and positive moments of postmodern theory between them present a portrait of the contradictions that run through a capitalism predicated on a vast communicational infrastructure--"simultaneously the ruin and the new potential of all meanings."[41] Both offer important insights, yet each provides only a partial perspective.

The first responds to the deepening reach of computerised commodification, but nihilistically denies the possibility of resistance; the other recognises the "socialised worker's" potential for experiments in diversified and democratic communications but occludes issues of exploitation and capitalist control. Only when the two tendencies are seen counterpoised in ongoing conflict does an adequate perspective emerge. Thus in Negri's view postmodern thought is "ambiguous"; although "eclectic," it does identify "certain conditions on which it is possible to construct the concept of new subjectivities."[42]

Negri's Marxism thus enters into a tentative rapport with postmodern theory. Yet his insistence on the universal and progressive goals of struggle is also reminiscent of the postmodernists' major modernist opponent, Jurgen Habermas. Negri's contrast between dominative information and insurgent communication owes an acknowledged debt to Habermas's theory of communicative action, which upholds an "ideal speech situation" of democratic, symmetrical dialogue unobstructed by inequities of power and skill as a yardstick against which to measure emancipatory social change.[43] However, for Habermas economy and workplace lie outside the orbit of such judgement, and are subject to an instrumental logic that finds inexorable embodiment in capitalist rationalisation. The consequence is a purely defensive social democratic politics which aims to protect select areas of the "life-world" from the encroachments of the "system", but abandons any fundamental challenge to capital's dominance of productive activity.[44]

For Negri, in contrast, the advent of the "factory without walls" makes it impossible to split work from life. The increasing prominence of communicative action is precisely a result of the socialisation of production. Conflict between instrumental and communicative logic crystallises around the contradiction between capitalist command and collective

labour; and the horizon of the "ideal speech situation" can only be reached by way of full-blown revolutionary project whose ultimate objective remains the demise of capital. In the next two sections I elaborate this point by looking briefly at examples of what Negri would consider "negative" and "positive" moments of postmodern analysis, and their relation to autonomist theory.

Simulacra: The Reality Gulf

What Negri terms the "banal and pessimistic" school of postmodernism is undoubtedly best represented by the school of Jean Baudrillard and his followers. Baudrillard, after starting from a brilliant critique of orthodox Marxism's base/superstructure dualism, and an incisive analysis of cultural commodification, has since gone on to develop an ever-more nihilatory analysis of the power of media.[45] In an age of advanced information technologies he claims, signs, which once pointed to reality, then served to mystify it through advertising and propaganda, have now come to entirely substitute for it. We enter a world of simulacra, where models come before originals. In this hyper-reality,

> The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is
> the map that precedes the territory . . . The real is produced from
> miniaturised units, from matrices, memory banks and command models--and
> with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times.

Subjectivity is no more than an effect of an omnipresent "code," produced by a shadowy "neo-capitalist cybernetic order."[46] A "cyberblitz" of advertisement, propaganda, television shows and polling techniques produce the very needs, desires, opinions and identities to which they ostensibly respond. A media apparatus that effortlessly recuperates opposition as spectacle annuls every antagonism. With reality itself constituted by wall-to wall -media images, the epistemological ground for distinction between actuality and imaginary, truth and lies, fabrication and authenticity evaporates. Social existence undergoes an "implosion," becoming a "black hole," a spongy, infinitely absorbent mass that soaks up media images from Bobbits to Bosnia, indifferent to veracity but hungry for ever more intense waves of sensation.[47]

The recent culmination of this line of thought comes in Baudrillard's articles on the Persian Gulf War.[48] Written at the time of the conflict, these focussed on the role of the media in a war where "our strategic site is the television screen, from which we are daily bombarded."[49] Baudrillard claims that propaganda and disinformation make it impossible to know what is actually going on in the sands around Kuwait: epistemological certainty, including even the confidence that what is occurring constitutes a "war," has been swallowed up in an abyssal "reality gulf."[50] While he admits that large numbers of people have been killed and cities bombed, the "virtual" nature of the electronically mediated hostilities makes any "practical knowledge of this war . . . out of the question."[51] All that sceptical intelligence can do is "reject the probability of all information, of all images whatever their source."[52] The aim of this is not to "seek to re-establish the truth"--for which, Baudrillard insists, "we do not have the means"--but rather to "avoid being dupes."[53]

Despite the denunciations that these and other of Baudrillard's writings have rightly attracted, they should not be lightly dismissed. His account of the simulacra has, as Negri puts it, "a very high degree of descriptive power."[54] Indeed, in many ways it more fully acknowledges the enormous challenges facing oppositional movements today than many more conventional Marxist accounts of `ideology'. For it registers a situation in which control of the media often (if not as uniformly as he suggests) gives established power the capacity not just to promulgate specific beliefs and values, but to set the very parameters of perception.

Negri himself uses Baudrillardian language to describe this capitalist "duplication" of reality. Discussing the neoliberal state (which they also term "the postmodern state") he and Michael Hardt suggest that one of its central roles in capitalist restructuring has been to disintegrate the institutions of civil society (trades unions, political parties) so as to effectively annul political debate. However "this void must be covered over by the construction of an artificial world that substitutes for the dynamics of civil society." Thus "Even while the real elements of civil society wither . . . its image is proposed at a higher level."[55] Here, they remark, "The new communicational processes of the so-called information society" play a vital role, with a move "from the democratic representation of the masses to the representative's production of their own voters";

> Through the mediatic manipulation of society, conducted through enhanced polling techniques, social mechanisms of surveillance and control, and so forth, power tries to prefigure its social base . . .[56]

Moreover, Baudrillard's account recognises--even as it reinforces--one of the most problematic aspects of the postmodern proletarian condition, namely that awareness of such manipulation may take the form of a deep-seated cynicism and relativism, inimical to activism. Indeed, his account of "social implosion" can be seen as a quite percipient account of an advanced state of class decomposition in which solidarity and agency have broken down in favour of atomisation and spectatorship.[57]

Where autonomist analysis parts company from Baudrillard, is, of course, on the possibilities of challenging and subverting the reign of the simulacra.[58] Underlying Baudrillard's fatalistic cynicism is in fact a highly structuralist view of the subject as simply an effect of the dominant "neo-capitalist" cultural code. An autonomist perspective would understand the operations of this dominant code not so much as constructive as reductive--something that selects, limits and constricts the possibilities of a more expansive field of social practices that always includes at least some elements `other' than capital. If the self is always fabricated, some fabrications promote a subjectivity of passivity, dependency and indifference, while others foster agency, autonomy and inquiry.

In a rather cryptic phrase, Negri has suggested that in the face of the "duplicatory" power of capital, the task of opposition is nothing less than "a Socratic task--that of reimposing the principle of reality."[59] This need not imply a naive objectivism, or uncomplicated faith that situations can be reduced to a single truth. But it is, in the flickering world of postmodernity, an important affirmation of the possibility of distinguishing between truer and falser depictions of reality--in the sense of identifying more or less coherent and comprehensive accounts, and more or less manifestly self-interested narratives.

Even advanced capital does not so completely or efficiently monopolise the channels of communication as to make this activity impossible. As Christopher Norris has argued, even in the midst of the Gulf War propaganda blitz, the activities of a few reporters of integrity did occasionally make it possible to discern the discrepancies and omissions of official accounts.[60] And Europe and North America also saw some remarkable uses of video, alternative television and computer networks to transmit news and analysis marginalised or excluded from mainstream accounts.[61] Although these efforts were, in Robert Hackett's phrase, "engulfed" by the US military-marketing campaign, they nevertheless point to potentialities that in other circumstances could be more effective.[62] Indeed, Negri would argue that one of the characteristics of the socialised worker --or postmodern proletarian--is his/her increasing ability to reappropriate capital's communicational machines in order to contest its simulations. But to consider this possibility we should turn to a more optimistic version of postmodern analysis.

