We Have Our Own Concept of Time and Motion

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With contributions from
Auto Italia South East
Mark Fisher
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AAAAARG
Book Bloc
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Introduction
Auto Italia South East

We have our own concept of Time and Motion comes from a growing network of artists who have formed around Auto Italia and its programme and, although a long time coming, is a logical conclusion of artists finding affinity with each others projects, ideas and aspirations.

This publication (produced in two parts) outlines a live programme which will see Auto Italia become a base for the production of new work and ideas, pushing artists to the forefront of collaborations with other fields. Produced by Auto Italia in collaboration with Federico Campagna, Huw Lemmey, Michael Oswell and Charlie Woolley this project showcases progressive approaches to self-organisation in London today. Over the four days organisations such as Book Bloc, Deterritorial Support Group, The Free Association and the Alliance of Radical Booksellers and speakers such as Mark Fisher, Marina Vishmidt, Nina Wakeford, Nina Power and Franco Berardi will be brought together. The project aims to challenge pre-conceived ideas of self-organisation by looking at how they fit within neo-liberalism and potentially complicit in the growing precarity of all labour.

The root of the desire to put the project together stems from the many times that Auto Italia has been asked to present (and promote) artist-run organizations. We became very aware that there is a lack of awareness within a history of artist-run spaces of the conditions of self-organisation within a neo-liberal frame. We realize that there is a need to make public the intangible expertise, knowledge and network which Auto Italia is a part of and produce new information that can develop a larger narrative around self-organisation and self-publishing.

The texts in this publication reflect a range of different concerns especially revisiting ideas that stem from Autonomist Marxism. It aims to provide additional perspectives and contexts to artistic self-organisation, firstly outlining this activity within 'capitalist realism' and then developing this into a critical reading of feminist 'identitarian' activism and the disconnection between labour value and the wage relation. Interviews and discussions provided by prominent online distributors of art work and literature add additional, pragmatic readings of concerns around setting up platforms for production and distribution. The second part will retrospectively cover the activity, discussions and events that will be produced over the four day project.

The Future is still ours: Autonomy & Post-capitalism
Mark Fisher

Adam Curtis's recent documentary series All Watched Over By Machines Of Loving Grace argued that discourses of self-organisation, which had formerly been associated with the counterculture, were now absorbed into dominant ideology. Hierarchy was bad; networks were good. Organisation itself – held to be synonymous with "top-down control" – was both oppressive and inefficient. There is clearly something in Curtis's arguments. Practically all mainstream political discourse is suspicious of, and sceptical towards, the state, planning and the possibilities of organised political change. This feeds into the ideological framework that I have called capitalist realism: if systemic change can never happen, all we can do is make the best of capitalism.

There's no doubt that the right has been able to profit from identifying the left with an allegedly superseded 'top down' version of politics. Neoliberalism imposed a model of historical time which places bureaucratic centralisation in the past, by contrast with a "modernisation" that is held to be synonymous with "flexibility" and "individual choice". More recently, the much derided idea of the Big Society is, in effect, a right wing version of autonomism. The work of Phillip Blond, one of the architects of the "Big Society" concept, is saturated with the rhetoric of self-organisation. In the report "The Ownership State" which he wrote for the ResPublica think-tank, Blond writes of "open systems" which "recognise that uncertainty and change render traditional command-and-control ineffective." While Blond's ideas have been seen by many as obfuscatory justifications for the neoliberal privatisation agenda, Blond himself positions them as critical of neoliberalism. Blond notes a paradox that I also discuss in Capitalist Realism: rather than eliminating bureaucracy, as it promised to, neoliberalism has led to its proliferation. Since public services can never function as "proper" markets, the imposition of the "market solution" in healthcare and education "generates a huge and costly bureaucracy of accountants, examiners, inspectors, assessors and auditors, all concerned with assuring quality and asserting control that hinder innovation and experiment and lock in high cost." Such systems, Blond writes, are "organic rather than mechanistic, and require a completely different management mind-set to run them. Strategy and feedback from action are more significant than detailed planning ('Fire – ready – aim!' as Tom Peters wrote); hierarchies give way to networks; the periphery is as important as the centre; self-interest and competition

are balanced by trust and cooperation; initiative and inventiveness are required rather than compliance; smartening up rather than dumbing down." Since the right is now prepared to talk in these terms, it is clear that networks and open systems are not enough in themselves to save us. Rather, as Gilles Deleuze argued in his crucial essay "Postscripts on Societies of Control", networks are simply the mode in which power operates in the "control" societies that have superseded the old "disciplinary" structures.

