Work, Bodies, and the Emerging Politics of Alienation

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Abstract

Labour in the "post-industrial" society alienates bodies' embodied capacities such that bodies' potential to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – has become the social form of the domination of labour by capital. The labour process of these emergent forms of labour is a political space in which bodies' potential for praxis is formatively shaped and deployed in the making of bodies in desiring forms, constituting and re-constituting social environments in forms that unevenly and contestedly reflect transformations in modes of capital accumulation. This social-fixing of indeterminate labour-power links and decouples the inner relations between power, production, reproduction, value, and subjectivity that constitute the emerging politics of alienation. My jumping-off points to these relations are a set of investigations that purportedly describe "new" and "hegemonic" forms of labour in the post-industrial society: the sociological and political economic enquiries into 'aesthetic labour', 'emotional labour' and the triadic conception of 'affective/immaterial/biopolitical labour'. I resolve the one-sided and contradictory elements of these explanations with an empirically-informed dialectical reconfiguration of the concept of body work that identifies new dimensions to the corporeal character of alienated labour. Alienated body work is attendant to a deepening of the reciprocal relations across productive and reproductive spheres and therein alienated body work integrates articulations of the capitalist politics of production together with the social mechanisms of the production of subjectivity more acutely than in previous phases of capitalist production. This deepening connection between spheres of production and reproduction is the centre of the contradiction of the social form of the domination in the post-industrial society: the emerging politics of alienation is constituted by the potential for a capitalistic transformation of the body which forecloses on the subversive potential of bodies' capacity to engage in praxis but this social condition simultaneously brings those embodied political capacities into direct confrontation with the logic of value at the very centre of production.

Dedicated to
Kathleen and Knoxie,
whose lessons remain.

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All errors remain my own.

Contents

Introduction: Work and the Production of Politics

> *"From the relationship of estranged labour to private property it further follows that the emancipation from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in the* political *form of the* emancipation of the workers*; not that* their *emancipation alone was at stake but because the emancipation of the workers contains universal human emancipation—and it contains this because the whole of human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production, and every relation of servitude is but a modification and consequence of this relation."*
>
> Karl Marx[1]

Between 2006 and 2008 I was working in the recruitment industry, selling various services to a variety of unsuspecting and suspicious human resources workers. This company engaged in recruitment for an unusual mix of branches of industry; mechanical and pipeline engineering, a variety of IT and software development, and in the recruitment of salespeople. Why is this an unusual mix? In each of these industries the object of labour appears to have a distinct character. In these types of engineering work the object of labour is a tangible material thing – a cog, a pin, a pipe, a machine; the character of the object is entirely coordinate to the character of the objects of industrial capitalism. In software development, at its most basic, the object is a line of code that is manipulated through a user interface, by means of a computer system, powered through a Central Processing Unit drawing on various types of memory chips and drives such that it interacts with other lines of code in order to produce a wide range of computations that are rendered as visible forms transmitted through a display screen. Apparently more ethereal than a lathe or an oil pipeline network, this distinctly post-industrial object and attendant labour processes still carry with them the objectifications of industrial capitalism; its labour process is still constituted by the objectification of technical knowledge in machines with the aim to produce value. But what of sales? What is the object of sales work? Is it the commodity being sold? Is that the object of labour? Is it the person who is "being sold"?[2] Is it the order sheet or the invoice that is the object of labour, where the exchange becomes a measurable coding of value constituted by labour-time, surplus, wage

[1] Karl Marx. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Tr. Martin Milligan. (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988). 82. Emphasis in original.

[2] To "be sold" is a common phraseology in the sales industry and is used to describe a person who has been persuaded to buy the given commodity. As such, it does not describe the selling of a person but describes the process by which either the desire to say "yes" or the inability to say "no" has been produced.

and profit? Why was I so fascinated with these questions about the object of labour in these industries? Surely I had a job to do; I had to sell the company's recruitment product and motivate, cajole and coerce others to do the same. So although I was intimately invested in these questions – what is it exactly that I do? – but also not supposed to engage myself in apparently academic enquiries about the constituent relations of the process by which I produce value nor in similar enquiries factors of labour processes in the various branches of industry that produce the value by which I reproduce my life. Is it me then? Is it the sales worker's body that is the object of the sales labour process? Do I need make myself into a particular qualitative form of a body as a precursor to engaging in these forms of inter-subjective modes of labour? What do I do to the person who I'm selling to in the process of making him or her "sold"? What's work doing to me? What's it doing to them? How is it changing the way we think? Is it changing who we are? If so, why? Do these relations pertain across other forms of inter-subjective labour? What is the purpose of these transformations and what is the politics that produces them and is attendant to them? What is the politics of the so-called "post-industrial economy"?

Marx's theory of alienation was both an instigator for these questions and a framework for thinking through them; the relationship between the worker and his or her object of work is a key aspect of Marx's theory. But it was both satisfactory and unsatisfactory. On the one hand, the theory of alienation makes it possible to problematise the character of the relationship between the worker and the object within the context of the entire labour process and the context of the totality of the politics of capitalism. Marx's theory of alienation shows how the character of the relationship between the worker and the object both constitutes and is constituted by the relationship between the worker and his or her activity. In turn, these two relations constitute the possibilities for workers to engage what Marx calls their species-being in their mode of life and they constitute the character of the separation of humans from one another. By taking the object as a starting point Marx's theory defines and explains relations that are inimitably political and that immediately engage questions such as freedom, desire, choice, need, justice, expropriation, exploitation, and so on. On the other hand, it could not answer my questions; Marx's theory does not take into account the post-industrial transformation of forms of labour and the concomitant transformations in the dimensions of the relationship between workers and their object. Marx had little idea of these inter-subjective forms of labour – what I call "emergent forms of labour" – or of the prominence they would come to take in the so-called "knowledge economy" or "new economy". And so the apparent insight into these forms of inter-subjective labour offered by Marx's theory of

alienation can only offer a starting point. As such, the theory of alienation is uniquely suited to the political problem of these forms of inter-subjective labour – the theory of alienated labour begins from the object and it is the character of the object that is the most apparent change in this transformation of labour. However, if the theory of alienation is to contribute to our knowledge of the political economy of the contemporary conjunction of capitalism there is rigorous conceptual, theoretical and historical work that must be done in order to make it relevant to this transformation.

Why was I even thinking about these questions at all? We go to work, we produce things, we get paid a wage, we go home; a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. This is more or less what Adam Smith, James Mill, Friedrich von Hayek, Milton Friedman *et al*. tell us. Today it seems that politics ends where production begins. But is it true? Is the politics of production basically a space of consent and fair exchange of property? Is this what work is? Or is it something deeply sinister, oppressive and exploitative? David Bell and Richard Florida tell us that work in the post-industrial society, the work of the creative class, is a progressive and liberating social force. The significance of my problematic lies here: as a proletarian I've never found much liberation to be had by virtue of being a member of this so-called creative class. And this is why I was thinking about these questions. There remains a distinct *un*freedom to labour and to life. Can a theory of alienation relevant to today's times tell us about the politics of contemporary societies in the same way as Marx's theory of alienation told us about the politics of the industrial proletariat? My aim is to produce an understanding of labour in post-industrial capitalism that can articulate the present social condition of the proletariat, can explain the contours of the capital's domination of labour politically and illustrate the challenges posed by the project of praxis.

To introduce my study I want to talk about why emergent forms of labour are important to the production of politics in the so-called post-industrial society. First, I will set-out the problematic. In doing so I will summarise my key arguments and analyses and illustrate how they bring me to the conclusion by which I make my key contribution to knowledge: I find that the capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – is the social form of the domination of labour by capital. Second, to situate my study within its broader theoretical and empirical contexts I will then focus on a set of precepts regarding the relation between work and life: the periodisation of capitalism, the inherently political character of work, and the politics of alienation. Throughout this discussion of precepts I illustrate how the contributions my thesis makes to studies in economic organisation, labour process analysis and labour

studies, the sociology of work and the political economy of work are necessary elements for a significant contribution to the discipline of politics. This discussion will also situate my work within a Marxist approach that is defined by Feinberg as the 'philosophy of praxis,' a term that he applies to the Lucaksian elements of the Frankfurt School but which I argue has a much more broad intellectual heritage and enduring influence.[1] This discussion will demonstrate how the epistemological concerns that are attendant to my approach rely on a unity between theoretical analysis and empirical study; that is, it is an approach that is concerned with challenging the separation between philosophy, politics and economics. I will then highlight the contribution and the significance of my research and to conclude this introduction I will summarise each of the chapters of the thesis indicating the flow of my argument.

0.1. The Body in Emergent Forms of Labour: the problematic

Emergent forms of labour are contingent upon the alienation of the political capacities of workers, making bodies themselves the basic unit of politics in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism and rendering the labour process and the sphere of reproduction as critical spaces for anticapitalist politics. Particular forms of cultural, ideological, and community environments are produced by the subjects of an economic organisation of emergent forms of labour; these environments constitute the political spaces that are regulated by states, transnational associations and international bodies, and their organising elements. I use the term "emergent forms of labour" to describe the kinds of work that are regarded as epitomic – even hegemonic – in the so-called "post-industrial society"; these are kinds of work that ontologically entail the commodification, exploitation, and alienation of the political capacities of bodies as labour-power. The emerging politics of alienation is not constituted by a simple form of the subsumption of bodies under capital but is produced by subjects within a process in which indeterminate bodies, and their indeterminate political capacities and potentialities, are socially-fixed. This social-fixing is a relation constituted by the capitalist organisation of labour, the capitalist sphere of consumption, and the capitalistic character of modes of the reproduction of labour-power. There is no totalising form of domination of political life by economic logic – whether that logic be the logic of capital accumulation or the logic of anticapitalist antagonism. There is a fundamental absence of totalisation within the political economic totality because the social-fixing of bodies as labour-power is bound

[1] Andrew Feinberg. *The Philosophy of Praxis: Marx, Lucaks, and the Frankfurt School*. (London: Verso, 2014).

together within temporal, spatial, and historical limits. As Kristin Carls argues, 'labour control is nothing static or homogeneous, but the outcome and object of constant struggles.'[1] The subject, the body, is a precarious figure within and against economic determination, inside and outside the point of production. The emerging politics of alienation is not a totalising force upon the state and states but is a form of politics that links with and decouples from the modes of national governance and international relations that have emerged from the global hegemony of liberal-democratic states in the *laissez-faire* and monopoly periods of capitalist alienation. In an important sense, my thesis examines Michael A. Lebowitz's argument that 'no one could honestly say that capitalism is a good society…The logic of capital generates a society in which all human values are subordinated to the search for profits.'[2] I examine this by focusing specifically on the transformation of politics that is attendant to the transformation in the organisation of labour. The emerging politics of alienation are the politics of a new world breaking in to the old, a world that presents greater challenges to anticapitalist politics than the one over which Manchester's satanic mills loomed darkly: the dominion of the emergent labour process over the bodies of workers in this specific phase of capitalism extends to hearts and minds, not simply arms and legs.

My thesis addresses a set of conceptual problems that emerge from transformations in the organisation of work, that is, from an empirical problem. I begin the substantive part of my investigation and argument by examining the most influential and enduring concepts to have emerged from this transformation – the Strathclyde Group's concept of aesthetic labour, Arlie Russell Hochschild's emotional labour, and the post-*operaisti* concepts of affective/immaterial labour and biopolitical production. On the one hand, I find that the concept of aesthetic labour eradicates the political from production and that the concept of emotional labour reproduces the boundaries of the politics of capitalist production, limiting political space of production to negotiations between organised labour and capital and to moments of micro-resistance and micro-solidarity. On the other hand, the triadic conceptualisation of affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production purports to show that a revolutionary exodus from capital is immanent in the form of the transformation in the organisation of work. All of these concepts have the same object – the transformation in the organisation of work that has occurred since around 1970 – but argue from the perspective of a different aspect of labour. The proponents of aesthetic labour argue that the aesthetic properties of bodies have new relevance as labour-power, the proponents of emotional labour

[1] Kristin Carls. 'Affective Labour in Milanese Large Scale Retailing: Labour Control and Employees' Coping Strategies', *Ephemera* 7:1 (2007). 48.
[2] Michael A. Lebowitz. *The Socialist Alternative: Real Human Development*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010). 16.

argue that the commercialisation of feeling is a central aspect of the sociology of work, the proponents of affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production argue that the organisation of work must necessarily give greater autonomy to workers because of transformations in value production.