Cyborgs: Living/Dead Labour

For such an example, we can do no better than to look at the notion of the "cyborg" presented by Donna Haraway in her "Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in 1980s."[63] For Haraway, the figure of the cyborg--a cybernetic organism--provides an "ironic myth" expressing contemporary possibilities for political activism in an era when capitalism operates through a high-technology "informatics of domination."[64] To refer to the inhabitants of this global system as "cyborgs" is to suggest that in a society permeated by media, computers and genetic engineering, subjectivity has in a profound and irreversible way become technologised--formed at the interface between

human and machines. Drawing on postmodern theory, Haraway argues that in such a technological world, identities cannot be predicated on some `essential' nature, but are instead relentlessly artefactual and constructed. However, in a spirit diametrically opposite to the anti-technologism of much left and feminist thought, she does not find this prospect defeating or dispiriting. As she puts it,

> cyborgs . . . are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins.[65]

At its most literal level, cyborg politics means refusing a "demonology of technology" and embracing the possibilities of reappropriating the instruments of information capitalism for alternative purposes, reconstituting the boundaries of daily life by "both building and destroying machines."[66] More broadly, the border-transgressing figure of the cyborg is for Haraway a metaphor for the hybrid identities emerging in a situation where the "elementary units" of "race, gender and class . . . themselves suffer protean transformations" within a global high-technology capitalism.[67] Cyborg politics thus also means discovering new forms of organisation adequate for an era when a "new industrial revolution" is "producing a new world-wide working class."[68] This project, Haraway suggests, involves rejecting vanguard parties but fostering affinities and alliances." Oppositional, utopian and completely without innocence," she writes, cyborgs are "wary of holism, but needy for connection--they seem to have a natural feel for united front politics."[69]

Haraway's concept of the cyborg has a distinct affinity with Negri's theory of the socialised worker. For Negri, the socialised worker is a figure operating at variegated sites throughout the circuits of capital, immersed in a technoscientific environment where computers and communications have become so commonplace as to constitute a second nature. S/he (Negri specifies the feminisation of the workforce as a feature of the socialised worker) inhabits an "ecology of machines."[70] Computers, videos, faxes and other media become so quotidian that workers have "organic" familiarity with them.[71] Capital is thus unable to stop socialised workers using these technologies for their own purposes--of which the most politically significant is the establishment of communication across the divisions that segregate sections of the workforce. Indeed, Hardt and Negri specifically declare this parallelism with Haraway's line of thought, saying that the increasing interface of the labouring body with technological appendages means that "the cyborg is now the only model for theorising subjectivity."[72]

Several cases which would serve as examples of such "cyborg" activism have already been discussed in earlier chapters: Subcommandante Marcos plugging in his laptop; French students appropriating Minitel; video counter-surveillance in Los Angeles or East Timor; the feminist computer and radio networking surrounding the United Nations conferences in Egypt and Bejing; the mobilisation of biomedical knowledge in struggles around AIDS, abortion and environmental health. Andrew Ross, in an article inspired by Haraway's line of thought, cites a case which would also well serve as an instance of the "organic" connection to technoscience that Negri sees in the socialised worker.[73] This involves a group of Michigan autoworkers that had been promised courses in computer programming as part of their on-the-job training by General Motors. When the company

abruptly terminated these courses, declaring that such depth of technical knowledge was excess to functional workplace requirements, the workers--who included veterans of the Flint sit-down strikes--launched a law suit, hinging around the corporation's use of state-provided public education funds for private purposes. But they also formed their own USE net news group and email bulletin—"The Amateur Computerist." This bulletin was devoted simultaneously to practical self-instruction in computer lore, criticisms of the corporate use of technology, arguments for the reduction of the work week, support of autoworkers' strikes and "netizens" arguments for the democratic, rather than commercial, organisation of cyberspace. It eventually came to command a relatively wide following--a prime example of cyborg struggle.

Although there are strong similarities between the lines of thought of Negri and Haraway's, there is a difference in emphasis. Haraway's work is characteristically postmodern in its refusal to nominate any central axis of conflict along which activism might be arrayed. This refusal results (particularly in elaborations by later authors) in the discovery of cyborg resistance in every aspect of contemporary technoculture, with little attempt to make strategic or tactical differentiations about its political significance. Negri's appropriation of the cyborg concept reinscribes it within a Marxist horizon of capital/labour conflict, but to heretical effect.

Marxists have always emphasised that capital is a system that tends to supplant living labour with dead labour, replacing the variable capital of human workers with the fixed capital of machinery. This tendency now appears to be reaching a culmination in genetic and computerised technologies, where machines are infiltrated deep into organic life itself while artificial intelligences promise to assume many of the attributes of

consciousness. One interpretation of this situation is to see in it a necrotic apogee of capitalist control--a near total subjugation of living to dead labour, the ultimate victory of fixed over variable capital, a nightmare of technological exploitation extended to the point where the very biological integrity of the species is subordinated to the imperatives of accumulation. This is the theme of some Baudrillardian strains of postmodernism, such as the brilliantly graphic, but ultimately voyeuristic, accounts of technocapital's virtual "harvesting" of human flesh offered by Arthur Kroker and his colleagues.[74]

But from Negri's perspective this is only half the story. Against it must be set countervailing tendencies, in which the increasing interface and infiltration of living by the dead labour opens towards a quite different outcome: a prosthesis of labour and machine that loosens capital's unilateral control of technology. Expanding his point, I would say that capital, in its drive to automate every function of the work place--mental as well as manual--has been compelled to develop machines of extraordinary versatility, technologies which in their potential universality emulate the very flexibility and plasticity of living labour itself. In this respect, information society theorists are right to emphasise the difference between mechanised and information systems. However, this protean quality of computers and communication systems--their reprogrammability, their interactivity--is often taken as simply marking a new, intensified level in capitalist development. What such analysis omits is the possibility that this flexibility might be used, not to augment capital, but to subvert it. For the malleability of the new technologies means that their design and application becomes a site of conflict, and holds unprecedented potential for the recapture. These are the possibilities recognised by Haraway and Negri, possibilities of which any Marxism confronting postmodern culture must take account.

Rhizomes and War Machines

Although we can find elements of a postmodern/ Marxist recombinancy in Negri's work, to see a sustained exploration of this possibility we should turn to the oeuvre of his allies and collaborators, Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze. Of course, despite the explicit insistence of these authors that they are indeed Marxists, many would feel that the chaotic playfulness, exotic vocabulary and celebrations of desire and schizophrenia found in their writings are far removed from the sober business of historical materialism.[75] On the other hand, Guattari has specifically divorced his work from postmodernism --denouncing the ideas of a "postmodern condition" promoted by Lyotard and Baudrillard as "the very paradigm of every sort of submission, every sort of compromise with the existing status quo"--yet is regularly included in anthologies of postmodern thought![76] This confusion if anything confirms the accuracy of a hybrid designation--`postmodern Marxists.'