Does all this then mean that ideas of autonomy and self-organisation would inevitably be co-opted by the right, and that there is no further political potential in them for the left? Definitely not – far from indicating any deficiency in autonomist ideas, the co-option of these ideas by the right shows that they have continuing potency. Seeing what is wrong with Blond and his ilk's appropriation of autonomism will also tell us something about what the difference between right and left might be in the future.

Curtis is right that the principal way in which autonomist ideas have been neutralised is by using them against the very idea of political organisation. Yet autonomist theories continue to be crucial because they give us some resources for constructing a model of what leftist political organisation could look like in the

post-Fordist conditions of mandatory flexibility, globalisation and just-in-time production. We can no longer be in any doubt that the conditions which gave rise to the "old left" have collapsed in the global North, but we must have the courage not to be nostalgic for this lost Fordist world of boring factory work and a labour movement dominated by male industrial workers. As Antonio Negri so powerfully put it in one of the letters collected in the recently published Art And Multitude, "We have to live and suffer the defeat of truth, of our truth. We have to destroy its representation, its continuity, its memory, its trace. All subterfuges for avoiding the recognition that reality has changed, and with it truth, have to be rejected. … The very blood in our veins had been replaced." Even though the shift into so-called "cognitive" labour has been overstated - just because work involves talking doesn't make it "cognitive"; the labour of a call centre worker mechanically repeating the same rote phrases all day is no more "cognitive" than that of someone on a production line – Antonio Negri is right that the liberation from repetitive industrial labour remains a victory. Yet, as Christian Marazzi has argued, workers have been like the Old Testament Jews: led out of the bondage of the Fordist factory, they are now marooned in the desert. As Franco Berardi has shown, precarious work brings with it new kinds of misery: the always-on pressure made possible by mobile telecommunications technology means that there is no longer any end to

the working day. An always-on population lives in a state of insomniac depression, unable to ever switch off.

But what has to differentiate the left from the right is a commitment to the idea that liberation lies in the future, not the past. We have to believe that the currently collapsing neoliberal reality system is not the only possible modernity; that, on the contrary, it is a cybergothic form of barbarism, which uses the latest technology to reinforce the power of the oldest elites. It is possible for technology and work to be arranged in completely different ways to how they configured now. This belief in the future is our advantage over the right. Phillip Blond's networked institutions may have a cybernetic sheen, but he argues that they must be situated in a social setting which is re-dedicated to "traditional values" coming from religion and the family. By strong contrast, we must celebrate the disintegration of these "values", as the necessary precondition for new kinds of solidarity. This solidarity won't emerge automatically. It will need the invention of new kinds of institutions, as well as the transformation of older bodies, such as trade unions. "One of the most important questions," Deleuze wrote in the "Control" essay "will concern the ineptitude of the unions: tied to the whole of their history of struggle against the disciplines or within the spaces of enclo-

sure, will they be able to adapt themselves or will they give way to new forms of resistance against the societies of control? Can we already grasp the rough outlines of the coming forms, capable of threatening the joys of marketing?" Perhaps the lineaments of that future can be seen in Latin America, where left wing governments facilitate worker-run collectives. The issue is not any more of abandoning the state, government or planning, but making them part of new systems of feedback that will draw upon – and constitute – collective intelligence. A movement that can replace global capitalism does not need centralisation, but it will require co-ordination. What form will this co-ordination take? How can different autonomous struggles work together? These are the crucial questions we must ask as we begin to build the post-capitalist world.

David Hilmer Rex

This text was written in response to the same set of questions posed to AAAAARG on p17. David's answers have taken their own form.

Art Torrents' front end was active from 2006 to 2008. The back end is still active, consisting of inviting people to the bit torrent site KaraGarga.net (KG). Over the years I've invited approximately 1200 people from all over the world to KG, a part of which have contributed to the now more than 1140 works of video art indexed at KG. Art Torrents was in hindsight a pragmatic infrastructural solution serving as a bridge between KG and Google's bot crawlers. The site wasn't particularly ambitious in terms of imagining new ways of distributing work, producing new economic models neither drawing up new ways of mediating the circulated work. These concerns weren't dealt with in the pursuit for a space which is without friction, where works were made readily available to whomever would be interested. Speed, availability, scalability, non-territoriality, omnipresence and horizontal organisation are all characteristics in play when talking about AT and KG. Both of which could be seen to exist outside of any kind of material economics.