From my examination of the labour process of emergent forms of labour in chapter four, my reconfiguration of the concept of body work in chapter five, and my reconfiguration of Marx's theory of alienation in chapter six, I argue that the essence of transformations in the organisation of work is the reification of bodies as labour-power. Not simply bodies but rather, more specifically, the political capacities of bodies. As such, there are elements of continuity and elements of change in the transformations of the form of the exploitation of labour-power. Political capacities of bodies are formatively shaped within social, economic and ideological environments. I argue, however, that emergent forms of labour are at the centre of a productive organism that is fundamental to the constitution of these environments and the formation of the subjects that create them. The alienation of bodies' political capacities is constituted by their coding as aspects of value-producing labour-power within the sphere of reproduction, by their commodification as labour-power in the wage-labour exchange, as a result of their active deployment in the production of the object of the labour process, by their being rendered as the object of the labour process, and through the consumption of the cultural and ideological aspects of commodities produced by emergent forms of labour. Alienation in emergent forms of labour is constituted by a twisting and distortion of the political capacities of bodies in the image of the figure of exchange-value; every moment of alienation has exchange-value at its centre and as such the antagonism between labour and capital is played out politically at the point of production and in the sphere of reproduction. My empirically-informed theoretical analysis of emergent forms of labour by means of an historical materialist method and the theory of alienation makes an important contribution to the resolution of the analytical problems and contradictions that pertain amidst the contemporary conceptual landscape of labour. Most importantly, my thesis resolves the binary demarcation that pertains between the politics proposed by the contemporary conceptual landscape of emerging forms of labour, which on the one hand implies the end of politics and on the other affirms the end of capitalism.

In my examination of the relationship between the organisational and the active forms of labour, the production of the political environment and the subjects who both inhabit and create that environment, I continually find contrary to the intentionalist understanding of subjectivities that are often central to the liberal and social constructionist contributions to the

field of labour studies. As Lisa Adkins argues, investigations into these problematics oftentimes invoke 'a version of personhood…which side-steps a consideration of how personhood itself may be materially reconstituting in the new economy. Specifically, when people are discussed, they are assumed to be largely in control of and indeed to own their own identities and bodies.'[1] My examination defines the processes that render this view of the Cartesian 'irreducible intendedness' of the subject toward the object – the object also being him or herself – as lacking in the critical tools required to offer a more full account of the production of political subjects and the political and ideological environment.[2]

0.2. Periods of capitalism

One of the precepts that underpins my study is the idea that capitalism is a distinctive mode of production that can be further distinguished by three phases. The periodisation of capitalism is by no means a unique or contentious standpoint; it is, nonetheless, indicative of a rich stream of contending characterisations of how capitalism operates and the sort of political environment it creates. Capitalism is usually periodised by the terms '*laissez-faire* capitalism', 'monopoly capitalism', or cognates thereof, and a variety of terms that describe its third phase.[3] My focus is this third phase. Daniel Bell's examination of the transition from monopoly capitalism to the post-industrial society is well-travelled.[4] Christian Marazzi argues that 'what has happened in these last 30 years is a veritable metamorphosis of production processes of…surplus-value.'[5] Some talk of the increasingly relevance of the emotional and embodied capacities of workers.[6] Others propose a 'Cognitive Capitalism' and new and revolutionary class-compositions, arguing that this period of capitalism is an organisation of value-production that is on the verge of collapse: Hardt and Negri speak of 'Empire' and the 'Multitude', Paulo Virno of a 'post-Fordist semblance' and of 'exodus', and Nick Dyer-Witheford of high-technology capitalism and of New Social Movements as 'species-being

[1] Lisa Adkins. 'The New Economy, Property and Personhood', *Theory, Culture & Society* 22:1 (2005). 112.
[2] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value', in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. (New York: Routledge, 2006). 212.
[3] Ben Fine and Lawrence Harris. *Rereading Capital* (London: Macmillan, 1979). 119.
[4] Daniel Bell. *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting.* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).
[5] Christian Marazzi. *The Violence of Financial Capitalism.* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011). 48.
[6] Arlie Russell Hochschild. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2003).; Chris Warhurst, *et al.* 'Aesthetic Labour in Interactive Service Work: Some Case Study Evidence from the "New Glasgow"' *The Service Industries Journal* 20:3 (2000). 1-18.; Carol Wolkowitz. *Bodies at Work*. (London: Sage, 2006).

movements.'[1] Others challenge these revolutionary formulations. Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis argue respectively that the cognitive capitalism theorists' focus on the knowledge worker hides 'the continuing exploitations of women's unpaid domestic labour' and of agricultural and manufacturing labour.[2] My key argument throughout this thesis is that, when viewed from the perspective of the political, the central aspect of this change – the locus of the political character of the transition from monopoly capital to this contemporary configuration – is labour. I engage in this debate and directly challenge the abstract conceptual constellation of concrete forms of emergent labour and the various theories on the politics of contemporary capitalism that emerge from it.

As such, my engagement with the periodisation of capitalism opens up a series of theoretical and conceptual tools with which to engage the historical absences in Marx's theory to the contemporary political economy. I engage in these debates in three ways. First, I examine the concepts of aesthetic labour, emotional labour, and the cognitive capitalism approaches to affective labour, immaterial labour and biopolitical production. I examine these approaches through the method of immanent critique, identifying contradictions and confluences with the aim of characterising the purported politics that follow from their formulations. Second, following this series of conceptual and philosophical analyses, I engage in an empirically-informed theoretical approach to the labour process of emerging forms of labour. Third, I reconfigure the conceptual analysis of the politics of emergent forms of labour using the method of dialectical abstraction and the theory of alienation with the aim to uncover the political relations that extend from and to these kinds of labour processes. Through these methods and analyses I challenge Bell's liberalism and its reincarnation in the conceptual structure of aesthetic labour, I challenge the internalisation of the capitalistic framing of the politics of production within the structure of emotional labour, and I challenge the optimism of the cognitive capitalism theorists. In doing so I draw upon key aspects of Federici's research on reproduction, theories of the capitalist labour process, research on the body in capitalism, as well as other Marxist and feminist approaches to the political economy of work.

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[1] Jan Moullier Boutang. *Cognitive Capitalism*. Tr. Ed Emery. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire.* (London: Penguin, 2005).; Paulo Virno. 'Post-Fordist Semblance', *SubStance* 36:1 (2007): 42-46.; Paulo Virno. 'Virtuosity and Revolution: The Political Theory of Exodus' in Paulo Virno and Michael Hardt (eds). *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).; Nick Dyer-Witheford. *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and circuits of struggle in high-technology capitalism.* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999).; Nick Dyer-Witheford. '1844/2004/2044: The Return of Species Being' *Historical Materialism* 12:4 (2004). 11.

[2] Silvia Federici. 'On Affective Labor', in Michael A. Peters and Ergin Bulut (eds) *Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011). 58.; George Caffentzis. 'A Critique of Cognitive Capitalism' in *Letters of Blood and Fire: Work, Machines, and the Crisis of Capitalism*. (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2013). 122.

My thesis is constituted by a fundamental re-thinking of the characterisation of the contemporary landscape of labour and the politics that are purported to be attendant to it.

0.3. The Politics of Work

My problematic is significant to politics because work is immediately political. Work, of any kind, in any society, engages forms of social cooperation. Work is the fundamental aspect of social and of biological life. Biological life is sustained by work because it is dependent upon the use-values that work produces. To find a time when humans did not rely on work to live would require us to travel back to perhaps over a million years into the past and across several distinct sub-categories of the homo genus.[1] Work does not simply require social cooperation at the point of production but produces general forms of social cooperation that are bound together with questions such as who works and who does not, who does which forms of work and who does others, how the values produced by work are distributed, who decides what work is done and how it is done, and who controls the objects upon which work is carried out. As such, work is always bound together with power and renders subjects, to use Rancière's formulation, as party to or a non-part of the political life of a given society.[2] As far as we know, all historical forms of work, throughout early tribal societies, in slave-based economies such as those of Ancient Greece, Persia, and Egypt, feudal societies in Northern Europe and East Asia and in labour under capitalism have been constituted amidst historically-determined practices of domination, subordination, consent, and resistance. The organisation of production and the construction of political apparatuses persist alongside one another; economics and politics are not separate but are a unity within which historically-determined practices collide with one another; economic power excludes subjects from political space and political power is deployed to produce and reproduce economic power. The economic system of production reproduces political systems of mastery and servitude that are reflected in the organisation of economy. This relation is not an algebraic formula that brings the symbols of economic domination and political domination into conjunction. This relation is not prefigured but is the object of the analysis. My aim is to examine the relation between the qualitative character of the domination of the wage in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism, how the qualities of this domination interpellates political subjects

[1] Thomas Plummer. 'Flaked Stones and Old Bones: Biological and Cultural Evolution at the Dawn of Technology', *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 47: (2004). 125-126.
[2] Jacques Rancière. 'Ten Theses on Politics', *Theory & Event* 5:3 (2001).

demographically and in terms of the form of their political subjectivities, and ultimately to define the emerging politics of alienation.

Work in capitalism is, contrary to popular perception, not simply what we do in between those hours lost from life when we clock-in and clock-out. Work is what we do when we interact with the world and work is central to life. This is a bold statement, controversial to many who regard work as an unwelcome interruption amidst spells of life; the idea of work as a painful drudge, as something we *have* to do in between living our lives, is common in liberal approaches and their progenitors and at the very edges of anticapitalist critique in the Zerowork elements of *operaismo*.[1] One of the things this thesis does is demonstrate that this view of work emerges from an ahistorical reflection of the capitalist organisation of production upon the politics of work and renders that reflection as a fixed, eternal and immutable representation of the relationship between people, the work they do, and the world itself. If we were to take labour under capitalism as a reflection of the dimensions of work then it is no surprise the abolition of work is the political goal of many. But the dimensions of work are not reducible to its apparent contours under capitalism. To address this fallacy, I follow in the historical materialist tradition and make a distinction between work and labour. I argue that to understand the politics of work it is vital to make a distinction between the concrete activity that constitutes interaction with the world and the particular, historical mode of the organisation of this activity. Under capitalism, it is labour, not work, that we do in return for the wage upon which our lives are so dependent.

Work is political because the way we work and what we produce give both form and content to life. As Francis Green argues, 'work itself is a major and defining part of most people's lives. It takes up a large proportion of their time on this earth and profoundly moulds their life experiences.'[2] What we produce through work is not simply things; work produces social relations and ultimately produces the subjects, the human bodies, who do the work, the bodies who consume and desire, and it produces and shapes desire itself. Work is political because it is the life of the species; work is the basis of both biological and social existence and, as such, the organisation of work is the cornerstone of the organisation of social life. To invert this statement and view it from the perspective of the political rather than the perspective of work, power, consumption, culture, and everyday life are fundamental to political life; all of these

[1] I argue that this is fundamentally a Mercantilist view of work that has been reproduced in anticapitalist critique. On the Mercantilists see David A. Spencer. *The Political Economy of Work*. (London: Routledge, 2009). 10-13. For an example of the *operaista* politics of Zerowork see Franco "Bifo" Berardi. *Precarious Rhapsody: Semiocapitalism and the pathologies of the post-alpha generation*. (London: Minor Compositions, 2009). 25.
[2] Francis Green cf. Linda McDowell. *Working Bodies: Interactive Service Employment and Workplace Identities.* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). 4.

intrinsically connected modes of social cooperation, of political Being, are brought into relation with one another within the organisation of work in all societies, albeit in some societies more than others. I argue, therefore, that political life in work is reflected in and connected to political life in general because work is a site of the production of subjectivity. To view the intrinsic political character of work from another vantage point, 'if capital cannot be understood as external to labour', as John Holloway posits, 'it cannot be understood as something economic.'[1] This thesis therefore addresses itself to the problem identified by Paul Thompson and Chris Smith, that 'distinctions about moments in political economy (exchange, production, circulation, realisation) have been lost or subordinated to a general focus on the labour process as work organisation.'[2] I argue further that these distinctions between moments in political economy must be brought back to bear on how the politics of the labour process is characterised. Work makes us who we are; what we do and how we do it is a process of formatively shaping the qualitative character of our political subjectivity and shapes our very bodies.