Deleuze and Guattari's work is now the topic of a growing number of excellent analyses. I will therefore only give a brief overview of their position before looking more specifically at how it bears on our discussion of information capitalism.[77] In the universe of Deleuze and Guattari, all social reality is constituted by desire. Desire is not good or bad; just productive and dynamic. Indeed, I think it is fair to say that Deleuze and Guattari's desire is the principle of transformative, constitutive action which Marx called `labour'-- prior to its appropriation within a structure of surplus value extraction.[78] Desire is heterogeneous and mobile. Social order is built on its homogenisation and stabilisation-- the organisation of the small, fluid, multiplicitous "molecular" forms of desire into big, institutional "molar" macrostructures: "To code desire is the business of the socius."[79] This

binding of desire is a "territorialization"-- a fixing in place, setting of boundaries.[80] But

desire is "nomadic," always seeking lines of fight or flight, pursuing more objects,

connections and relations than any society can allow.[81] Consequently "there is no social

system that does not leak in all directions."[82]

Capitalism "deterritorialises" more stable archaic social orders based on landed

property or tribal community, but "reterritorialises" everything in terms of exchange

value.[83] Constantly adding or subtracting organisational "axioms" and altering its

combinations of labour process, political organisation and cultural apparatus, it is more

flexible than any of the social systems it supplants.[84] Its most recent form is "integrated

world capitalism," in which "the single external world market (is) . . . the deciding

factor."[85] The global economy emerges as a "universal cosmopolitan energy which

overflows every restriction and bond":

> Today we can depict an enormous, so-called stateless, monetary mass that
>
> circulates through foreign exchange and across borders, eluding control by
>
> the states, forming a multinational ecumenical organisation, constituting a de
>
> facto supranational power untouched by governmental decisions . . .[86]

Characteristics of "integrated world capitalism" are a reshaping of the international

division of labour, with the appearance of areas of under-development appearing within

the developed world and limited development within the underdeveloped world; a

declining number of jobs; intensified integration of the upper, privileged strata of the

working class and the appearance of new strata of great insecurity--"immigrants, hyper-

exploited women, casual workers, the unemployed, students without prospects, all those living on social security"; and a "constant reinforcement of control by the mass media."[87]

However, over the same period that capitalism has consolidated this global, "molar" structure, there also appears what Guattari terms a "molecular revolution"--"a proliferation of fringe groups, minorities and autonomist movements leading to a flowering of particular desires (individual and/or collective) and the appearance of new forms of social grouping."[88] These are movements appearing beyond the ranks of the industrial working class amongst the unemployed, women, ecologists, homosexuals, the old, the young . . . These, Guattari says," constitute `fighting fronts' of a quite different sort from those that have always marked the traditional workers' movement.[89] For these movements, it "is not just a matter of struggling against material enslavement and the visible forms of repression, but also, and above all, of creating a whole lot of alternative ways of doing things, of functioning."[90] The undecidable factor today is whether these micro-revolutions "remain contained within restricted areas of the socius" or establish " a new inter-connectedness that links one with another" and end by producing "a real revolution . . . capable of taking on board not only specific local problems but the management of the great economic units."[91]

Deleuze and Guattari speak of revolutionary organisation as the creation of "machines of struggle."[92] This has to be understood carefully. For Deleuze and Guattari, any assemblage of desire--at a subjective or social level--is a "machine." The term is aimed to break with humanist concepts of natural identities, to emphasise (as Haraway does with her concept of "cyborgs") the constructed, produced, and collectively fabricated nature of psyche and society. Thus when they speak of radical political organisation as the

creation of nomadic "war machines," while they certainly do not preclude armed struggle, the phrase has a far wider dimension. They are thinking in terms of aggressive, mobile, decentred organisations, capable of being built or dismantled as needed, that can harry and erode the structures of established order--"state machines." At the same time, given their affirmative attitude toward the subversive use of technology, which we will examine in a minute, there is also a certain literal embrace of the machine as an instrument of struggle.

The characteristic form of a contemporary "machine of struggle" is a "rhizome."[93] By this name Guattari and Deleuze designate decentred, divergent, transverse, non-hierarchical, lateral or transverse modes of organisation--contrasted with "aborescent" or rigid, linear, vertical and hierarchical patterns."[94] Deleuze and Guattari apply the term "rhizomatics" to modes of philosophy and psychoanalysis, but the phrase also has clear political implications. The experimentation with coalitions, rainbows, networks, and webs that has been a salient feature of anti-capitalist movements in the last decade are all experiments with rhizomatic forms of organisation. Guattari speaks of the needs for the "molecular revolution" to find forms of organisation in which "the different components will in no way be required to agree on everything or to speak the same stereotypical language."[95] In doing so he reiterates a persistent theme of autonomist Marxism: Sergio Bologna has similarly spoken of the search for "a set of recompositional mechanisms that start, precisely from a base of dishomogeneity," while Sylvere Lottringer and Christian Marazzi emphasise "multi-centred" forms of struggle which "stress similar attitudes without imposing a `general line.'"[96]

One characteristic of "rhizomatic" organisations is that the distributed nature of their decisions and actions makes rapid and efficient communication very important. Thus

the possibility of using information technologies becomes very significant. Guattari,
himself involved in politicised pirate radio, was particularly aware of this possibility and
he repeatedly emphasises the liberatory possibilities of new machines. On the one hand,
high technology offers "integrated world capitalism" the opportunities of extending "a
generalised machinic enslavement" in which humans operate as input-output relays within
elaborated information systems dedicated to speeding the circulation of exchange values.
However, this situation also abounds in "undecidable propositions."[97] There is a "shared
line of flight of the weapon and the tool: a pure possibility, a mutation";

> There arise subterranean, ariel, submarine technicians, who belong more or
> less to the world order, but who involuntarily invent and amass virtual
> charges of knowledge and action that are usable by others, minute but easily
> acquired for new assemblages.[98]

Guattari specifically rejects "media fatalism" arguing that as a result of declining costs, and
continued technological advancement, continuous labour market retraining there is a
growing "potential use of . . . media technology for non-capitalist ends."[99] Media, he says,
can be tied to different types of "group formation"--one based on "standard identifications
and imitations, the father, the leader, the mass media star," the other more open and
creative, leading to dialogues which can break down received stereotypes and encourage
diverse collectivities to form their own discourses and self-representations. The first,
Guattari claims, is encouraged by the uni-directional broadcast technologies of the "mass
media," the latter by the new capacities of a "post-media age " in which the communication
technologies can be "reappropriated by a multitude of subject-groups."[100] Computerisation,

in particular, has "unleashed the potential for new forms of . . . collective negotiations, whose ultimate product will be more individual, more singular, more dissensual forms of social action.[101]

Harry Cleaver has made an interesting application of the "rhizome" concept to the Zapatista networking discussed in the previous chapter.[102] For another example of the "rhizomatic," "post-media" movements of the sort Guattari envisages, one might think of the anti-roads struggles which have snaked their way through post-Thatcherite Britain across sites like Twyford Down, the M11 Extension and Newbury.[103] These campaigns, aimed at blocking the new motorways built largely to facilitate integration with the European Economic Community, involve highly diverse groups--Earth Firster's, middle class conservationists, local property owners, Marxist militants, Greenpeacers, the Donga Tribe, and so on. They also interweave loosely with other movements, such as the very nomadic struggles by Gypsies, `travellers,' anti-hunt saboteurs against the draconian restrictions on civil liberties and personal mobility imposed by the Tory government's Criminal Justice Bill, or various `New Digger' groups such as "The Land is Ours" attempting to reappropriate the one-time `commons' from corporate ownership.

One feature of these anti-roads struggles has been their pervasive use of various forms of high-tech communication: personal computers to co-ordinate rapidly assembled blockades and demonstrations; video to record and publicise protests and for counter-surveillance against police and security guards; the dissemination of such film through alternative television producers, such as the celebrated "Undercurrents" programs; and, more loosely, the construction of a cultural ambience of protest closely associated with

various forms of techno-music. One reporter on the "postmodern tendencies" of this

"media-friendly, technologically-literate" movement comments:

> Anti-roads activists phone up the media to give interviews from the top of
>
> cranes while videoing the behaviour of police and security guards
>
> swarming beneath them. The action footage is replayed at clubs and
>
> festivals or broadcast on the Internet across the world. As the electronic
>
> icons . . . are appropriated for protest, the information technology
>
> revolution is being pressed into service in the name of further widening the
>
> scope of political communication and participation.[104]

This, I suggest, is exactly what Guattari thought "the molecular revolution" would look like.