An important question to pose oneself when being involved within an institution, is how and in what way the given institution perpetuates itself? One must consider how it mediates work, how it constructs and choreographs its audiences, how it partakes in the material-geographical sequence it is located in.

The social, economic, spatial and ideological consequences of its ways of working produce and, in retrospect, how it recognizes itself as an important agent in transforming and mutating artistic research, thought and production. In that regard, AT and KG are interesting not in terms of how they deal with most of these questions, but in terms of what happens when all of them are instrumentalised in pursuit of a chaotic and violent mode of distribution.

At one point I started contacting a set of selected artists, asking whether I, and subsequently UbuWeb, could distribute their work. A lot of the responses were characterized by an understandable fear of losing control. Every parameter is in flux when the work first enters the stream; the spatial-geographical setting/sequence, the mediation, the resolution as defined by the device used for display, the viewer itself, in short: the outcome of the whole situation. Deeming the outcome of that situation negative or positive in advance, I would consider over-bearing. The potential is maximized and minimized in the same movement and thus places the moment of actualization directly with the viewer. In other words, the idea and material manifestation of the autonomy of works of art are obliterated.

This space of insecurity is not dissimilar to what François Deck talks of when talking of unprotected spaces, meaning; spaces, discussions, encounters, conflicts, etc., which are beyond or outside any institutional authority, stripped of any given historical position and therefore, at the very least, dependent on the economic-juridical government it is situated within. Advancing into these unprotected

spaces, artists would need to operate in all directions, facing the abstraction found on every level of their project, be it economic, spatial, discursive, contextual, etc.

Is the current mode of production within the visual arts, not only limiting our ideas, knowledge, desires, speculations to a set of confined spatial-linguistic spaces again and again, rather than advancing into other areas and recognizing with how we could take advantage of it? Why haven't more intricate economic models been developed that respond to the inherent modalities of artistic and precarious work? We are still stuck in a model where there are extremely few established routes through which artistic thinking can intervene in other spaces and discussions. Artistic research, thought and institutional 'manufacturing' would only benefit from taking on the task of recognizing itself in the process of being exploded, spread, being rid of a name, a familiar body, mode of production and so forth.

Artistic research, thought and production no longer require specific institutional frameworks or mediation in order to be 'seen'. They accumulate value in and of their application, not by a given historical archive and can thus exist wherever, whenever and folded into anything: it doesn't need to look or operate in any specific way. This poses a fundamental problem. How does a discipline or epistemic framework reckon with what takes place when someone or something, in pursuit of addressing a specific audience, problem, desire, speculation, etc., alters itself so dramatically both internally/externally, that the discipline it originates from isn't able to see it anymore?

Counter(Re-) Productive Labour
Marina Vishmidt

This text is modified from a paper delivered at the Beyond Re/Production: MOTHERING – Dimensionen der sozialen Reproduktion im Neoliberalismus *exhibition, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin, 30 March 2011*

This text proposes to situate the debate about the management of social reproduction in the historical framework of Marxist feminisms that redefined domestic labour as a question of critical political economy and class struggle, as well as in the present state of activist and theoretical practice. The starting point of my approach consists of inquiring into what it means to inscribe social practices which do not produce market commodities into the wage-form, more narrowly, and into the value-form more broadly. Another aspect to this would be the production of subjectivity that arises out of struggles that necessarily include both moments of identification with and negation of, or, the consolidation and dispersion of, of a social category or identity, and feminist politics as well as communist politics are two examples which I have worked with for some time (although the same paradoxes, or, rather, dialectics, can be found in any social movement that has to invoke a group identity which marginalizes in order both to overcome the oppressions of that identity and to change the social conditions that make it possible, that is, the totality).