But work does not simply make us who we are; it shapes the subjects that occupy and create the world. As Ana C. Dinerstein and Michael Neary argue, 'capitalist work is not sanctioned by society, but society is sanctioned by capitalist work.'[3] This thesis examines this relationship between work and society politically, investigating the transformations in the ways we work, the ways we live, and who we are. I examine how, to take this concept uncritically for the moment, "capitalist work" sanctions society, I investigate the character of this society, and identify the points of resistance and subversion against capitalist power. This idea of "sanctioning" is, nonetheless, not a claim that the time spent on production is a totalising force that determines subjectivity. On the contrary, the character, dimensions and counterpoints of this "force" are the object of the analysis. But my thesis does begin from a claim that work is such a fundamental feature of society – in terms of magnitude and of quality – that it intersects with all the spheres of life that we regard as influential in the shaping of our selves. We all work, whether that work is paid labour or it is interaction with the objective world with the aim of producing a use-value. We all consume things that are produced by work. It is within this context that the thesis explores and uncovers the ways by which relatively recent changes in forms of the capitalist organisation of work have

[1] John Holloway. 'In the Beginning Was the Scream' in Werner Bonefeld (ed.). *Revolutionary Writing:* Common Sense *Essays in Post-Political Politics*. (New York: Autonomedia, 2003). 19.
[2] Paul Thompson and Chris Smith. 'Labour Power and Labour Process: Contesting the Marginality of the Sociology of Work', *Sociology* 43:5 (2009). 923.
[3] Ana C. Dinerstein and Michael Neary. 'From Here to Utopia: Finding Inspiration for the Labour Debate' in Ana C. Dinerstein and Michael Neary (eds). *The Labour Debate: An Investigation into the Theory and Reality of Capitalist Work.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001). 10.

determined and have been determined by changes in the way we live, how those changes have altered the ways we relate to our own bodies and to the bodies of others, and, ultimately, how these transformations bear upon the political problem of freedom. As such, this thesis contributes to the 'project of developing a political economy of the working class [that] involves not merely adding labour on to an existing theoretical framework but on integrating labour into the whole.'[1]

My key contribution to knowledge is that the political problem of emergent forms of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism is that the properties by which bodies are political and capable of praxis are becoming central to the production of the object and this object is not simply inanimate nature but is human bodies. As such, there are continuous elements of social organisation operating in this relationship but there is also flux – the key aspects of this flux are the annexation of the modes by which bodies are formatively shaped and how they are brought directly into the capitalist labour process. As such, the very capacities by which political subjects can mobilise resistance to domination and subjugation are the very object of domination and subjugation. The political capacities of bodies are under siege by the logic of surplus-value; in work, in consumption and leisure, and in reproduction. My analysis demonstrates that the politics of emergent forms of labour are, from the perspective of capital, a struggle for the end of politics. This end of politics is not simply an internalisation of capitalist norms of accumulation – the commodification of labour-power, the subordination of reproduction to the labour-market, the production of the world as private property and the production of those outside private property as outside politics; the commodification of the political capacities of bodies is the process of the integration of the political subject within the logic of surplus-value and outside the possibility of resistance. The politics of emergent forms of labour, from the perspective of labour, are politics for the exclusion of capitalist logic from political space. As such, the politics of emergent forms of labour are constituted by a reconfiguration of the character of the structural antagonism between labour and capital in which nothing is certain, for which there is no teleology or logic of immanence that offers assured visions of the future. This problem is significant because everything, including Being, is at stake; everything is caught in the contradiction between the end of politics and the end of capitalism This is not an optimistic thesis but rather is one that aims to chart out the challenges that must be surmounted to engage anticapitalist praxis because the very capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans

[1] Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin. 'Bringing the Working Class In: Michael Lebowitz's *Beyond "Capital"*', *Historical Materialism* 14:2 (2006). 119.

express their Being as political Being – is the social form of the domination of labour by capital.

0.4. The Politics of Alienation

My study into the politics of alienation is concerned with how economic organisation produces and reproduces forms of domination and servitude. The theory of alienation is a framework that uncovers processes of servitude and domination, it is a means by which the character and dimensions of this production of political space can be interrogated. I argue that the theory of alienation enables a much needed reintroduction of work – of the importance and significance of wage-labour relations within the mechanisms that reproduce society and political life – to the discipline of politics. Thus, this thesis is significant politically because it charts out how the politics of work is produced and how its character shapes the character of *politics*. As such, this is not a thesis that takes people's alienation from political participation as its focal or starting point; rather it implies that this type or appearance of alienation is a symptom of a much more fundamental process of the production of politics as police, to use Rancière's formulation again, that proceeds from the alienation of labour.[1] Alienation is not (simply) a state of separation from the institutions of political life, nor is it a psychological disorder, but rather is a process by which the world, political life, and the life of the human subject and of the species, is distorted, twisted, and appropriated as private property forms. Alienation is a nexus of political economic mechanisms that reproduce the capitalist mode of production and its character of domination.

The theory of alienation is fundamental to Marx's project to lay bare the effects of the capitalist organisation of work upon life itself. Alienation is not the only theory or conceptual matrix deployed by Marx with this aim and, as such, I do not argue that his theory of alienation displaces his theories of surplus-value or exploitation. Rather, I argue that his theory of alienation takes the same object as the theories of surplus-value and exploitation but examines it from a different vantage point. Philosophically, with this approach I argue contrary to Louis Althusser's attempt to amputate Marx's pre-1848 works from Marxism. As Guido Sarosta argues, 'the debate over the existence of continuity between Marx's early critique of alienated labour in the Paris Manuscripts and his mature writings such as Capital and the Grundrisse has been settled both from a theoretical and textual point of view. The

[1] Rancière 'Ten Theses on Politics'

existence of an inner unity underlying the different phases of Marx's intellectual project seems to be now part of the "ABC of Marxism."'[1]

I have chosen to focus the attention of this contemporary investigation into work by using this theory because the character of the relationship between the worker and the object is at the centre of alienation theories. It is from the character of this relation from which all other aspects of the theory emerge. A key characteristic of emergent forms of labour is that an alteration in the character of the object of work is at their centre. It is therefore timely to deploy alienation theory in an attempt to uncover potentially important characteristics of the power apparatus that emerges from the capitalist organisation of the labour process in these forms of production that apparently predominate in the westernised, post-industrial times and spaces.

I demonstrate that the politics of alienation in emergent forms of labour opens up an important and significant perspective on ideas about the structural antagonism between labour and capital. I find that alienation in emergent forms of labour has a particularly political character that goes beyond Marx's positive theory that the emancipation of the worker from alienation is the political form of the emancipation from private property. Alienation appears as a foreclosing on the political project of dealienation because the capacities and potentialities of bodies by which emancipation is to proceed are formatively shaped in the figure of value. Alienation in emergent forms of labour pertains from the political character of the embodied capacities of labour-power. Alienation in emergent forms of labour is no longer a set of four movements, albeit ones that pertain within an ontological inner connection of the alienation from the object, activity, species-being, and fellow humans. The human character of the object of emergent forms of labour renders alienation as a single movement of the alienation of and from the human that is the object of emergent forms of labour by means of alienated activity that can only proceed on the basis of the twisting and distorting of the human capacities that constitute the potential for species-being. Alienation in emergent forms of labour brings those factors that, in Marx's theory, are located outside the labour process into the labour process and simultaneously draws those four factors into a closer relation to one another. This is not to say that these relations do not ontologically entail one another in Marx's theory of alienated labour, but rather that the temporal and spatial dimensions of these factors of alienation are brought into congruence with one another as a consequence of the alienated unity between production and reproduction that attends transformations in the

[1] Guido Sarosta. 'Editorial Introduction: Rethinking Marx's Mature Social Theory', *Historical Materialism* 12:3 (2004). 44.

organisation of production. As such, emergent forms of labour bring those capacities by which workers are to emancipate themselves from capital directly into confrontation with capital at the point of production. My study of the politics of alienation is an interrogation of the dynamics of the contradiction between the foreclosing on the revolutionary potential of the indeterminacy of labour-power and the front of struggle that emergent forms of labour create.

0.5. Summary of Chapters

I open my investigation with an examination and interpretation of the theory and method that underpins it. I engage in an historical examination of the development of Marx's critical method, his dialectical method, and his ontological theory, highlighting how I deploy particular aspects of the theory and method in my argument. I argue that the theory of alienation stands at the centre of Marx's work and I explore how it connects to his political economy and theory of value.

In chapter two I examine the conceptual field of emergent forms of labour, deploying the method of immanent critique. I begin this examination with an introduction to the historical study of work by discussing the distinction between work and labour, connecting my examination to the historical materialist methods discussed in chapter one. I then analyse the key features of Arlie Russell Hochschild's concept of emotional labour, the concept of aesthetic labour, and the development of Maurizio Lazzarato's concept of immaterial labour. I draw out the confluences and contradictions between and within these conceptions of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism and interrogate the politics that each of these concepts propose.

In chapter three I continue the examination of theories on the politics and political economy of work that emerge from the concept of immaterial labour by engaging the contributions of a loosely connected school of Autonomist Marxists, the post-*operaisti*. I examine the ways in which they have reconfigured Marx's critique of political economy such that it engages with the organisation of labour in the contemporary phase of so-called cognitive capitalism. I examine the inter-relations between their key concepts, their epistemological principles, and their connection to Marx's critique of labour through the prism of how they reconfigure the theory of alienated labour.

In chapter four I continue this critical engagement with the contemporary conceptual landscape of labour through a theoretical analysis of the labour process under capitalism. This discussion introduces an examination of the labour process of two concrete forms of emergent labour; call centre work and the work of advertising creatives. It indicates that the body is central to the problematic of autonomy and anticapitalist praxis because it is the body itself that is the object and the instrument of the labour process of emergent forms of labour.

In chapter five I critically engage with theories of the body at work and from this critique I configure a materialist and dialectical concept of body work. This conception captures the historical continuity and flux of the organisation of the exploitation of bodies and charts-out the reciprocal relationality between processes of the production of the body in work, production and reproduction.

In the final chapter, I reconfigure a specifically Marxist theory of alienation that focuses on how bodies' political capacities are made into the objects and instruments of the labour process in emergent forms of labour. I argue that the labour process of emergent forms of labour constitute an apparatus that connects the spheres of production and reproduction as an alienated unity and examine the political character of these determinations. Finally, I discuss how the dimensions of the alienation of labour bear upon the form of the social domination of capital and upon the potential for praxis in the contemporary political economy of work.

I conclude with a summary of the thesis and its contribution, a discussion of the political landscape that proceeds from the alienation of bodies' capacities and potentialities and note some of the areas for future research that emerge from my analysis.

Chapter One. Theory and Method: Critique, Dialectical Abstraction, and Marx's Theory of Alienation.

"Marx's words are like bats: one can see in them both birds and mice."