Cyber-Nazis and Nizkor Projects

However, it is important to recognise that the potentialities recognised by Deleuze,

and Guattari also have a malignant side. One of the salutary aspects of these authors' work

is that they take seriously the possibility of a postmodern fascism, in which the very

communicational and nomadic capacities so rich in anti-capitalist possibilities are

recuperated in appallingly destructive form. Guattari and Deleuze have always emphasised

that molecular rebellions can turn negative, becoming paranoid or suicidal, and they have

taken conventional Marxisms to task for their failure to recognise the unconscious and

preconscious paths in which longings for emancipation and freedom become twisted into

racist, sexist and homophobic hatreds and authoritarian dependencies.[105] Like Baudrillard,

they speak of "black holes"--in this case, meaning the turning inwards of revolutionary

aspirations toward internecine hostility.[106] In this perverted form, they become available to capitalism as a weapon against movements of autonomy, providing the basis for fascism -- "without doubt capitalism's most fantastic attempt at economic and political reterritorialisation."[107]

Today, it is very evident that desires for autonomy from "integrated world capitalism" can take `right' and well as `left' forms. The proliferation in North America and Europe of neo-Nazis, Klan, Aryan Nations, Patriot Militias, holocaust deniers and fundamentalist churches, mobilised both in official forms, such as the movements headed by J. M. Le Pen in France and Pat Buchanan in the USA, and in clandestine, underground networks of the sort responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing or the burnings of immigrant hostels in Germany, represents a significant popular response to the social and economic costs of neoliberal restructuring. Recruiting their membership from sectors of the working class dramatically devastated by the advent of the information economy--the unskilled, rural white males at the base of the US militias, the masses of European unemployed--these movements present an analysis that often mixes percipient analysis of globalisation with extremes of pathological fantasy. Unemployment is attributed to aliens and immigrants; disintegrations in family security and social infrastructures to the activities of feminists and homosexuals; capital's overrunning of national sovereignty is deciphered as the result of Jewish banking cabals; real intensifications in security-state activity appear as fantasies of black helicopters commanding take-overs engineered by the United Nations; and desires for release from deepening immiseration translates into programs of vengeance against every form of social `other.'

These movements have proved at least as adept as the left, probably more so, in availing themselves of the widely socialised capacities of information age capitalism. "You may ask `why the computer technology?" wrote one Aryan Nations leader as early in 1984:

> The answer is simple, because it is our Aryan technology just as the printing press, radio, airplane, auto, etc. etc. We must use our own God-given technology in calling back our race to our Father's Organic Law.[108]

Such uses extended from the sophisticated BBS computer networking linking the armed cells of various North American white supremacist groups and militias; the Usenet newsgroups such as alt.skinheads, alt.politics.white_power, or alt.politics.nationalism.white; holocaust -denial World Wide Web sites, such as the trilingual "Stormfront"; the distribution by German and Austrian neo-Nazi groups of children's computer games based on genocidal scenarios; and the extraordinary success of the far-right in colonising talk radio in the United States.[109] Indeed, the considerable communication power of proto-fascist groups has meant that combating their high technology propaganda itself become an important focus of information activism--one thinks of the Nizkor Project (from the Hebrew word for "we will remember") operated by a Ken McVay, a fifty-four year old Vancouver Island store-clerk and self-described "modem junkie" who has over years compiled a vast electronic archive (or what has been described as "the information equivalent of a gigantic weapons dump") devoted to refuting holocaust revisionism on the Internet.[110]

The relations of these far right groups to the central institutions of capital are complex. On the one hand, the threat to order posed by their armed wings has meant that such movements are indeed targeted by the state security apparatus, which often brings to bear on them the most violent forms of repression (Waco, Ruby Ridge), while at the same time making their activities a pretext for a more generalised repression (censorship of the Internet). At the same time, there are undoubtedly sectors of capital--for example the corporate backers of the Republican right in the US--which look to either tolerate or actively harness the energies of such movements to the project of paralysing and destroying working class unity. Out of such complicity emerges the real possibility of a fascist "reterritorialisation" of capital.

Deleuze and Guattari note that "What makes fascism dangerous is its molecular or micropolitical power, for it is a mass movement: a cancerous body rather than a totalitarian organism."[111] As they observe, the success of Nazism in Germany lay in its creation of microorganisations capable of penetrating every cell of society, organisations which both predated its assumption of state power, and, persisting afterwards, gave this power an insidious and omnipresent grip on society:

. . .fascism is inseparable from a proliferation of molecular focuses in interaction, which skip from point to point, before beginning to resonate together . . . Rural fascism and city or neighbourhood fascism, youth fascism and war veteran's fascism, fascism of the Left and fascism of the Right, fascism of the couple, family, school and office: every fascism is defined by a micro-black hole that stands on its own and communicates

with the others, before resonating in a great, generalised central black hole.[112]

As Douglas Kellner and Steve Best point out, it is not hard today to perceive the potential for such a North American fascism, which would surely combine racists, `pro-family' groups, fundamentalist Christians, skinheads, anti-environmentalists, MIA groups, and gun lobbies in a deadly resonance.[113]

The condition of the postmodern proletariat thus includes what Negri calls "alternative subjectivities."[114] One powerful tendency is for the destructive effects of capital's offensive to translate into intensified competition between different groups of workers. To the degree that this tendency prevails, the various limbs of the collective labourer will be turned against each other in the mutual dismemberment of neo-fascist populism, religious fundamentalism, ethno-nationalism, gay bashing and sexist backlash. In this situation of extreme decomposition, the absorption and appropriation of new technologies could serve only to provide fresh instruments for internecine self-destruction- -nazi hate lines, homophobic computer bulletin boards, fibre-optic evangelism and right - wing grassroots radio. Above this wreckage of class politics, the multinationals will glide through the global networks, swooping down to gut and abandon successive sites for profitable exploitation. No one witnessing recent events in Europe and North America can doubt the plausibility of this outcome.

The other possibility is for the different segments of social labour to connect and interanimate their struggles against capital. In this context the reappropriation of informational technology has a special significance, not only as an inroad upon capital's control over what is now a vital force of production, but also, simultaneously and

inseparably, as a means to open the channels through which the "socialised worker" can overcome segmentation and constitute itself as a subject of radical co-operation. Communication--through contestation and infiltration of established channels, alternative media, autonomous radio, tactical television, culture jamming and computer counter-networks--spins the life thread of awareness, negotiation, dialogue, criticism, self criticism and solidarity by which the variegated agencies of the collective worker develop their basis for alliance, create a recombinant politics and recognise each other as members of a compound subject capable of reclaiming the direction of society from capital .

Post-Marxists . . . or Communists Like Us?