What these two sides of the inquiry have in common, for me, is the question of strategy. There is the truism that whatever doesn't kill capital only makes it stronger, and that also goes for 'excessive demands' such as Wages for Housework or the basic income which have been implemented only to the degree that they enhance the surveillance capacities of the state on behalf of capital's ability to exploit the recipients of such 'benefits'. Thus 'excessive demands' meant to raise social struggles to another plane tend to bear the paradoxical character that their real practical goals are so contrary to the profit motive that far from posing demands to capital that it cannot fulfil (or, as Silvia Federici once wrote, 'Wages Against Housework'), they could only be realized in a revolutionary situation where capital and the state have been eliminated from the equation. As Marx put it in the first notebook of the Grundrisse when writing about the socialist proposals for 'labour-money', 'This demand can be satisfied only under conditions where it can no longer be raised.' Much the same can be said for social democratic demands made in a militant spirit like many of the arguments and demands posed by the education movements in the current period, such as 'education must be free': as demands, they seem to be addressed in an advisory spirit to a capitalist state which has lost its way, or to a political subject which can only be addressed in a reflexive capacity, like the subject of Kant's aesthetic judgement. But it is not to be discounted that such invocations may yet develop real power, looking at the severely curtailed horizons for capital at present, certainly in Europe and the United States.

So, to begin historically, I would like to take the experience of Italian Autonomist Marxism, or Operaismo as it is also called, from two standpoints: one, the negation of labour, and the other the redefinition of unproductive as productive labour. The negation of labour standpoint of the period is often summed up by Mario Tronti's thinking on the 'refusal of work' and the refusal of political identity stemming from the worker's place in the social and technical relations of capital: 'To struggle against capital, the working class must fight against itself insofar as it is capital.' In this sense, what is discussed as 'workerism' does, from the very start, at least as far as Tronti or e.g. Raniero Panzieri were concerned, entail a rejection of work as constituted in capitalist social relations rather than a valorisation of a productivity severed from capitalist control: this is capital understood as a social relation, not as a parasitic power the way that much subsequent post-autonomist writing has figured it. Though it can't be avoided that this latter does follow from the autonomist 'Copernican turn', initiated also by Tronti, that is, labour is the primary rather than the dependent variable in the development of capital. The other standpoint is the redefinition of housework, care work, etc. as productive labour by the autonomist feminists such as Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Silvia Federici, Leopoldina Fortunati, etc. which is the perspective that underlay the Wages for Housework demand.

These feminist activists and theorists in the 1970s were responsible for pointing out the necessity of unpaid labour to the system of production centred on waged labour. This argument can be seen as addressing surplus value production (the dependence of profit on unpaid labour) from the viewpoint of divisions within the working class: the labour-power of waged workers is dependent on the unwaged labour of housewives. The revolutionary perspective here was one that aimed to consolidate fractions of the class exploited in very different ways by showing a unity of interests against exploitation – making the question of the wage ancillary rather than definitive for determining the political subject of class struggle. The wage divides workers from one another and produces a form of discipline and identification between the interests of labour and capital (though it should be noted, that the wage preserves a dialectical mismatch between those interests, while the prevalence of debt today, for ex., coercively closes the gap where that mismatch can become a site of struggle). The solution of collectivising housework and care work would here also be insufficient, so long as the gendered division of waged and unwaged labour and its place in the larger capital-labour relation remained unchanged.

The strategic importance of re-defining 'women's work' as productive work in terms of capital in this way was that since male 'productive workers' were the most radical and mobilized part of the Italian worker's movement, this was a way both to unite the feminist movement with them – to bring together the feminist and

the worker's movement on the ground of exploitation - and to expand the worker's movement into social reproduction, as also seen from the practices of self-reduction, proletarian shopping, mass squatting, and so forth. It also enacted the discourse of 'refusal of work', while pointing out that a housewives' strike had a very different meaning from a strike in the factory: a housework strike would inevitably be more radical, since the withdrawal of labour at the factory relied in great measure on continued labour in the home.

Yet, Wages for Housework was always contradictory, since by proposing that yet another 'social program' or 'entitlement' (as they're called in the U.S.) be introduced, they were tactically confusing the 'social wage' (welfare state concessions by capital for the part of the population it does not require for its self-valorisation or which it has exhausted) with the wage as it was paid to the formally employed. This kind of social wage was counterposed to what was even then an increasingly fictitious 'family wage' which implied one salary by a male breadwinner would be enough to cover the needs of a family of non-employed dependents – a powerful fiction, since it had been used to keep working women's wages artificially low from the time of the Industrial Revolution up to the present, and excluded women from the mainstream, as well as the radical, workers' organizations. Also, the idea of 'wages for housework', when not enacted in the grotesque outcome of the return of commodified housework, namely migrant domestic labour to the homes of the global middle class, can be

readily recuperated by the state as a form of management of populations inactive in the formal economy.