Vilfredo Pareto[1]

1.1. The Inner Connections of Immanent Critique, Dialectical Abstraction, and Historical Materialist Ontology

The politics attendant to changes in the organisation of labour can be more fully understood by means of an inner-related method of immanent critique, empirical analysis, and dialectical abstraction. In my examination of the contemporary landscape of labour I bring the method of immanent critique to bear on concepts and theories that address themselves to apparent changes in both the organisation and the concrete forms of wage-labour in this conjunction of capitalism. In chapter two I deploy this method in an examination of the concepts of aesthetic labour, affective labour, emotional labour, and immaterial labour. These concepts are used to describe and demarcate what are purportedly "new" forms of labour, unique to a specifically post-modern/post-industrial economy. I use the term "emergent forms of labour" to describe these forms of work in their concreteness, distinct from my specific use of conceptual terms to describe the theoretical products – the "abstract" forms – that have emerged from the study of emergent forms of labour. From this process of immanent critique of these abstract concepts of labour, a series of internal contradictions emerge. Most urgently, a need to focus more carefully and specifically on the contradictions of post-*operaismo* theoretical systems emerges as a consequence of their generalising aspect and the embeddedness of their theories within a theory of capital. I undertake the critique of post-*operaismo* in chapter three. As such, the form of immanent critique begins with a concern for the internal contradictions of these concepts of labour and the contradictions that pertain between them in chapter two, to a concern with the contradictions that emerge from the post-*operaismo* characterisation of the politics of work in

[1] Vilfredo Pareto. *Les Systemes socialistes, II.* (Paris, 1902). 332. Cf. Bertell Ollman. *Alienation: Marx's conception of man in capitalist society, Second edition.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). 3.

chapter three. The terrain of critique shifts to an examination of the effects of post-*operaismo* epistemological assumptions upon their key concepts, their analyses and their conclusions. I navigate this terrain with an examination of post-*operaisti* understandings of alienation and the effect of these understandings on the key concepts of their theoretical matrix; namely, general intellect and autonomy. In this way the latter parts of chapter three situates post-*operaismo* theories within the Marxist tradition and brings critique to bear on their internal contradictions.

By chapter four, 'Labour Processes and Indeterminate Bodies', the focal point of the critique is turned to how these theories on labour in contemporary capitalism can be seen to address, or not, the concrete conditions of their object of study. This positive critique proceeds through an analysis of the labour process of two forms of labour that utilise the affective, aesthetic, emotional, cognitive and communicative capacities of the worker: the work of advertising 'creative' workers and that of front-line call centre workers. It is important to state here that these examinations proceed as illustrations of forms of labour that bear the key characteristics that are highlighted in the conceptual field of the contemporary landscape of labour and not as a form of generalisation; I am not arguing that these concrete forms of work are the same as other concrete forms of emergent labour. Rather that important elements of the political economy of emergent forms of labour can be seen at work here. As such, they provide an empirical focal point from which I can investigate the production of politics in forms of labour that utilise these embodied capacities of workers.

Finally, the thesis directly deploys the method of dialectical abstraction on two objects of study. Following from the key conclusion of chapter four – that the political capacities and potentialities of bodies are utilised in forms of labour that exploit the affective, aesthetic, emotional, cognitive and communicative capacities of the worker – chapter five produces a dialectical concept of 'body work' in order to further illuminate the political economic relations of emergent forms of labour. In doing so, the analysis brings the concepts of aesthetic and emotional labour more explicitly back into view. Chapter six deploys the dialectical method of abstraction in an examination of the question of alienation and the production of politics in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism.

This process raises a number of methodological requirements that should be set out before the enquiry begins. In this chapter I illustrate the characteristics of the method of immanent critique, a project which in turn requires a discussion of its intellectual history. I discuss some key features of Marx's method of abstraction and its connection to enquiries into the relation between politics and production. This discussion of method concludes with an argument that labour is the nucleus of Marx's theoretical system and his analysis; the critique of labour is the

essence of Marx's political economy. As such, I argue in the final section of this chapter that to discard the theory of alienation is to abandon a head cornerstone of the critique of capitalism in both a negative and positive sense. To put this abstract statement in concrete historical terms, the failure to emancipate the workers, as noted by Marx in the epigraph I chose for the introduction to this work, is exactly the failure of all forms of so-called "actually existing socialism". As Erich Fromm notes, 'Marx's philosophy is one of protest; it is a protest imbued with faith in man, in his capacity to liberate himself, and to realise his potentialities.'[1] It is these twin notions of protest and the capacities of humanity that are the essence of my analysis of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism. My interpretation of Marx thus proceeds from a prioritisation of "labour", of the working class as the marginalised political subjects of capitalist societies, and therein proceeds as a thesis on bringing the working class back in to politics as a challenge to liberal understandings of the dimensions of political space and liberal characterisations of the political functions of capitalism. Attendant to this same aim to locate and examine political subjectivity in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism, my negative critique connects to three Marxist approaches to the political economy of work. My examination seeks to highlight the subjects that are absent from structuralist accounts of capitalist production and is brought to bear on the teleologies that follow from Althusserian economic determinism. Second, my analysis demonstrates that there are fields in critical studies in Marxism that produce the same teleology, but from the opposite side. Whereas Althusser produces an objective determinism – the position that the supersession of capitalism results from the inevitable structural overdeterminations produced by the capitalist organisation of production – the post-*operaisti* produce a subjective determinism – the position that communism already exists in an elemental form because the worker is already autonomous from capital and therefore a teleological 'exodus' from capital is an immanent condition of economic organisation in this period of capitalism. Finally, my critique is directed at the reduction of "labour" to "production" that is common in regulation approaches to political economy. I argue that, politically, the reduction of labour to production brings to the fore the very same absence of the essence of communism in "actually existing socialisms" – this essence being the emancipation of the workers – and as such is always in danger of producing the same 'Marx-in-caricature opposite' that is characteristic of the Soviet "Five-Year Plan for pig-iron production".[2] To address the lack in each of these approaches to a *political* economy of work I draw upon elements of socialist humanist and Lukacsian readings of Marx, particularly Bertell Ollman and István Mészáros' characterisations of Marx's method and the

[1] Erich Fromm. *Marx's Concept of Man*. (London: Continuum, 2004). vi.
[2] Paul Paolucci. *Marx and the Politics of Abstraction.* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). 1.

Frankfurt School's approach to subject formation in late capitalism. In this synthesis I also seek to resolve the structuralist critique of socialist humanism, namely the error of an 'anthropological interpretation of Marx.'[1] As such, my critique does not seek to obliterate its objects but rather aims for a critical examination and an attendant resolution of absences, contradiction, and incongruency within and between abstract characterisations and concrete conditions. Nonetheless, my critique also proceeds within an understanding of the impossibility of this project to resolve the abstract and the concrete; as George E. McCarthy argues, 'the concrete subject…cannot be completely captured by a critical science for the two realms of thought and history can never be synthesized into a higher unity.'[2] My approach also proceeds on the basis of Adorno's insight, as noted by J.M. Bernstein, that 'the division of labour between disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, history and psychology is not contained in or dictated by their material, but has been forced on them from the outside.'[3] As such, I reject the separation between philosophy and the social sciences and, in-keeping with my dialectical approach, regard these divisions as vantage points onto the same concrete totality.

Before I begin my discussion of each of these aspects of the method it is important to highlight that the process of immanent critique/empirical analysis/dialectical abstraction is exactly that – a process. These methodological operations are aspects of one intrinsically connected and inherently related method. Throughout this discussion I clarify how in Marx's method the process of immanent critique, empirical analysis, dialectical abstraction and the development of his ontology proceed alongside one another. The principles of immanent critique emerge from the production of a materialist dialectic method; the fundamental characteristics of the materialist dialectic proceed from the process of immanent critique; immanent critique and dialectical abstraction are always connected to empirical analysis: Marx's ontology is produced by these methods and the ontology determines the form of these methods. As well as describing the method of the thesis, a key aim of this discussion is to demonstrate that the validity and rigour of these seemingly circular procedures originates in the fact of political economy that 'determinants' do not stand 'completely independent of what is determined.'[4] With this in mind, because Marx's ontology can be seen to emerge from the recursive manner in which the method is developed, this chapter is structured so as to illustrate this emergence and ontology will be discussed last.

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[1] Louis Althusser. *For Marx*. Tr. Ben Brewster. (London: Verso, 2005). 155-6.
[2] George E. McCarthy. *Marx's Critique of Science and Positivism: The Methodological Foundations of Political Economy*. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988). 107.
[3] Theodor W. Adorno. Cf. J.M. Bernstein. Introduction to *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture.* (London: Routledge Classics, 2001). 2-3.
[4] Diane Elson. 'The Value Theory of Labour' in Diane Elson (ed.) *Value: The Representation of Labour in Capitalism*. London: CSE Books, 1979). 139.

The method of the thesis proceeds by way of an interpretation of Marx's thought. The thesis adopts Marx's categories and the sequence and mechanisms of his methods of enquiry with Marx's central problematic in mind: the critique of capitalism. Notwithstanding, it does so without claiming that this is the definitive interpretation of Marx. I have no desire to engage in debates regarding the interpretation of Marx's texts although I recognise that it is impossible to avoid engaging in *interpretation* itself; I set out an approach to my own problematic on the basis of an immanent critique of Marx, an immanent critique of research in Marxism and an immanent critique of the problematic itself that engages with liberal and social democratic approaches. I bring my interpretation of Marx's ontology, method, concepts and categories to bear on the concrete problematic of the production of politics in emergent forms of labour and of course the character of my interpretation is informed by my problematic. As such I would hope that the question of rigour should be brought to bear on the concrete analysis, rather than the correctitude of the representation of Marx, on the cogency of the approach rather than the devotion to the text. As noted above, my approach engages with a number of streams of inquiry in critical research in Marxism and other epistemological approaches and as such I have also attempted to avoid too much fidelity to any one by taking an open and critical approach to elements of dogma and transcendence that can be present, while also being sympathetic to the problems of incommensurability that can attend synthetical approaches. Further to this question, the thesis argues that Marx requires revision in two important ways. Firstly, Marx requires revision because history has proceeded. The organisation of the labour is neither the same as in the 19th century nor, as I will argue in chapter three, has its organisational form developed in the way that Marx thought it would. Secondly, Marx made some important errors in his analysis of capitalism that must be addressed. Importantly, although Marx offers elements toward a more full reading, I will argue in chapter five that his representation of the reproduction of labour-power is not expansive enough. Ultimately, I argue that Marx's theory of alienation must be reconfigured in order to reflect the concrete transformations in the organisation of production in the so-called post-industrial economy. I argue that this revision of Marx is entirely cognate with Marx's method and his ontological theory. Therefore, by way of this method, the thesis also adapts Marx's categories and does so through a critical analysis of the concrete conditions of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism.

1.2. Immanent critique

Immanent critique is the methodological starting point in the historical materialist project of understanding the social, political, economic and cultural conditions of the world.[1] There is a political content to the method of immanent critique that is immediate; as Robert J. Antonio states, 'immanent critique is a means of detecting the societal conditions which offer the most determinate possibilities for emancipatory social change.'[2] Immanent critique is not simply a method to interrogate apparent descriptions of the world, examine theories about the world, and deconstruct ideas about the world to reveal their component parts and relations thereby exposing contradictions therein; immanent critique is a method for critically engaging with the political, social, cultural and economic structure of societies. Immanent critique proceeds on the basis of the lack that is at the centre of Marx's indictment that 'the philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it.'[3] The interrogation of concrete social structures proceeds *alongside* this theoretical critique, as an intrinsic part of it. Immanent critique is the method of critical theory and the goal of critical theory is to reveal opportunities for the realisation of freedom. This invocation of "freedom" immediately presents a conceptual hook on which to hang the methodological coat. An important feature of immanent critique is its concern with examining how ideas about the world – ideas such as "freedom" – are articulated. Immanent critique is a method with which to understand whose interests are served by the particular framing of such ideas and it is a method with which such essentially anthropological ideas as these can be considered and framed within an ontological framework that accounts for humanity as a part of nature within history. The consequence of such a framing, as the intellectual history of critical theory demonstrates, is a series of radical reconfigurations of the ideas that emerged from 18th and 19th century liberal, socialist and anarchist thought and enquiry, for example, and that of classical political economy. I discuss why this is the case below, but for now it is enough to say that the method of immanent critique is the first stage of a process by which what is faulty, incorrect or obfuscating about representations of society, its politics and economy can be revealed. It is the first stage of the process by which hidden power relations that structure society can be uncovered. I deploy this method in order to identify where and how these power relations are obscured or poorly represented and to what, or whose, ends.