In 1985 Negri and Guattari co-authored a work published in France as New Spaces of Liberty, New Lines of Alliance, and in North America (in 1990) as Communists Like Us.[115] Their declared objective was "to rescue `communism' from its own disrepute," and to challenge a situation where "the `ethic' of social revolution has become instead a nightmare of liberation betrayed, and the vision of the future is freighted with a terrible inertia."[116] Against the devastating effects of "integrated world capitalism" they urged "reunification of the traditional components of the class struggle against exploitation with the new liberation movements."[117] Rejecting both Leninism and anarchism, Negri and Guattari propose the creation of multi-centric "machines of struggle.[118] This would require discarding the Marxist habit of nominating some agents as central to anti-capitalist struggle and others as marginal. Instead, it would involve constructing a system of "multivalent engagement" between movements, "each of which shows itself to be capable of unleashing irreversible molecular revolutions and of linking itself to either limited or unlimited molar

struggles."[119] In this process, the development of communicational links amongst movements, using the advanced technologies which capital is unavoidably disseminating, would be of crucial importance:

> All the current catchwords of capitalist production invoke this same
> strategy: the revolutionary diffusion of information technologies among a
> new collective subjectivity. This is the new terrain of struggle . . .[120]

Negri and Guattari offered a number of "diagrammatic propositions" about the issues around which the new rhizomes might cohere. These include struggles on the welfare front, for the establishment of a guaranteed equalitarian income, and against poverty in all its forms; shortening and reorganising the time of the work day; "a permanent struggle against the repressive functions of the State"; campaigns against war, particularly anti-nuclear movements; and the construction of North-South alliances amongst movements.[121] These, they say, would all be steps toward the rediscovery of communism not as "a blind, reductionist collectivism dependent on repression" but as a "process of singularisation";[122]

> Real communism consists in creating the conditions for human renewal:
> activities in which people can develop themselves as they produce,
> organisations in which the individual is valuable rather than functional.[123]

The struggle for communism could regain the universality Marx attributed to it if "Truth `with a universal meaning' is constituted by the discovery of the friend in its singularity, of the other in its irreducible heterogeneity . . ."[124]

This postmodern Marxism can usefully be contrasted with the very influential "post-Marxism" advocated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantall Mouffe in their Hegemony and Socialist Strategy ,also published in 1985.[125] In post-Marxism, the importance Marxists traditionally attribute to struggle against capital is dismissed as crudely economistic. Instead, the social is seen as an open, fluid, "unsutured" field, constituted by a plurality of power relations and struggles--over class, gender, race, homophobia, the environment-- none of which can be said to have any priority over, or intrinsic connection with each other, although they may be contingently linked together. Socialism is redefined in such a way as to diminish the importance of reorganising the relations of production, which simply becomes one part of a programme of "radical democracy" that seeks to promote equalitarian relations across the whole social spectrum. From this point of view, eliminating capitalism no longer claims any centrality amongst emancipatory projects.

Laclau and Mouffe believe that in moving the focus of social analysis outside the factory to embrace this wider field of conflicts they have decisively gone beyond Marxism. And indeed, in acknowledging the importance of struggles around issues of gender, race, and a multitude of other oppressions they have transcended the workerist logic of the Second International (their constant, and perhaps slightly outdated, target). In this respect their project does constitute an important break with sclerotic Marxisms.

However, to make this move they adopt an extraordinarily abstract and ahistorical vision of the contemporary world. The density and intransigence of historical

determinations are eclipsed, and there appears instead a concept of the social domain as "discourse," constantly available for deletion and recombination in ever-alterable "articulations," as fluid and malleable as words on a page. It is this ahistorical abstraction which makes it so easy for Laclau and Mouffe to side-step the Marxist insistence on the dominative centrality of capital. Once one returns from the abstraction of discourse in general to the concrete specificities of the late twentieth century, the degree to which the logic of capital is in fact busily "suturing" society --sewing up the planet in the net of the world market--becomes much more striking. To a greater extent than ever before, control over planetary resources, including the vital communicational and informational resource of "discourse" itself, are concentrated in the hands of a corporate order which now possesses truly global capacities of command and co-ordination, and whose organisation increasingly subsumes and mediates other social hierarchies formed on the basis of gender and ethnicity. To skip over this point is to return--under the guise of postmodern sophistication--to a liberal, pluralistic view of an open society based on a multitude of freely competing interest groups. It is to evade, rather than surpass, the crucial point of Marx's analysis of "real subsumption"--the tendency of capital to impose its logic not just over the workplace, but over all areas of life.

This is the line of analysis that Negri and Guattari develop. In their analysis, capitalist totalisation is a force that invades, permeates and refracts every domain of social activity, and every other social antagonism. The market asserts its priorities over issues of gender equity or ecological preservation to a degree that it becomes impossible for feminist or green movements to succeed without coming into conflict with it. And it is the necessity of this challenge that provides the potential connecting point between the varied

movements seeking to pursue other societal logics. From this point of view, there is no

evading the issue of control over production--defined in its broadest social aspect:

> Instead of new political alliances, we could say just as well: new
>
> productive co-operation. One always returns to the same point, that of
>
> production -- production of useful goods, production of communication and
>
> of social solidarity, production of aesthetic universes, production of
>
> freedom . . .[126]

Although Laclau and Mouffe's ideas have commanded an enormous academic interest, post

Marxism seems, a decade after its first enunciation, strangely dated. This is surely because

analysis that has almost nothing to say about the international division of labour, new

technologies of communication and exploitation, and changing conditions of labour misses

some of the most dynamic aspects of contemporary social transformation. [127] In a massive

failure of theoretical nerve, post-Marxism has shut its eyes to the approaching `big story' of

the early 21st century--the consolidation of the world market. Moreover, in practice,

"radical democratic" politics have proven peculiarly lacklustre. It has been associated

with a rejection of some of the most important actually-occurring forms of militant struggle

(such as the British miners strikes and anti-poll tax riots); with a fixation with electoral

politics and reformist constitutional schemes; and with a recycling of that most exhausted

shibboleth of social democracy--the mixed economy--at the very time when international

capital has decisively signalled its lack of interest in such a settlement.[128]

Negri and Guattari's collaborative work lacks the enormous theoretical sophistication with which Laclau and Mouffe invest their proposals, and its sense of urgency sometimes translates into a purple, overblown rhetoric, and certain traces of slapdash assembly. But in the decade since they wrote, their analysis of "integrated global capitalism" grows in pertinence. Their discussion of new, technologically facilitated "machines of struggle" resonates with the actual paths being taken a variety of coalitions and networks worldwide. And while their sketch of a revitalised communism is only rudimentary, it does at least begin to raise the pressing questions about the reorganisation of work, income and the allocation of social time that the general collapse of both state socialism and social democratic compromises necessitates. For these reasons, their postmodern/Marxism seems today a far more germane project than the eminently fashionable "post-Marxism."

Detotalising Totalisations

As Harry Cleaver has observed, autonomist Marxism has "evolved in such a way as to answer the post-modern demand for the recognition of difference and the Marxist insistence on the totalising character of capital."[129] Its project can be defined as a paradoxical "detotalising totalisation" that seeks to analyse the overarching social command of capital the better to dissolve it into a more multiplicitous and varied order. As Cleaver says,

> . . . in spite of justifiable post-modern objections to master narratives,
>
> simple self-defense requires that for any social theory to be useful in the

struggle for liberation, it must recognise and comprehend not only different

forms of domination but the world-wide and totalising character of the

capitalist form . . . what is required is an ability to grasp simultaneously:

the nature of the totality/globality that capital has sought to impose, the

diversity of self-activity which has resisted that totality and the evolution of

each in terms of the other.[130]

Capital, in order to maintain its totalising system, strives to prevent its variegated

opponents from combining forces: dividing, splitting, and fracturing in order to maintain

the systemic integrity of its world system. For the diverse anti-capitalist movements, the

problem is that in order to break out of capital's totalisation they have to link their

diversity, to ally across difference to circulate struggles.

I have suggested how, within this framework, we can recontextualise some of the

important postmodern insights into contemporary conditions of communication. In

introducing high technologies, a central aim of capital has been to reinforce its own circuits

while paralysing those of opposition movements through an increasingly intense regime of

informational control. This decompositional, disintegrative, immobilising tendency is

recognised in the Baudrillardian school of postmodernism--which, however, completely

fails to recognise the countervailing tendencies of oppositional groups. These groups have

to some extent been able to reappropriate these same technologies capital has deployed,

and make them channels for new solidarities and alliances. This is the tendency partially

recognised by Haraway and other `optimistic' postmodernists. In the work of Negri,

Guattari and Deleuze these two tendencies appear pitted against each other, as the collision

of different "machines of struggle"--a conflict that might be characterised as `cyborgs versus the simulacrum.'