The point about the return of a domestic servant class is crucial, of course, as it reflects so many shifts in global capitalist accumulation – transnational migration and its regulation in Western countries and the feminization of that migration. There is also the dramatic increase in the numbers of women entering the workplace - partially as a result of equal-rights legislation in the West – who are not in a position to do double-duty in the home as well, especially not with young children and the costs of child-care. This narrative is in fact an allegory of the fortunes of liberal or equality feminism which succeeded in many cases in removing gender from the terms of workplace exploitation, only to displace it to a raced and illegalized class of 'other women' as the welfare state melted away in the neoliberal era. In this sense, the commodification of domestic labour violently enforces the class relations, and class divisions, of feminism, but should be seen as one of the series of defeats suffered by working-class social movements in neoliberalism, which has turned back the clock for women in specific ways as in line with a general social regression, rather than a defeat to be laid

at the door of the limited vision held by liberal mainstream feminism – and the power of the latter may be read strictly as a symptom of the power of the former.

One of numerous lessons of Wages for Housework is the relationship of a contestation over how the value-form, here the wage, is applied to social relations, specifically social reproduction, to a turning-point in the mode of capitalist accumulation, to a moment of crisis (with the Italian Autonomist and Wages for Housework episodes occurring from the late 60s/ early 70s onwards, around the events which were setting the stage for the neoliberal era). The wage there became a contested category, a lever for interrogating a whole mode of production from the standpoint of gender, and a way to link workplace struggles to social or 'community' struggles. This discussion could also link into the present day through what it might mean to consider debt in terms of the wage, that is as a site of class struggle, both in terms of the erosion of class antagonism, and its reconstitution on different grounds. But also, importantly, how debt has been used instead of the wage for access to goods as services, as well as the self-development (entrepreneurial and education life projects) implied in the figure of "human capital" which has become objectively unavoidable as a form of life. In this sense, debt now, as the "discovery" of unpaid labour did then, signals the erosion of prospects

for collective working-class activity based in the workplace. This is not only because so much, if not most, capitalist work happens outside the official workplace, as the Italian autonomist feminists pointed out, but because debt-fuelled accumulation produces identities tied to consumption, not production – this could be seen as one of the key subjective political consequences of the post-1970s restructuring of the labour-capital relation – even as surplus-value extraction has intensified drastically over this time. This is not to naturalize the distinction between consumption and production; the whole structure of economies running on asset bubbles and service industries make that untenable. Such a naturalization also has specific political consequences, as is plainly in evidence in coverage of the recent riots: the label of 'consum¬erism' is used to isolate, pathologize and de-politicize looting, as distinct from the productive 'politics' of protest, or attacking 'legitimate' targets.[1]

Going back to the first point, the negation of labour, we can refer to a quote from Theorie Communiste: 'The social character of production does not prefigure anything: it merely renders the basis of value contradictory.' The reason that the basis of value is rendered contradictory by the social character of capitalist production is that it creates the possibilities for infinitely various and expansive forms of human co-operation, expands the spheres

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1: 'Riot Polit-Econ', a text delivered in the form of a 'Joint Report' not quite authored by the 'Khalid Qureshi Foundation' and the 'Chelsea Ives Youth Centre', makes a related point very succinctly: "Now more than ever the interface of 'work' and 'consumerism' in our society is rotten: it is the loop by which long term structural unemployment recreates the market for low-end consumer commodities and by that means recreates also the jobs which the long term structurally unemployed are expected to aspire to."

of needs, desires, enables the techno-logical development that could make the 'general intellect' a really effective force, a commons, etc. yet contracts all these capacities to the miserable format of self-expanding value and private property (technically, it could also be added that the basis of value is contradictory since this basis is labour yet capital has to con-stantly expel labour from the production process), which are further reduced by periodic crises and war. Writers working on 'communisation', that is, the immedi-ate and unmediated turn to communism following the tendential breakdown in the capital-labour relation and the decay of any politics based on the affirmation of work or workers' identity, which they call programmatism, link the negation or aboli-tion of labour to the abolition of use-value, not being content with the elimination of abstract labour and exchange value only as denoting the capitalist functions of the otherwise innocent terms 'labour' and 'value', as so much pre-critical Left analysis continues to do even now. As Bruno Astarian writes:

But then, if use value is considered identical to utility, the abolition of value is limited to the abolition of exchange value. And it is true that communist theory in its programmatic forms offers various versions of the abolition of value that, in the end, are limited to the elimination of exchange through planning. The activity stays the same (work, separated from consumption and from the rest of life), and planning guarantees justice, equality and the satisfaction of needs, considered exogenous, almost natural givens. On the contrary, as soon as communization is understood as a radical transformation of activity, of all activities, as a personaliza-tion of life due to the abolition of classes, use value reveals its abstract dimension of utility for a (solvent) demand unknown in its peculiarities and thus average, abstract.'

But what happens if we think reproduc-tion with or inside the social character of production which renders value contradic-tory, put reproduction into the term 'coun-terproductive labour' – a term used by Chris Arthur to indicate the independent subjectivity of labour within and against its subsumption by the subject of capital (apologies for the unexplicated Hegelian idiom here)? As Silvia Federici has writ-ten, the political significance of re-defin-ing reproductive labour was twofold – not only did it undermine the self-sufficient and natural status of productive labour as a synonym with industrial waged work -not because not all waged work is productive in Marx's terms but because waged labour relied on an invisible sup-plement of unwaged labour – but it turned reproductive labour into a site of contes-tation because it was seen as inscribed into the circuits of accumulation:

…by recognizing that what we call "reproductive labor" is a terrain of accumulation and therefore a terrain of exploitation, we were able to also see reproduction as a terrain of struggle, and, very important, conceive of an anti-capitalist struggle against reproductive labor that would not destroy ourselves or our communities. ..This has allowed a re-thinking of every aspect of everyday life — child-raising, relationships between men and women, homosexual relationships, sexuality in general– in relation to capitalist exploitation and accumulation.

as well as

The ability to say that sexuality for women has

been work has led to a whole new way of thinking about sexual relationships, including gay relations. Because of the feminist movement and the gay movement we have begun to think about the ways in which capitalism has exploited our sexuality, and made it "productive."

But with all these redefinitions of produc-tion and reproduction, which arose in different historical circumstances and thus cannot just be considered from our historical or theoretical vantage to be an 'error', we still face the contradiction that expanding the definition of produc-tive labour in this way is to turn it into an affirmation of labour and a demand for a wage – which is of course a dialectical demand (Wages Against Housework), an 'impossible demand' and a strategic demand, which is also how the Guar-anteed Basic Income is framed in some of the Marxist arguments favouring it. But it pre-empts a politics based on the analysis of the spread of real subsump-tion/commodity relations, of financializa-tion, as in the generalization of debt in increasingly privatised and for-profit social reproduction, as well as turning a blind eye to the biopolitical ends of expanding the sphere of the state into the private household made private by capital's economic needs. Likewise, on the face of it, it validated and consolidated the wage relation; as well as, turning the home into a workplace for women (or whoever is not working outside it) rather than challenging the gendered division of labour, and its intimate correlation with the form of the wage. So in a way the wages for house-work concept counters the premises it starts from, which is the demolition of the class relation by means of the demoli-tion of the position of women within it. Ultimately, although positioned in its

historical context and political moment, 'excessive demands' and Wages for Housework in particular here, confront us as inadequate then and more so now, when it is the disjuncture between labour and the means of reproduction, from the side of capital as well as labour, which needs to be pushed rather than resolved in a way inevitably favourable to capital and state. The subjective dis-identification with labour and gender cannot take on a positive valence of 'excess' (if we claim the promise of the system which is not intended for us, we will expose the lie of the system), which can only be normal-izing under the current conditions of normalized disaster, but can help disclose the imperative of negation as a practical politics. It is not simply that the particular strategy of 'excess (wage-) demands' worked in some fashion as a radical politics in the welfare-state Fordist era and is no longer capable of doing so; it is that capital is confronting us with these demands now, demands that presuppose 'conditions where [they] can no longer be raised'.