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[1] Paul Paolucci. *Marx's Scientific Dialectics: A Methodological Treatise for a New Century.* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). 108.
[2] Robert J. Antonio. 'Immanent critique as the core of critical theory: its origins and developments in Hegel, Marx and contemporary thought.' *British Journal of Sociology* 32:3 (1981). 330.
[3] Karl Marx. 'Theses on Feuerbach' in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *Selected Works.* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980). 30. Emphasis in original.

Immanent critique is also a method that is able to produce a thoroughgoing ontological theory connected to the material world and dismissive of transcendental explanations. Immanent critique is a means to examine the historical conditions of societies and the processes of their development from a critical perspective. It is not surprising therefore that immanent critique is the first step of Marx's method. But critical enquiry itself, Marx argues, begins from what he calls the 'immediate concrete'; that is, that which appears immediately before our eyes and ears, perhaps producing something as simple as a vague notion that "something is not quite right here..." My own enquiry began here when, as a child, I had a feeling that it was strange that I had friends who slept on a pillow-cases filled with torn-up rags and had few carpets in their houses. I came to think that there was something wrong about opening the fridge to see only a tub of margarine, an onion and half a loaf of bread. I found it strange that everybody I knew would hide from the "'lecky man" when he came knocking, would cash post-dated cheques with the milkman, and would be fraught at the need to buy new shoes for their children.[1] This life seemed at odds with the life that I saw represented on TV, in the newspapers and in books, and at odds with the life that I saw when I went beyond the boundary of my estate. Life never seemed to be presented from the perspective of the working class; it was as though the working class did not exist except in the working class and their experience of their own existence. When a representation of the working class did exist outside of itself, they were people who went on strike and got clubbed by brigades of policemen, or they were "youths" who threw petrol-bombs, burned cars out and got clubbed by brigades of policemen. They were working "on the black", they were "dole-ites", "smackheads".[2] It is clear to me that all of these things are symptomatic of articulations of power that reproduce a structure of political privilege that is contingent on the refusal of the political subjectivity of the working class; in many ways this is the political origin of my economic critique. I am a Marxist because Marx allows us to view the world from the perspective of the working class; he was the first to

[1] "'Lecky man" is the colloquial epithet for either one of two forms of electricity-company worker. One of these is employed to read domestic electricity meters. A great number of people, including us, had "fiddled" their electricity meter, either through the drilling of a small hole into the side of the meter through which a stopper could be inserted to prevent the rotation of the meter-wheel or by the installation of a loop of 10mm cable that would by-pass the flow of electricity around the meter. The introduction of digital machines has now rendered this first method obsolete, while the introduction of "tamper prevention systems" has rendered the second more difficult but not impossible. Should one be caught unawares by the arrival of the 'lecky man, it would be both difficult and dangerous to remove these quickly enough so that a clean inspection could take place. Recent consumer incentives for the installation of "smart meters", which track electricity consumption in real time and so make fiddled meters visible to suppliers, should also be noted. The other form of worker was a debt-collector. They would be avoided for obvious reasons.

[2] I grew up in Liverpool in the 1980s and early '90s. The Miners' Strike, the Dockers' Strike, Toxteth Riots, Hillsborough, the "sus laws", high unemployment rates, the scourge of heroin, a generalised demonisation of the culture and politics of the working class and a resistance to this demonisation were prominent motifs of the period. Alan Bleasdale's BBC play *Boys from the Blackstuff*, one of the more widely-known elements of this cultural resistance, is commonly regarded by those who know of its subject matter as more of a documentary than a dramatic work.

systematically look at the world from the vantage point of the working class and it is primarily Marxists who look at the world from this perspective. But before I venture further into these discussions of dialectical abstractions of vantage point, it is important to take a step back and examine the engagement of immanent critique with ideas and theories about the world.

Marx's political economy is preceded by his immanent critique of the works of Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach and Pierre Proudhon. Paul Paolucci elucidates some of the key principles of immanent critique.[1] First, immanent critique seeks out points in theories where things are explained by causes that are transcendent and originate from sources outside of the material world. The most well-known example of this aspect of critique is Marx's identification of the mysticism of Hegel's 'Absolute Idea' as the subject of history.[2] Second, immanent critique highlights points at which ideas about things are confused with things themselves. This fallacy often occurs in tandem with recourses to transcendent causes and norms. This principle of critique will be brought to bear on Mario Tronti's inversion of the labour/capital antagonism in the conclusion of chapter three. Third, immanent critique identifies the positing of eternal, immutable and ahistorical laws. This principle is of particular relevance to my examination of the field of enquiry into the concept of body work in chapter five. Fourth, it seeks to identify dogma; i.e., that which the author seeks to close off from critique with recourse to claims of its "obviousness" or "commonsense". In the field of the political economy of work I have found that the idea of the "labour market" is often a key foil in characterisations of this nature and is particularly relevant to the Strathclyde Group's concept of aesthetic labour. Fifth, when engaging in immanent critique it is important to 'distinguish between what a particular author says and what he believes he says.'[3] These principles of critique, I argue, are fundamental to the project of retaining the merits of the object of critique while nonetheless discarding the rest. This process of retaining the useful aspects of the objects of critique while discarding their contradictory and illusory elements is an important aspect to the development of my analysis. It should be noted that as well as implying standards for the production of a rigorous negative critique these principles also apply to the production of a positive analysis. The key principle that emerges from these methodological notes, as Andrew Buchwalter argues, is that 'immanent critique evaluates reality not with alien principles of rationality but with those intrinsic to reality itself.'[4]

[1] Paolucci *Marx's Scientific Dialectics* 104
[2] Karl Marx. 'Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State' in Karl Marx. *Early Writings.* Tr. Rodney Livingstone (London: New Left Review, 1974). 57-198.
[3] Marx cf. Paolucci *Marx's Scientific Dialectics* 104
[4] Andrew Buchwalter. 'Hegel, Marx, and the Concept of Immanent Critique' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29:2 (1991). 254.

It is this method, informed by these principles, with which I approach the concepts and theories that have been deployed to describe and explain changes in the organisation of labour and attendant theories on the transformation of politics. Thus, I begin from a sceptical standpoint and neither accept nor reject the concepts of affective, aesthetic, emotional, and immaterial labour. Rather the thesis examines these concepts and their attendant epistemological and ontological assumptions in such a way as to identify gaps and contradictions in their characterisations of the landscape of emergent labour, to identify mystical or transcendent explanations and places in the theory where ideas about things have taken the place of the actual, concrete conditions of the society that they seek to explain. I also highlight gaps and contradictions *between* these concepts of labour; one of the things my analysis demonstrates is that the concrete objects of these concepts of labour are often the same or very similar. I develop a positive critique on the basis of this negative one; I identify cogent ideas about emergent forms of labour in each of the concepts of labour by resolving analytical and theoretical contradictions and by means of a theoretical-empirical analysis of concrete kinds of emergent forms of labour. As such, my critique proceeds in a way that is sympathetic toward the integration of rigorous findings within the final analysis.

Marx applies these principles to a critical analysis of Political Economy, specifically to the works of James Mill, Adam Smith, David Ricardo and Jean-Baptiste Say. The key methodological tool that emerges from this critique, and the most relevant to my analysis here, is the idea of "standpoint", which relates directly to Marx's working out of his ontology throughout the *Paris Manuscripts*, *German Ideology*, *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and *Grundrisse*. This ontological theory will be discussed in much greater length in the final section of this chapter, but suffice to say that it is from this process of immanent critique that Marx discovers that Political Economy views the world solely from the standpoint of capital, thereby creating a 'twisting and inverting' representation of the process of objectification, which is the central relation of production and the principal object of Political Economy.[1] It is from the possibility of standpoints from which knowledge is produced, and the possibility for these standpoints to present a twisted, inverted and distorted understanding of the world, that I move to examine the dialectical method of abstraction.

[1] Karl Marx. *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. (London: Penguin, 1973). 831.

1.3. The Dialectical Method of Abstraction

1.3.1. The Epistemology of Abstraction

Marx's method of abstraction is a theoretico-conceptual process by which he reconstructs the unintelligible complexity of the "real concrete" (i.e., the real world) into something sensible, the "thought concrete".[1] Marx argues that everything that we seek to explore, explain or discover, which we necessarily abstract into units of understanding, pertains within a relationship of 'inner connexion' (hereafter 'inner connection').[2] As Paolucci argues, 'reality [is] a totality of connected parts.'[3] In this sense it is important to keep in mind that the method of dialectical abstraction gives form to the immanent critique, in addition to those principles listed in the previous section of this chapter. The method of dialectical abstraction informs the method of immanent critique because it provides an historical, conceptual and political framework through which incongruence and partiality can be illuminated and addressed. My interpretation of the materialist dialectic also proceeds with an eye to, what I regard as unfair, characterisations of the method in some postmodernist approaches. I argue that the materialist dialectic does not offer a series of Cartesian truths that emerge from a rigorous application of the method on any given object. Rather, the dialectic offers the possibility for knowledge of the concrete from a range of different perspectives within a system that accounts for historical development and the relation between the past, the present and the future. As Engels argues, 'dialectical philosophy dissolves all conceptions of final, absolute truth, and of a final and absolute [communist] state corresponding to it… Nothing is final, absolute, sacred.'[4] Furthermore, as Frederic Jameson notes, 'every attempt to construct a model of capitalism will be a mixture of success and failure: some features will be foregrounded, others neglected or even misrepresented. Every representation is partial.'[5] No critical research in Marxism is except from this maxim, and most oftentimes it does not claim to be.

Marx refers to the world we live in as the 'real concrete'. The real concrete refers to the world in all its complexity, as reality in its functioning, and indicates 'the transitory character of everything and in everything.'[6] According to Marx's theory of representation this world cannot

[1] Marx cf. Bertell Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic: Steps in Marx's Method.* (Urbana, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003). 60.
[2] Karl Marx. *Capital, vol. I: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2003). 28.
[3] Paolucci *Marx and the Politics of Abstraction* 58
[4] Frederick Engels. *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*. (London: Martin Lawrence, no date). 22.
[5] Frederic Jameson. *Representing* Capital*: A Commentary on Volume One*. (London: Verso, 2011). 6.
[6] Engels *Ludwig Feuerbach* 22

be known.[1] But subjects do live in it and need to make sense of it, even in order to go about day-to-day living. To understand the world people focus on the particular parts of the world that are relevant and important at that particular time. To state a first justification of this epistemological assumption then, the world is both complex and in constant flux and as such cannot be understood as a real concrete totality. As Ollman puts it, 'all thinking about reality begins by breaking it down into manageable parts.'[2] This breaking down of reality into manageable parts applies no less to crossing a road safely than it does to examining a labour process, for example. In this sense, dialectic identifies the kind of thinking and being in the world as it operates at an immediate level – we understand the world we live in by making abstractions of it. In doing so we 'make', we perceive and are able to think about the 'real concrete' by transforming it into an object of knowledge that is connected to spatial and temporal dimensions of varying complexities that are similarly abstracted. Thus knowledge of the real concrete world is knowledge of a world transformed; the method of dialectical abstraction is a way to produce knowledge of the world within the context of the world's complex, transitory, contradictory relatedness. This form of knowledge is what Marx calls the 'thought concrete.'