However, while Negri, Deleuze and Guattari envisage these struggles moving toward the constitution of a non capitalist society, they offer only limited hints as to what this alternative might be. They clearly see it not as a state-socialist imposition of centralised uniformity, but as an explosion of difference--a dissolution of the global command of profit which opens the way to alternatives that, like a volcanic "magma," spreads out in a "network of streams of enjoyments, of propositions, of inventions."[131] However it has to be said that these theorists have very little concrete to say about how such a self-organised society might operate--how the buses would arrive on time, the bread be on the shelf, or the AIDS vaccine be researched.

There are some good reasons for this reticence. Blueprints for a post-revolutionary society have too often had authoritarian implications. The stipulation of a pre-conceived set of ideal relations has resulted in `transitional programmes' that repress anything deviating from their model. Postmodern/Marxists emphasise that any project truly believing in the self-determining capacities of people should avoid theoretical foreclosure of the paths this energy might take. Furthermore, if the aim of revolutionary activity is to break the `totalising' logic of capital and shatter its homogenising and systematising tendencies, as Negri and Guattari suggest, any stipulation of a singular form of post-revolutionary society can be seen as self-contradictory; rather, the aim should be to create a space where a diversity of social, cultural and economic ways of being can coexist.[132]

These are important points that nevertheless leave difficult problems unresolved. While a post-capitalist society definitely should encourage diversity of social organisation,

and be open to evolving and unforeseen directions, this does not eliminate the need to think carefully about what arrangements, on a planet effectively unified by trade, transport and communication, might enable such a coexistence, or of considering which within a plethora of possibly emergent non-capitalist ways of life are desirable and worth fighting for. So it is to these points that I turn in the next chapter.

Notes

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[1] See for example Jean Francois Lyotard's acknowledgement of his debt to American sociology in the opening pages of <u>The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge</u> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984). Early uses of the term `postmodern' from this quarter can be found in Peter Drucker, <u>Landmarks of Tomorrow</u> (New York: Harper Row, 1957), and Amitai Etzioni, <u>The Active Society:A Theory of Societal and Political Processes</u> (New York: Free Press, 1968).

[2] For useful studies of this relationship, see Krishan Kumar, <u>From Post-Industrial to Post-Modern Society: New Theories of the Contemporary World</u> (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); David Lyon, <u>Postmodernity</u> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994); Margaret Rose, <u>The Post-Modern and the Post-Industrial: A Critical Analysis</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991); Frank Webster, <u>Theories of the Information Society</u> (London: Routledge, 1995).

The `postmodern' is of course a bewildering category: distinctions can be made between <u>postmodernism,</u> an artistic movement, <u>post-structuralism</u>, a philosophic (or anti-philosophic) tendency, and concepts of <u>postmodernity</u> as a particular social formation. We use the term `postmodern theory' to designate those thinkers who believe that a distinctively postmodern moment can be recognised in any or all of these fields, particularly the last.

[3] For an interesting account of this context, see Mark Poster <u>Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser</u> (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1975).

[4] For a very economical statement of this position, see Gianni Vattimo, <u>The Transparent Society</u> (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1992) 1-11. On the relation between post-structuralism

and informatics, see Mark Poster, <u>The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990).

[5] Lyotard, <u>The Postmodern Condition</u> xxxiv.

[6] Jean Baudrillard, "Interview: Game With Vestiges," <u>On the Beach</u> 6 (1984): 19-25, cited in Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, <u>Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations</u> (London: MacMillan, 1992).

[7] Jean Francois Lyotard, <u>Political Writings</u>.(University of Minnesota: Minneapolis, 1993).115.

[8] Mark Poster, <u>Foucault, Marxism and History: Mode of Production versus Mode of Information</u> (Cambridge: Polity 1984).

[9] Marshall Berman, <u>All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity</u> (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982) 33, 348.

[10] Perry Anderson, <u>In The Tracks of Historical Materialism</u> (London: Verso, 1983).

[11] Stephen Bronner, <u>Socialism Unbound</u> (New York: Routledge,.1990) 171.

[12] Andrew Britton, "The Myth of Postmodernism: The Bourgeois Intelligentsia in the Age of Reagan," <u>Cineaction</u> 13/14 (1988): 17.

[13] Alex Callincos, "Postmodernism, Post-Structuralism, Post-Marxism?" <u>Theory, Culture and Society</u> 2.3 (1985): 85-101.

[14] Todd Gitlin, "Images Wild," <u>Tikkun</u> 4 (4), 112.

[15] Raymond Williams, <u>Marxism and Literature</u>. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 128.

[16] Fredric Jameson, "Foreword," The Postmodern Condition by Jean Francois Lyotard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984) xii.

[17] Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism: or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," New Left Review 146(1984): 55-92.

[18] For analysis of Mandel's work, see Chapter 3.

[19] For the debate around Jameson's work see the essays in Douglas Kellner, ed., Postmodernism/Jameson/Critique (Washington DC: Maisonneuve Press, 1989).

[20] David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989)

[21] Harvey 302.

[22] Harvey 302.

[23] Harvey 112.

[24] Jacques Derrida, Specters Of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International. (London: Routledge, 1994).

[25] Derrida 168. Adrian Wilding, Rev. of Specters Of Marx by Jacques Derrida, Common Sense 17 (1995): 92-95.

[26] At different points in his oeuvre Jameson oscillates between suggesting an eventual return to more `normal' conditions of class struggle, development of vaguely described "cognitive mapping" practices (1984; 1988) and "homeopathic" adoptions of postmodernism (1987). See his "Periodising the 60's,"The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971-1986. v. 2. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1988) 178-210; "Cognitive Mapping,"Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, ed. Lawrence Grossberg and Cary

Nelson (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1988) 347-358 "Reading without interpretation: post-modernism and the video-text," <u>The Linguistics of Writing: Arguments Between Language and Literature</u>, ed. Nigel Fabb, Derk Attridge, Alan Durant and Colin McCabe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987) 199-224.

[27] Harvey 353-356.

[28] Antonio Negri, <u>Marx Beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse</u> (Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey, 1984), xvi.

[29] Negri, "Interpretation of the Class Situation Today: Methodological Aspects," <u>Open Marxism</u>, vol. 2, ed. Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn and Kosmas Psychopedis (London: Pluto 1992),85.

[30] Negri, <u>The Politics of Subversion: A Manifesto for the Twenty First Century</u> (Cambridge: Polity, 1989) 87.

[31] Karl Marx, <u>Capital: A Critique of Political Economy</u> vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1977) 1054. Marx wrote that "When the worker co-operates in a planned way with others, he strips off the fetters of his individuality, and develops the capabilities of his species" (447) For his extended reflections on the topic of co-operation see Chapter 13 of <u>Capital</u> vol. 1, "Co-Operation," 439-454.

[32] Negri, <u>The Politics of Subversion</u> 52, (original emphasis).

[33] Negri, <u>The Politics of Subversion</u> 116.