Following this ambivalent thread, I'd like to end with an open question about the troubled dialectic between affirmation and negation in feminist and communist politics. The dialectic of the affirmative and negative is perhaps the most inter-esting legacy of the strain of autonomist marxism I've been discussing here. The Wages for Housework campaign, extended in some measure to any 'de-fensive' campaigns on behalf of the social wage could be seen as one of the clearest examples of this. The choice to affirm an identity as a worker with a view towards dismantling the whole labour-capital relation through an impossibly

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expansive and immeasurable concept of labour parallels the move of affirming membership of a subjugated class within the capital:labour relation in order to claw back some of the wealth produced by labour to expand the autonomy/latitude for action of the working class beyond being a working class. To claim how useful you are to capital in order to wrest a measure of independence from it is the classic gesture of all welfare struggles. This then resonates with the feminist affirmation of a collectivity of women in order to eventually to show up the impossibility and injustice of gender (including gendered divisions of labour, as in Wages for Housework and most other materialist variants of feminism) as it is promulgated by the heterosexual re/productive matrix, gender as naturalizing logic of atomisation and control. Here it might be worth adding a concept of 'gender' as a real abstraction in capital and revisiting some of Shulamith Firestone's 'sex-class' argu-

ments from The Dialectic of Sex among other articulations as in Foucault, Melia or Hocquenghem that square the logic of sexual preference and the commodity, or in the work of Denise Riley on the problematic category of 'women' in feminism. The history of the feminist movements raises a lot of questions about identification and dis-identification, i.e. what are the problems and potentials of identifying collectively as an oppressed group in order to overcome both that oppression and the group identity that perpetuates it – this of course links to Marx's idea about the working class having to not be the working class anymore if capitalist class society is to be overcome. The structure of 'radical identification' thus seems to traverse both identity politics and class politics, but this will have to be taken up further another time.

Interview with AAAAARG.org

What are the key aims of your project and how did it take shape, come about?

At the beginning I wrote this: AAAARG is a conversation platform – at different times it performs as a school, or a reading group, or a journal.

AAAARG was created with the intention of developing critical discourse outside of an institutional framework. But rather than thinking of it like a new building, imagine scaffolding that attaches onto existing buildings and creates new architectures between them.

Sharing books is not a new practice, it has happened for a long time in various ways. Publishing itself could be seen through this lens. All that AAAARG does is to bring these multiple and diverse instances of sharing books into relation with one another, so that they might inform one another, leaving visible traces, something for others to use. There are many complications, questions, and consequences that are raised in the process, but the aim has always been to support radical thought outside of existing academic contexts.

Do you see your project as an archive, or a collection or is it challenging the very notion of this?

Well, it is a self-organized archive and a collective collection, but I see the project more as a resource. It's contents are the

materials for the production of writing, artworks, demonstrations, reading groups, self-institutions, films, lectures, critical thought, etc. Of course there are many kinds of resources – some quite exploitative – but the word, with its emphasis on use and access, seems a better fit than archives or collections, which appear motivated more by their internal logic (how they're organized, how something gets in, how objects relate to one another, etc.)

Is it possible for the internet to act as a reason to change copyright laws or do the preservation of copyright law and the illegal distribution of content on the internet create semi-institutional subcultures which reinforce cultural hegemony?

I don't know. But it seems clear that the internet has become a reason to change copyright laws. The labor and money required to produce a copy of something and distribute it has, for many things, become very small. Therefore copyright laws are changed as a means of combatting the technical affordances of computers and the internet, to produce scarcity and secure the interests of businesses. I'm not sure what you're asking in the second part of the question, but certainly some practices of illegal content distribution maintain the situation more than disrupt it; and some are connected to extremely exploitative and destructive groups. It's impossible to generalize.

How does the platform you have developed and the work it distributes either depart or contribute to the emphasis of some material over others?

Interview with AAAAARG.org

Anyone can upload texts and there is no approval process. Nonetheless, there is a coherence to the library, which is apparent if you look at it. When you look closer, though, you see government documents, tax forms, schematics, and leaks in addition to philosophy, political theory or art criticism. It's not that anything does or doesn't make sense because of what it is (what's the topic? is the author famous enough? what disciplinary history does it inherit from?), what matters is the relationship that someone has to it. Things get uploaded because they're being used by a group of people, or because one person found a piece of writing so exciting they wanted other people to read it, or because someone has the need for it. And that need comes about from many reasons: the book isn't sold where they are; they aren't academically affiliated; they don't have the money; their library was shut down.