Therewith we all always abstract from the real world and all knowledge is the result of various processes of abstraction. Therefore, Marx's method of abstraction is, in part, a product of his critique of 'faulty' abstract constructions of the world. 'Critique is a key notion in Marx's early writings,' David Walker states and, as discussed earlier, Marx's dialectical method emerges from his immanent critique of Ludwig Feuerbach, Max Stirner, Pierre Proudhon, G.W.F. Hegel, Adam Smith and David Ricardo.[3] The dialectical method of abstraction is a product of this critique as much as it is a product of Marx's 'revolutionary humanistic inversion' of Hegel's dialectics.[4] To bring this argument regarding the centrality of abstraction to the process of knowledge production to the methodological plane, I will now examine the concrete and more greatly perceptible features, what we might call *the mechanisms*, of Marx's method of abstraction. First, I explore the four senses with which Marx uses the term 'abstraction'. Second, I examine the inner relations of the dialectical method by discussing the importance of Marx's term "Relation" to the understanding of his system and method. Third, I examine the

[1] Louis Althusser. 'From *Capital* to Marx's Philosophy' in Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar. *Reading Capital*. Tr. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2009). 36-42.
[2] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 60
[3] David Walker. *Marx, Methodology and Science: Marx's Science of Politics.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001). 45.
[4] A. James Gregor 'The Concept of Alienation in the Philosophy of Karl Marx' in John Somerville & Howard L. Parsons (eds.) *Dialogues on the Philosophy of Marxism.* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974). 294.

three modes of abstraction in Marx's work – abstractions of historical generality, abstractions of extension, and abstractions of vantage point.

1.3.2. Meanings of "Abstraction"

Marx uses the term 'abstraction' in four ways. The first is the one I have described at the beginning of this section; to abstract is to subdivide the world in thought and thereby make the real concrete into an object of thought. In its second sense, abstractions are the result of this process. Thus the term abstraction has both a verb and a noun form; it is something that is done and it is the product of what has been done. The third sense in which Marx uses the term abstraction is to describe objects of critique. Marx uses the term abstraction to describe 'faulty' constructs that are deployed as an explanation of reality and they can be faulty in three ways. First, they are either too broad or too narrow to be able to comprehend their problematic. Second, an abstraction is faulty if it transposes the theoretical results from abstractions in one temporality to propel arguments that pertain to other temporalities. Third, abstractions are faulty when they only view relations from one perspective, or vantage point.[1] Marx uses the term abstraction in a fourth way to indicate the processes by which abstractions come to order and shape understandings of the world; abstractions produce ideology and Marx uses the term abstraction to describe ideology. It is worth quoting Ollman at length to draw together this third and fourth sense of Marx's use of the term.

> '*The isolated individual, man separated from both natural and social conditions, is not only the preferred abstraction* [...] *in which bourgeois ideology treats human beings; it also serves as its preferred vantage point for studying society.*'[2]

Marx uses the term abstraction in this fourth sense to describe 'the particular organisation of elements in the real world that provides the objective underpinnings' for the deployment of the faulty constructs of bourgeois ideology, i.e., abstractions in the third sense.[3] Thus, Marx's own abstractions are those of the first and second sense; they are a systematic process of abstraction that is coherent with the principles of immanent critique and they are the products of this process of abstraction. As such, Marx's abstractions are intended to avoid the limitations and one-dimensional understandings presented by abstractions in the third and fourth sense.

[1] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 61-2
[2] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 103
[3] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 62

Abstractions in the third sense are faulty in terms of their breadth, their connection to history and their perspective. Abstraction in the fourth sense refers to the world abstracted from its real condition. Abstraction in this fourth sense indicates that the world is organised by means of the obscuration of key elements of the world.

The aim of this thesis is to reveal some of these obscured elements. I deploy Marx's method of abstraction because it bears two key features that are central to the examination of changes in the organisation and form of labour in contemporary capitalism. The first of these key features of Marx's method of abstraction is that these abstractions 'focus on and incorporate both change and interaction' whilst also integrating continuous elements.[1] Second, although each singular process of abstraction is brought to bear upon a single conceptual unit an overriding concern for inner connections between the institutions and practices of a given society at particular and general levels is intrinsic to the method. As Ollman observes, in Marx's method 'reciprocal effect predominates and has logical priority over causality.'[2] Dialectical abstraction is a method by which the inner connection that pertains without and between objects of inquiry can be critically examined and traced out. Paolucci observes that the result of this mode of critical examination is the finding that 'social practices, structures and their historical development...entail each other in an ontological sense.'[3] Through this method my thesis aims to specifically examine the consequences that follow from the condition that what is inseparable in reality has been made to appear separate, that the reciprocal relationality that pertains between apparently separate objects of inquiry is really a fundamental characteristic of what these apparently separate objects are, and through the method of abstraction seeks to open up new points of analysis from which the workings of contemporary capitalism can be characterised. To further interrogate the implications of these methodological justifications I will now examine the inner relations between the three modes of abstraction.

1.3.3. The Inner Relations of Modes of Abstraction in Marx's Method

Although the tripartite presentation of the modes of Marx's process of abstraction as abstractions of extension, abstractions of historical generality, and abstractions of vantage point implies a set of discrete, self-contained methodological processes and similarly discrete, self-contained theoretical products, this is not the case. The modes of abstraction can be set apart from one another in this way so as to indicate and separate important characteristics of the

[1] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 63
[2] Ollman *Alienation* 131
[3] Paolucci *Marx and the Politics of Abstraction* 56

results of the process of dialectical abstraction but they are neither deployed in such a way that they are separate from one another nor do the relations and forms that they illuminate exist separately from other considerations. That is, an abstraction of extension will involve abstractions of historical generality and of vantage point; an abstraction of vantage point will involve abstractions of extension and of historical generality; an abstraction of historical generality will involve abstractions of extension and of vantage point. Also, any abstraction will have relations that are not included within that specific presentation of the abstraction as a result of the ability of dialectical abstractions to bring some relations more closely into view while occluding others. And this is why Marx's words must be understood as appearing like bats; as István Mészáros argues, 'his key concepts cannot be understood at all except in their dialectical – and often apparently self-contradictory – relatedness.'[1] By presenting the method as constituted by different modes I can better illustrate the how the method emphasises and understates different relations in such a way as to bring what is at stake in the specified problematic more clearly into view. Marx's use of the term "Relation" offers important insights into the method of abstraction and into the ontology of historical materialism.

1.3.3.1. Relations

'Marx conceives of *things* as Relations.'[2] The common-sense view, proposed in the objects of Marx's critique, is that there are things and there are relations between them. That is, things and relations are interdependent in character; things are affected by other things, the character of things can alter as a consequence of their relationships with other things – other things can cause an effect on the thing – but relations are not a constitutive part of things. This is the ontological assumption made by virtually all research in the humanities and social sciences. As Diane Elson notes, 'it is simply taken for granted that any theory requires separable determining factors, discretely distinct from what they are supposed to determine.'[3] Marx's critique of this "common-sense" view is at the centre of his critique of Classical Political Economy. 'The economists', he says in reference to the Ricardian school, 'do not regard it [capital] as...[a historical]...relationship because they cannot admit its relative character.'[4] Ollman states that 'the full truth about any one thing includes (because of its internal relations) the truth about everything.'[5] My activity of sitting at a desk writing notes includes the Relation of a light source being available and that it is not raining heavily or there is a roof over my

[1] István Mészáros. *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (Delhi: Aakhar, 2006). 13.
[2] Ollman *Alienation* 26
[3] Elson 'Value Theory of Labour' 131
[4] Karl Marx. *Theories of Surplus Value, pt. 3.* Tr. Jack Cohen and S.W. Ryazanskaya. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971). 265.
[5] Ollman *Alienation* 37

head. Everything about the character of the environment, the desk, the space, the lever-arch binders, the books, the e-books and pdf files, the form of the notes written with a set of writing instruments on paper that is lined and hole-punched, and the power relations under which this activity proceeds, implicate a certain character of productive relations that also determine my engagement in this activity and the form of my activity. The character of these productive relations implicates these conditions for other workers in this branch of industry and therewith illuminates its class-character. To fully understand and explain the processes, institutions, objects and activities of the class-character of capitalist society, we must understand them as relations. As relations, Ollman argues that within Marx's method 'these processes are conceived of as aspects of each other and of the whole they come together to compose.'[1] Thus, the possibility for abstractions of extension follows directly from the ontological position of the inner-relatedness of the world and opens up various vantage points from which we can view these relations while also being historically situated. I think that abstractions of historical generality offer the clearest indication of the epistemic relations between each mode of abstraction, therefore I will begin my examination of the modes of dialectical abstraction here.

1.3.3.2. Abstractions of historical generality

The aim of this thesis is to examine changes that have taken place within the capitalist mode of production; it is impossible to do this within a theoretical framework that cannot comprehend degrees of historical specificity.[2] The mode by which Marx abstracts historical generality specifically addresses problematics of this character. Bertell Ollman and Paul Paolucci identify seven levels of historical generality that Marx deploys in order to understand the relations within and between different systems of the organisation of production. Levels six – what is common to all animals, such as the need to eat and procreate – and seven – what is common to all matter, such as weight and volume – are not unimportant but they can be hypostatised as a given within this problematic without causing too many problems. Therefore, I will focus discussion on levels one to five of abstractions of historical generality.

Level one of abstraction of historical generality focuses on what is most particular and specific about a chosen object of analysis. For example, my name is Paul McFadden and I live in Newcastle. I'm writing notes on Marx's method of abstraction and planning how best to present it to a reader who may not be familiar with it and in the context of my problematic. I'm using pens and lined paper, sitting at a desk in a room in a building. Thus, level one makes a very narrow abstraction of extension – it focuses solely on concrete activity – and takes the

[1] Ollman *Alienation* 262
[2] R.J. Horvath and K.D. Gibson. 'Abstraction in Marx's Method', *Antipode*, 16:1 (1984). 12.

object of inquiry as the vantage point – in this case its concrete identity as me, with a name and an address. This level of abstraction does not understand the desk as a mass-produced desk but only as an object whose use-value is that you can write on it. So it does not understand the social relations that pertain to this not *really* being a room but rather being an office, the building being a *university* building, but only considers them in terms of their concrete reality as objects differentiated only by concrete qualitative identities. Level one abstractions of historical generality also make a very narrow temporal abstraction. An abstraction that captures level one of historical generality focuses on the immediate history of its object, or at least the very near future or the very near past. The narrowness and limitations of this level of abstraction are given example by the circumstance that in the life of this object, at the time of writing the first draft of this piece I was no longer writing notes but was *writing*, as it were; my concrete activity had changed. At subsequent edits my concrete identity had altered according to the passage of time and the circumstances of my existence had altered. The historical passage of these alterations, and most importantly the political economic dimensions that explain these alterations, can only be captured by moving up the scale of historical generality.