[34] "It was an immense step forward for Adam Smith to throw out every limiting specification of wealth creating activity--not only manufacturing, or commercial, or agricultural labor, but one as well as the others, labor in general. With the abstract

generality of wealth-creating activity we now have the universality of the object defined as wealth, the product as such or again labor as such, but labor as past objectified labor. How difficult and great this transition was may be seen from how Adam Smith himself from time to time still falls back into the Physiocratic system. Now it might seem that all that had been achieved thereby was to discover the abstract expression for the simplest and most ancient relation in which human beings--in whatever form of society--play the role of producers. This is correct in one respect. Nor in another . . . Indifference towards specific labors correspond to a society in which individuals can with ease transfer from one labor to another, and where the specific kind is a matter of chance for them, hence of indifference. Not only the category `labor,' but labor in reality has here become the means of creating wealth in general, and has ceased to be organically linked with individuals in any specific form. Such a state of affairs is at its most developed in the modern form of existence of bourgeois society--in the United States. Here, then, for the first time, the point of departure of the category `labor,' `labor as such,' labor pure and simple, becomes true in practice . . . Thus the simplest abstraction which modern economics places at the head of its discussions and which expresses an immeasurably ancient relation valid in all forms of society, nevertheless achieves practical truth as an abstraction only as a category of the most modern society " Marx, <u>Grundrisse</u> (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 104--105.

[35] Negri, <u>The Politics of Subversion</u> 201.

[36] Negri, <u>The Politics of Subversion</u> 200.

[37] Negri, <u>The Politics of Subversion</u> 202.

[38] Negri, <u>The Politics of Subversion</u>, 200.

[39] Negri, The Politics of Subversion 203.

[40] Negri, The Politics of Subversion 206.

[41] Negri, The Politics of Subversion 203.

[42] Negri, The Politics of Subversion 202.

[43] See Jurgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action: Vol. 1. Reason and the Rationalisation of Society (Boston: Beacon, 1984) and The Theory of Communicative Action: Vol. 2. A Critique of Functionalist Reason (Boston: Beacon, 1987). Negri writes that "in the productive community of advanced capitalism we find ourselves confronted by a primary phenomenon which, following Habermas, we will call `communicative action.' It is on the basis of the interaction of communicative acts that the horizon of reality comes to be constituted . . . Above all, communicative action gives rise to the extraordinary possibility of activating dead socialised labour. Communication is the Direct Current of these relationships." The Politics of Subversion, 117

[44] Habermas in an interview with Peter Dews upholds this segregation as follows: "Marxists . . . have to ask themselves whether socialism today, under present conditions, can still really mean a total democratic restructuration from top to bottom, and visa versa, of the economic system: that is a transformation of the capitalist economy according to models of self-management and council-based administration. I myself do not believe so . . . I wonder-this is an empirical question which cannot be answered abstractly, but only through experimental practice--if we should not preserve part of the today's complexity within the economic system, limiting the discursive formation of the collective will precisely to the decisive and central structures of political power: that is, apart from the

labor process as such . . . We must start from the fact that social systems as complex as highly developed capitalist societies would founder in chaos under any attempt to transform their fundamental structures overnight . . . Such a path would . . . accomplish a prudent and long-term process of transformation. The task is a very difficult one, for which an extraordinarily intelligent party is necessary." Cited in Peter Dews,ed., <u>Autonomy and Solidarity: Interview with Jurgen Habermas</u> (London:Verso, 1985). .Critics sympathetic to autonomist Marxism such as Michael Ryan have strongly attacked this scaling-down of leftist ambitions for thoroughgoing social transformation as "managerial social democracy"--see his "The Joker's Not Wild: Critical Theory and Social Policing," in <u>Politics and Culture: Working Hypotheses for a Post-Revolutionary Society</u> (London: MacMillan, 1989) 27-45.

[45] For a valuable account of Baudrillard's trajectory see Douglas Kellner, <u>Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond</u> (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

[46] Jean Baudrillard, Simulations (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983) 3.

[47] Baudrillard, "The Implosion of Meaning in the Media and the Implosion of the Social in the Masses," <u>The Myths of Information: Technology and Post-industrialCulture</u>, ed. Kathleen Woodward (Wisconsin: Coda, 1980. 137-150. At some points in his writings Baudrillard suggests that this indifference, the extreme inertia of the "silent majorities," might constitute the only possible resistance to a regime which incessantly solicits the participation of the subjectivities it has itself created. But in his later works, even this possibility evaporates, in increasingly `fatal' scenarios. All natural functions have become

artificial, the senses are technologised, automation has liquidated labour and images supplanted things. Wired at all points to walkmans, cellular phones and media,we float through a vertiginous world devoid of truth or foundation, which increasingly tends towards the dimensions of a technologically created hallucination, a virtual reality in which it becomes impossible to tell the difference between actual and imaginary, someone and something . . .

[48] Jean Baudrillard, The Gulf War Did Not Take Place (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

[49] Baudrillard, The Gulf War Did Not Take Place.

[50] Baudrillard, The Gulf War Did Not Take Place.

[51] Baudrillard, The Gulf War Did Not Take Place.

[52] Baudrillard, The Gulf War Did Not Take Place.

[53] Baudrillard, The Gulf War Did Not Take Place.

[54] Negri, The Politics of Subversion 203.

[55] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Labor of Dionysus: A Critique of the State Form (London: Minneapolis, 1994) 268.

[56] Hardt & Negri 271.

[57] Indeed, Baudrillard's idea that in such a condition oppositional impulses can only express themselves negatively, in terms of extreme passivity, indifference and non-participation were also mooted by the autonomist Mario Tronti in his discussion of labour during periods of defeat--see his Ouvriers et Capital (Paris: Christian Bourgeois, 1977).

[58] In regard to Baudrillard, Negri's critique of the French nouveaux philosophe is relevant. He observes that while their vision of totalised capitalist power displays "hatred for the despotic powers that dead labour tries increasingly to exercise over living labour," the problem with their position is that "This pessimism aborts into a philosophy which simply reflects the destructured power of capital, inasmuch as it uses the categories within an absoluteness which is neither dialectical nor revolutionary. It is not dialectical because it looks at power in unqualified terms, `without adjectives'; it is not revolutionary because, consequently, it cannot develop a logic of separation." "Domination and Sabotage," Working Class Autonomy and the Crisis, ed. Red Notes (London: Red Notes, 1979) 166.

[59] Negri, Revolution Retrieved (London: Red Notes, 1988), 192.

[60] Christopher Norris, Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals and the Gulf War (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1992).

[61] For accounts of this activity see Douglas Kahn , "Satellite Skirmishes: An Interview With Paper Tiger West's Jesse Drew," Afterimage 20.10 (1993): 9-11, and Martin Lucas and Martha Wallner, "Resistance by Satellite: The Gulf Crisis and Deep Dish Satellite TV Network," Channels of Resistance, ed. Tony.Dowmunt (London: British Film Institute 1993) 176-194.

[62] Robert Hackett, Engulfed: Peace Protest and America's Press During the Gulf War.(New York: New York University, Center for War and Peace and the New Media, 1993).

[63] Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's," Socialist Review 80 (1985): 65-107.

[64] Haraway 65, 66.

[65] Haraway 68.

[66] Haraway 68.

[67] Haraway 91.

[68] Haraway 91.

[69] Haraway 101.

[70] Negri, <u>Politics of Subversion</u> 93.

[71] Negri, <u>Politics of Subversion</u> 85-86.

[72] Hardt and Negri 10.

[73] Andrew Ross, "Hacking Away at the Counterculture," <u>Technoculture</u>, ed. Constance Penley and Andrew Ross (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1991). We supplement Ross's account with information from the Amateur Computerist, online, Internet.

[74] See for example Arthur Kroker and Michael Weinstein, <u>Data Trash: The Theory of the Virtual Class</u> (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1994).

[75] See, for example, the sardonic dismissal of these thinkers by Harvey, 352, or the more measured critique in Best and Kellner. For Deleuze's affirmation of Marxism see his <u>Negotiations</u> (New: York: Columbia University Press, 1995), and for Guattari's, "Institutional Practices and Politics," <u>The Guattari Reader</u>, ed. Gary Genosko (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) 123.

[76] Guattari, "The Postmodern Impasse," <u>The Guattari Reader</u>, 110. See also his "Postmodernism and Ethical Abdication," in the same collection, 114-117.