Level two of the mode of abstraction of historical generality is deployed so as to understand 'what is general to people, their activities and products' within a relatively definite period of time that can be distinguished from the general form of the mode of production but not separated from it.[1] For example, there is relative agreement amongst students of capitalism that three specific phases can be distinguished within the capitalist mode of production. Furthermore, with reference to the relatedness of the three modes of abstraction, the different terminology which is used to describe these phases particularly highlights the abstractions of extension that are important to the problematics of their proponents. Theorists primarily interested in labour often deploy a distinction between the phases 'formal subsumption of labour under capital', the 'real subsumption of labour under capital', and the 'real subsumption of society under capital.'[2] Those principally interested in production often deploy *laissez-faire* capital, monopoly capital, and finance capital or late capitalism as categorical markers for these three phases of capitalism.[3] The intellectual history of critical research in Marxism shows that the ways in which the character of abstractions of historical generality are presented is intrinsically connected to the particular problematics of the researchers. In comparison with level one, level two abstractions expand the range of inquiry to more people, to longer periods

[1] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 88
[2] The post-*operaisti* tend to this terminology.
[3] E.g. Rudolf Hilferding. *Finance Capital: A study of the latest phase of capitalist development*. Tr. Morris Watnick and Sam Gordon. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).; Ernest Mandel. *Late Capitalism*. (London: NLB, 1975).; Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho. *Marx's Capital, 5th edn*. (London: Pluto Press, 2010).

of time and to larger areas. I am not simply writing a description of Marx's method of abstraction, I am engaged in 'production as a specific branch of industry' during a specific phase of the capitalist mode of production.[1] Thus, in the movement from level one of historical generality to level two there is a movement in the abstractions of extension and the range of vantage points that can be deployed, a movement which will become clearer as the discussion progresses. As well as expanding the delimiting points on notions of the identity of things (relations), level two abstractions of historical generality allow vantage points to be considered in terms of their relation to one another as specific categories of a variety of branches of production within a specific organisation of capitalism, rather than as a range of (inter-) relations that pertain in a relatively autonomous fashion between different subjects and objects. Level two also allows an expansion of the object of analysis from a sole concern for the concrete activity of a specific person to an extension wherein this understanding of concrete activity can be considered as "labour" and whereby this concept of labour can simultaneously be extended so as to understand it as a relation of capital, money, value, etc.; that is, the movement from the narrow limitations of level one abstractions of historical generality to the broader scope that is opened up by level two abstractions allow concrete activity to be considered as a part of a set of relations concerning a specific historical period demarcated by a specific arrangement of the social and technical relations of production.

Level three of abstractions of historical generality pertain to what is common to a specific mode of production. In our case, capitalism, but when capitalism, feudalism, slavery, etc., are spoken of they refer to abstractions at level three of historical generality. Thus, it becomes clear the condition of those more general historical levels must be understood in order to understand the more specific; in this case it is clear that the abstractions of specific level three historical systems must be understood in order to understand their level two variations. That is, in order to understand the specific conditions of variations in the capitalist mode of production they must be considered with reference to the economic, social and political conditions of capitalism more generally. Level four abstractions of historical generality pertain to what is common to all class societies and level five to what is common to human society, to the human condition. To briefly illustrate all of these levels of historical generality together and to show how they relate to one another: I am never simply writing notes but am engaging in work activity that is given specificity by my particularly human capacities and doing so within a specific branch of production in a specific period of the capitalist mode of production, which is a class-based form of human society. Marx illustrates that a contribution to knowledge of social, political and

[1] Marx cf. Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 87

economic reality is contingent on the configuration of levels of historical generality in such a way as to focus on what is important to the particular problematic. Therefore, as my problematic is concerned with the production of politics in emergent forms of labour I will mainly focus on levels two, three and four and the relations between them; that is, I focus on the historical relationality between this variation of capitalism, the capitalist mode of production, and class-society. Level five of historical generality, that which is common to humanity and human society, and level one, concrete, subjective activity, remain important points from which I engage with the ontological consequences of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism and the production of politics.

There are connections within a system and connections between systems, a system being at its most specific a distinctive time and space within a mode of production. In this sense, for example, "work" is an abstraction which reveals the connection between systems. It is universal across all modes of production because it is activity which pertains from the powers and needs that all humans share. Therefore "work" can only be fully understood as something that emerges from relations at levels five, six and seven of historical generality, i.e., that which is common to human societies, common to animals, and common to matter, that pertain throughout all kinds of level four, three, two and one historical generalities. That is, "work" in capitalism should be understood as "labour"; labour is a concrete abstraction of "work" in this particular historical conjunction at levels three and two of historical generality, because it is work in relation with a specific organisation of capital, as opposed to work in relation to its object alone at level five and level one. This mode of the deployment of particular levels of historical generality affects the range and breadth of abstractions of vantage point and extension that can be brought into view.

1.3.3.3. Abstractions of extension

Marx's abstractions of extension are a methodological mechanism that is determined by and determinant of, philosophically, the ontological position that reality is a totality of connected parts. As Paolucci states, we produce abstractions of extension when we 'isolate in thought how sets of parts [of the whole] do or do not extend to others.'[1] Abstractions of extension are also concerned with the relations between and within the systems mentioned above, that is, between and within particular modes of production and variations of modes of production. With abstractions of extension, Marx limits and delimits a particular concept to various degrees in order to include or exclude certain relations. Again, as with abstractions of historical

[1] Paolucci *Marx and the Politics of Abstraction* 58

generality, he does this with reference to the concerns of the problematic. In this sense, for example, when he seeks to explain the sphere of circulation under capitalism we see that he limits the concept of capital to include money, commodity and surplus-value to produce the general formula for capital, M–C–M` (Money–Commodities–Money+surplus-value).[1] To put this another way, the general formula for capital does not understand capital as a thing, it understands it as a relation. At this extension of the abstraction of capital, commodity and money are an intrinsic part of capital: Marx states here that 'capital is money, capital is commodities.'[2] Furthermore, money and commodities 'function only as different modes of existence of value itself.'[3] Thus, even a relatively limited abstraction of extension is still in relation – in concrete relation as opposed to abstract relation – to that which is 'outside' of a given representation; here Marx extends the general formula for capital to show its relation to value. To bring these 'outside' relations into view using the dialectical method it just needs to be examined from a different vantage point. For example, when Marx goes beyond explaining simple circulation and examines capital from different vantage points, such as in the labour theory of value, more relations of capital are brought into view. Production, distribution, exchange, consumption, use-value, exchange-value, surplus-value, commodity, and, ultimately, the polar opposite of capital, i.e., labour, are an intrinsic part of the capital relation in Marx's labour theory of value; they *are* capital, but they are capital at different moments of production. Capital cannot be fully understood if it is considered as a thing; it can only be fully understood when it is understood as a relation. Abstractions of extension are modes by which capital's relational character can be uncovered.

1.3.3.4. Abstractions of vantage point

Abstractions of extension and of historical generality generate vantage points from which holistic understandings of social processes and institutions can be produced. Vantage points are deployed in order to view the same relation 'from different sides or [view] the same process from different moments.'[4] Abstractions of vantage point are, as noted, inherently and intrinsically linked to the character of abstractions of historical generality and to abstractions of extension. A more narrow abstraction of extension brings fewer relations into view and offers fewer vantage points from which to examine them. A more broad abstraction of extension not only does the opposite but also allows us to understand the system at a more general level. Marx's abstractions always view the relations revealed by abstractions of extension and of

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 145-153
[2] Marx *Capital vol. I* 151
[3] Marx *Capital vol. I* 151
[4] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 100

historical generality from a particular perspective. To return to the example of Marx's general formula for capital discussed above (M-C-M'), we see that capital is understood from the perspective of commodity and of money in the formula itself. However, we also see that in the working-out of the formula Marx considers it first from the vantage point of circulation.[1] Furthermore, Marx considers these perspectives from the vantage points of commodity and money as aspects of the 'active factor' in the process of circulation: value.[2] In this sense we see that the relations which are brought into view in Marx's abstractions can 'serve independently or collectively...as vantage points.'[3] As Paolucci states, the mobilisation of vantage points allows us to 'reveal multiple features of an object of study and help bring structural and historical inner connections into better view.'[4]

1.3.4. Abstraction as a Unified Process

As has been indicated throughout this examination of Marx's dialectical method of abstraction, although it is useful to consider the process of abstraction in Marx's work as tri-modal, abstraction is nonetheless one process. An abstraction of historical generality cannot be produced without simultaneously producing an abstraction of extension which pertains from a particular vantage point. As Ollman states, 'these three decisions (really, three aspects of the same decision) as to extension, level of generality, and vantage point are usually made together, and their effects are immediate, though on any given occasion one or another of them may appear to dominate.'[5]

The method of dialectical abstraction proceeds throughout the thesis. The method indicates potential focal points of critique, underpins the introduction to the distinction between work and labour in chapter two and the examination of the labour process in chapter four. The method is more directly deployed in chapters five and six: on the centrality of processes of exploitation of the capacities and potential of bodies in emergent forms of labour and an analysis of its attendant politics, and on the alienation of labour.

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 145-153
[2] Marx *Capital vol. I* 152
[3] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 100
[4] Paolucci *Marx and the Politics of Abstraction* 59
[5] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 101

1.4. Marxian Ontology: Labour and Alienation

1.4.1. Alienation as Ontology

Marx's ontological theory emerges from his method of immanent critique and his subsequent synthesis of Hegel's historical idealism and Feuerbach's passive materialism. As such, I have structured this chapter according to the form of this development, rather than beginning with the ontological theory and proceeding to epistemological principles and methodological mechanisms. Such a structure would imply a tendentious quality to critical research in Marxism that is simply not present. Marx's theory of alienation is significant because his humanistic inversion of Hegel's dialectic is predicated on his immanent critique of Hegel's theory of alienation. As a result, Marx's theory resolves the contradictions that pertain from Hegel's reliance on a transcendent ontology.

Following his investigations, Marx contends that the organisation of society, economy, politics, religion, etc., – the entirety of the human experience and humanity itself – is alienated. Furthermore, ideas and 'knowledge' about all facets of human experience proceed on the basis of this alienation and are therefore distorted and one-dimensional representations of reality. Although my own research proceeds on the basis of an awareness of these functions of alienation and a series of active processes that aim to uncover what lies beneath alienation it still proceeds within alienation and is a product of it; this is a thesis that is fundamentally limited because it is produced within the alienated ideology of capitalism and is delimited because it is produced against the alienated ideology of capitalism. I focus on alienation as a marker of ontology because it implicates, as a methodological procedure, my ability 'to isolate, in a given field, the particular field which at the same time determines the horizon of its totality.'[1] This given field is the negation of the capitalist ordering of politics and the particular field is 'the emancipation of the workers' because, following Marx, I argue that this is the particular field that determines the horizon of the capitalist totality *beyond* capital and therein fosters a mode of critique of and resistance to capital that is able to bring the destruction of capital into view and the possibility for the supersession of other relations of servitude.[2] Of course, there is immediately a problem of definition here; alienation is both a complex idea with an intellectual history that is characterised by development and it is an idea that is central to my thesis, therefore I will indicate the extent of its dimensions throughout my argument.

[1] Slavoj Žižek. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. (London: Verso, 2008). 97. It is important to point out here that Žižek argues that this formulation leads to an 'essentialist' ordering of struggle and that this is a problem. I do not share his concerns but I do share the opposition to the idea that the emancipation of the workers is the end of political struggle.
[2] Marx *1844* 82

However, as a heuristic for the moment, theories of alienation are a positing that the organisation of human society is separated from the nature of which humanity is a part and the organisation of society *separates* humanity from nature, and thus from itself. As a result, ideas about the organisation of society are divorced from reality. From these arguments regarding a general alienation, through immanent critique and materialist dialectical abstraction Marx isolates the central mechanism of the alienation of and the alienation from 'what is', i.e. the 'ontos' (*ὄντος*).[1] The nexus of human experience and the entirety of social, political and economic organisation is alienated because *labour* is alienated by and in class-society. As István Mészáros argues, Marx's ontology begins to emerge from his critique of the world and of ideas about it as he approaches this critique 'from the viewpoint of a great synthesising idea: "the alienation of labour" is the root cause of the whole complex of alienations.'[2] From this idea, with its genesis in immanent critique and its location within a dialectical outlook, Marx produces the possibility for a linking of various points of critique; critique of political economy, critique of ethics, critique of the history of ideas, and critique of politics.

Before discussing how and why labour is alienated it is important to situate Marx's theory of alienation further within its intellectual history. Marx's theory of alienation problematises the totality of human experience, and its constituent social, political, economic, cultural, moral, etc., dimensions. It is important to note here that the theory of alienation merely problematises this totality and does not capture the concrete totality of its object as some sort of Cartesian "truth", nor does it claim to do so. Marx's theory of alienation renders these dimensions subject to a positive form of critique that is not rooted in transcendental normative values and/or propelled by dogma and/or the particular interests that are attendant to class society. Rather, the theory of alienation allows for a form of critique that is rooted in an historical analysis of the concrete conditions of humanity's place within the nature of which it is a part.