[77] We are particularly indebted to Kenneth Surin,"Reinventing a Physiology of Collective Liberation: Going `Beyond Marx' in the Marxism (s) of Toni Negri, Felix Guattari, and

Gilles Deleuze," paper presented at the Rethinking Marxism Conference. Amerst, Mass.

1992, Michael Hardt, "The Art of Organisation: Foundations of a Political Ontology in

Gilles Deleuze and Antonio Negri," diss., U. of Washington, 1990, and the chapter on

Deleuze and Guattari in Best and Kellner 76-110.

[78] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, <u>Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia</u>. (New

York: Viking,1983) 116. On "molecular" and "molar" formations, see 183.

[79] Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 139.

[80] On "territorialisation" and "deterritorialisation" see Deleuze and Guattari, <u>Anti-Oedipus</u>

222-240.

[81] On "nomadism" see Deleuze and Guattari, <u>A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and</u>

<u>Schizophrenia</u> (London: Athlone, 1987) 380-385.

[82] Deleuze and Guattari, <u>A Thousand Plateaus</u> 204.

[83] Deleuze and Guattari, <u>Anti-Oedipus</u> 222-240.

[84] Deleuze and Guattari, <u>A Thousand Plateaus</u> 454-73.

[85] Deleuze and Guattari, <u>A Thousand Plateaus</u> 465.

[86] Deleuze and Guattari, <u>A Thousand Plateaus</u> 454.

[87] Guattari, <u>Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics</u> (Harmondsworth: Penguin,

1984) 260.

[88]Guattari, <u>Molecular Revolution</u> 263.

[89] Guattari <u>Molecular Revolution</u> 263. For Deleuze and Guattari "minorities" are not

defined by numbers put by distinction from concept of majority as"the national worker,

qualified, male and over thirty-five." Minority struggles are characterised by

connectability. In all the struggles, around votes, abortions, jobs, Third World --"there is

also always a sign to indicate that these struggles are the index of another, coexistent

combat." A Thousand Plateaus 471.

[90] Guattari, Molecular Revolution 263.

[91] Guattari, Molecular Revolution 263.

[92] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus 351-423.

[93] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus 3-25.

[94] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus 6-7.

[95] Guattari, Molecular Revolution 110.

[96] Sergio Bologna, "The Tribe of Moles," 51, and Sylvere Lotringer and Christian Mazarri,

"The Return of Politics," 8, both in Italy: Autonomia--Post-Political Politics, ed. Sylvere

Lotringer and Christian Marazzi. (New York: Semiotext(e), 1980).

[97] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus 473.

[98] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus 473.

[99] Guattari, "The Three Ecologies," New Formations 8 (1989): 146

[100] Guattari, "The Three Ecologies," 146.

[101] Guattari, "The Three Ecologies," 146.

[102] Cleaver, "The Chiapas Uprising," Studies in Political Economy 44 (1994)

[103] Our analysis in this section draws on the following articles Conor Foley, "Virtual

Protest," New Statesman & Society, 18 Nov. 1994, 47-49; Neil Goodwin and Julia

Guest,"By-Pass Operation," New Statesman & Society, 19 Jan. 1996, 14-15; Tim Maylon,

"Killing the Bill," New Statesman & Society, 8 July 1994, 12-13; Camilla Berens, "Folk

Law," <u>New Statesman & Society</u>, 5 May 1995, 34-36, and on Aufheben Collective, "Auto-Struggles: The Developing War Against the Road Monster," <u>Aufheben</u> 3 (1994): 3-23, and on our own research amongst activists in Britain.

[104] Foley 47.

[105] Deleuze and Guattari, <u>Anti-Oedipus</u> 105.

[106] Deleuze and Guattari, <u>A Thousand Plateaus</u> 224.

[107] Deleuze & Guattari <u>Anti-Oedipus</u>, 258.

[108] Richard Butler, cited in Hannah Nordhaus, "Underground By Modem," <u>Terminal City</u>, 11 Aug. 1993, 7.

[109] On these developments see Crawford Killian, "Nazis on the Net," The Georgia Straight 11-18 April 1996, 13-17, and Martin Spence, "Young Boy Network," <u>New Statesman & Society</u>, n.d., n.p.

[110] Kim Goldberg, "Battling Cyber-Nazis," <u>Progressive</u> , 13; Killian, 15.

[111] Deleuze and Guattari, <u>A Thousand Plateaus</u> 215.

[112] (Deleuze and Guattari, <u>A Thousand Plateaus </u>214.

[113] Best and Kellner, n.p.

[114] Negri, <u>The Politics of Subversion</u> 145-146.

[115] Felix Guattari and Toni Negri, <u>Communists Like Us</u> (New York: Autonomedia).

[116] Guattari and Negri 7, 8.

[117] Guattari and Negri 128.

[118] Guattari and Negri 103.

[119] Guattari and Negri, 123.

[120] Guattari and Negri, 16.

[121] Guattari and Negri 146.

[122] Guattari and Negri 13,

[123] Guattari and Negri 13,

[124] Guattari and Negri 42.

[125] Ernesto Laclau and Chantall Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics. (London: Verso, 1985). In making this contrast between Negri and Guattari and Laclau and Mouffe, we are considerably indebted to Richard Hutchinson, "Machines of Desire: Class, Identity and the Potential of the New Social Movements," New Directions In Critical Theory Conference, University of Arizona, 17 April 1993.

[126] Guattari and Negri 125.

[127] This general deficit is particularly marked by contrast with one brief, surprising, and indeed anomalous section in the final chapter of Hegemony and Socialist Strategy (161-175). For in these pages, Laclau and Mouffe offer an all-too-swift outline of the historical and material conditions which, they say, provide the grounds for the emergence of post-Marxist theory and radical democratic politics. It is--strange to say--an analysis of changes within the mode of production. Since the end of the Second World War, Laclau and Mouffe argue, there has been in the advanced industrial nations a significant shift in the organisation of capitalism, involving transformations in the labor process, state structure and popular culture. Commodification and bureaucratisation have reached into previously untouched areas of social life: at the same time, there has been a growth in the complexity

and density of civil society. Taken together, these tendencies have resulted in a multiplicity of new--and not necessarily class based--points of social antagonism. It is these conditions which make necessary and possible the emergence of new forms of social struggle--and of theories such as their own, which attempt to account for these fresh forms of praxis. Many readers of the book have pointed out that this section is inconsistent with the main thrust of their book. For while the bulk of Hegemony and Socialist Strategy is devoted to repudiating Marxism's insistence on the correspondence between economics and politics, its conclusion suddenly chooses to explain the necessity of a new politics by shifts in the pattern of capital accumulation! On this point see Michael Rustin, "Absolute Voluntarism: Critique of a Post-Marxist Concept of Hegemony," New German Critique, 43 (1988): 146-171; A. Belden Fields, "In Defence of Political Economy and Systemic Analysis: A Critique of Prevailing Theoretical Approaches to the New Social Movements," Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, ed. L. Grossberg and C. Nelson (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1988) 141-156; and Michelle Barratt, The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault (Cambridge: Polity, 1991).

[128] See in Chapter 2 the discussion of the British "New Times" initiative, which was heavily influenced by Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism.

[129] Harry Cleaver, "Secular Crisis in Capitalism: The Insurpassability of Class Antagonism," Rethinking Marxism Conference, Amherst, 1993.

[130] Cleaver, "Secular Crisis in Capitalism."

[131] Antonio Negri, Marx Beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse (Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey, 1984), 150.

[132] See for example Harry Cleaver, "Socialism," <u>The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power</u>., ed. Wolfgang Sachs.(London: Zed Books, 1992) 233-249.