Alienation is necessarily an historical concept; alienation is alienation from something therefore it implies causes; causes must pertain within an historical framework. It is ontologically necessary to posit the relation between history and alienation and this relation is an Ontological one; that is, it relates to "Being". As Mészáros states, 'the "nature of man" ("human essence", etc.) is the common reference point' for theories of alienation.[3] Thus, although Marx is not the first to state the relation between history and alienation, Hegel and

[1] I deploy the Ancient Greek '*ὄντος*', the root of the word 'ontology' and present participle of the verb 'to be', to illustrate the fundamental and essential character of Marx's argument regarding the alienation of and from the world. As stressed elsewhere throughout this chapter, this does not refer to a mere formal or institutional separation from social organisation but rather a separation from Nature, in-keeping with the implications of the idea of 'authentic being' in the use of the term *ὄντος* in Ancient Greek philosophy.
[2] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 16
[3] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 39

Jean-Jacques Rousseau being key theorists in this regard, his method of immanent critique highlights two important problems with antecedent theories of alienation.[1] First, they commonly posit a "return to God" or some other transcendent Other and thereby situate reconciliation and/or the transcendence of alienation outside of human experience. Second, and more commonly in historical approaches to alienation, they produce "diagnoses" that proceed from a fixed ideal of "human essence". Marx's theory, however, does neither. Rather, Marx's theory of alienation situates transcendence of alienation within human experience and does so without, despite common misconceptions – notably amongst the post-*operaisti* – resorting to a static or fixed conception of human essence.[2] Thus Marx's ontology is grounded within his epistemological approach; "humanity", human experience, politics, society, culture, economy, etc., can only be grasped fully 'on the basis of the historically developing *ontological totality* ("nature") to which it belongs.'[3]

Marx's critique of the theoretical fields of philosophy, ethics and political economy is fundamental to the development of his ontological theory. He observes that they cannot speak to one another even though they all contain the notion of "human essence/condition/ experience" as their most basic and fundamental underpinning. Marx's immanent critique of the contradictions within and between each of these fields, in concert with his dialectical investigations, leads him to the three most basic concepts of their shared problematic and thus to the structure of his ontological theory. Mészáros characterises Marx's ontology at its most basic as a recognition of the centrality of the categories "man", "nature", and "industry" in the project to understand, define, and disaggregate this notion of human essence that is so essential to the humanities and social sciences.[4]

The category "man" of course refers to "humanity", that is, the men, women, and children that make up the *homo* genus of hominids. The term "man" is used most commonly to refer to *homo sapiens*. The precision of this definition may at first sight appear precious. Nonetheless, I make it for two reasons. First, it has been demonstrated that members of other classes of the *homo* genus of hominids engaged in work. I will deploy dialectical abstractions of historical generality to include these classes at the necessary points of the argument. This will be discussed at greater length in the section on work and labour the next chapter. Second, texts

[1] G.W.F. Hegel. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Tr. A.V. Miller. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), G.W.F. Hegel. *Philosophy of Right*. Tr. T.M Knox. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942); Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The Social Contract*. Tr. Maurice Cranston. (London: Penguin Classics, 1968). 80-107.
[2] Problems of how post-*operaismo* interpretations of Marx bear upon their concrete analysis will be raised at a number of points throughout this discussion and will be substantively addressed in chapter three.
[3] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 43. Emphasis in original.
[4] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 99-101

throughout all disciplines are littered with the use of the term "man" in such a way as to denote the species and not the sex; this proliferation constitutes a series of acts of epistemic violence that contribute to the reproduction of patriarchal and phallogocentric modes of thought and practice.[1] As Gayatri Spivak states, 'I construct my definition as a woman not in terms of a woman's putative essence but in terms of words currently in use. "Man" is such a word in common usage. Not *a* word, but *the* word.'[2] Any project of liberation must include within it the replacement of this definite article with the indefinite. This violence is so embedded in language that it is difficult to avoid the use of these nouns and pronouns even in English – which is not structured with gendered nouns like other Indo-European languages – without undertaking a series of syntactical and grammatical gymnastics. I will retain the terms "man" and "men", "his" and "him" when citing other authors and will use alternatives in my own text when I can do so without obscuring meaning.[3] "Nature" refers to that organic and inorganic material that is, in an important sense, external to "man". Notwithstanding, as has been noted throughout this chapter, "man" is simultaneously external to nature and part of it. The importance of this relation will be discussed in the paragraph below. "Industry" refers to the productive activity that people engage in when they interact with nature. Industry is the process of mediation between man and nature; it is the process by which the reciprocal relationality between "man", "nature", and "industry" is put into motion.

Marx's framing of his ontological theory in this three-fold way as a relation in motion between "man", "industry", and "nature" illustrates the problems of static and fixed conceptions of human essence that emerge from theories that only take into account conceptions of "man" and "nature", such as those of Smith and Rousseau, and indicates the possibilities for their supersession. Marx's conception identifies the fundamental importance of illustrating the relation between human essence and productive activity. "Human nature" is something that develops within the reciprocity that pertains in the relation between "man", "industry", and "nature". Therefore the idea of "human essence", as Mészáros argues, '*necessarily implies* the ontological fundamental self-mediation of man with nature through his own productive (and self-producing) activity.'[4] Human essence is neither given nor static, but develops within the reciprocal mediation between "man", "nature", and "activity". In Marx's theory of alienation

[1] See for example Genevieve Lloyd. *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*. (London: Methuen, 1984).
[2] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Feminism and Critical Theory' *in* Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. *In Other Worlds*. (London: Routledge Classics, 2006). 103. Emphasis in original.
[3] I am unable to find an acceptable way through the contradiction that pertains from resolving the epistemic violence inflicted by the use of the masculine noun, the violence to cognition that pertains from dropping (sic.) *ad. inf.* into the text, and the violence to meaning that can attend the modification of the gender bias deployed in these texts when the texts themselves remain unmodified.
[4] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 108. Emphasis in original.

the idea of the transcendence of alienation is not predicated upon a "return to nature" or "return to essence", as the post-*operaisti* assume. Rather, the theory of alienation proceeds from the identification of the first-order mediations of human existence – "man", "nature", and "industry" – and the findings of a critical analysis of capitalist production. These analyses conclude that the first-order mediations have been transformed into a system of second-order mediations, and that these second-order mediations have at their centre the separation of "man" into an antagonistic relation between private property and labour, and thus the entire complex of social organisation is predicated by the alienation of humanity from itself.

Private property and labour are the second-order mediations of the "man" relation: humanity is split into private property and labour. Private property is nature that has been separated from nature; it has been alienated by labour and simultaneously codified within juridical, political, legal, etc., institutions such that it is reified, i.e., it is made into a thing, and it has a bearer – the possessor of private property. Labour is productive activity that has been separated from the producer; it is industry that has been alienated from the human by private property such that it is made into a thing. This process of second-order mediation constitutes the alienation of labour and the framework of second-mediations is the fundament of the political economic organisation of production under capitalism in which alienated labour is put into motion. The world is understood in terms of its second-order mediation; the world is understood by ethics, philosophy, political economy, *et al*, only in terms of its alienated organisation. As noted earlier, this alienated character is the essence of the inability of these fields to communicate with one another.

Political economy, specifically the political economy that proceeds from the bases of Ricardian and Smithian classical political economy, begins from the standpoint of capital. As such, Smith's naïve injunction that the capitalist division of labour 'occasions, in a well-governed society, that universal opulence which extends itself to the lowest ranks of the people' reduces political economy to the effort to find that good-governance.[1] In doing so these approaches to political economy understand both private property and labour only as factors of production; that is, they regard property and labour as necessary resources for the production of value and as commodities that constitute the sphere of exchange. Therewith, by taking the standpoint of capital, classical political economy cannot relate either property or labour to "man". Smith's forays into political economy and ethics, in particular, offer a useful unitary point from which to demonstrate the contradictions that ensue from this failure. As Mészáros notes, 'when Smith

[1] Adam Smith. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, volume one*. (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1910). 10.

seeks to take '"man" into account, he leaves immediately the ground of political economy and shifts to the speculative viewpoint of ethics.'[1] In abandoning the material ground of political economy for the speculative affairs of ethics Smith cannot but recourse to an hypostatisation of the idea of a fixed human essence that is given form only by normative values that are transcendent and outside of human experience and a one-dimensional and ahistorical analysis of material conditions through which he is able to propose the universality of a narrow, egoistic human nature.

To overcome the contradictions produced by the one-dimensional and incompatible standpoints of political economy and ethics Marx takes 'the critically adopted standpoint of labour in its self-transcending universality' and it is from this point that his theory of alienation emerges.[2] Marx's theory of alienation – a development of previous theories of alienation itself – passes through a number of developmental stages. For Marx it begins with his critique of law and of the notion of *veräusserung,* the alienation of property by sale. Building on Hegel's theory of alienation and his critique of labour, Marx isolates the concept of *entäusserung*, the externalisation of self, and through an analysis of the political economy of labour under capitalism poses *entfremdung,* the estrangement or loss of the object and the attendant loss of the self, as a form of the externalisation of self and activity that is particular to production under private property. In this conceptual movement Marx thereby illustrates a pernicious aspect to entäusserung, a term that Marx retains and uses in this modified form when he wants to emphasise the loss of self in productive activity. Thus in this example the recursive relationship between Marx's ontology and his dialectical method is illuminated once more. The ontology is a product of a process of immanent critique that is shaped by a materialist dialectical approach and, in turn the ontological theory illuminates vantage points and implicates a dialectical outlook from which a positive critique is to be produced. It is from this critical standpoint that the conceptual structure of the theory of alienated labour emerges.

1.4.2. The Conceptual Structure of Marx's Theory of Alienation

At its most fundamental, Marx's theory of alienation is organised into four factors. These four factors can be further organised in groupings of two. As Paul Brook argues, the theory contains two 'labour process factors': the alienation of object and alienation of activity.[3] In the *Paris*

[1] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 109
[2] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 113
[3] Paul Brook. 'The Alienated Heart: Hochschild's 'emotional labour' thesis and the anticapitalist politics of alienation', *Capital & Class* 33:7 (2009). 9. (7-31).

Manuscripts Marx arrives at these two factors following an analysis of the labour process under capitalism. Following from this analysis, Marx draws out what we might call two "life factors" that illuminate how the organisation of labour process under capitalism and its relations extend out from the labour process and thereby organise life itself. Marx's theory of alienation is the critique of the ontological consequences of work in class-society and more specifically of labour under capitalism. To expand and specify this rather broad statement further, I will unpack its two objects – "critique" and "ontological". Marx's theory is a material critique that is fore-grounded in an empirical analysis of labour under capitalism or rather, as Ollman notes in a revision of his own analysis of Marx's theory, an empirical analysis of labour under private property.[1] Therefore, on the one hand, the theory of alienation is an analysis of the social relations of capitalist production; this analysis immediately brings forth the theory's two labour process factors. On the other hand, the theory explains how the organisation of labour under capitalism orders the world and the subjects who make it; every aspect of life under capitalism is qualitatively shaped in relation to the apparatuses that are produced and reproduced according to the alienation of labour. At this point of categorisation of Marx's theory, it is important to note that there is no philosophical, methodological, or concrete justification to assume that these are the only four principal vantage points from which alienated labour can be examined. Such a justification would not be consonant with Marx's analysis, nor his ontological theory or materialist dialectical method. In chapter six I introduce another vantage point on alienated labour – the alienation of the body as instrument. I argue that this vantage point is of equal analytical importance to these four and, more importantly, is a vantage point on alienation that illustrates the political character of the organisation of emergent forms of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism. This aside, I will now endeavour to populate this generalised category of alienation by examining Marx's analysis of these four vantage points and thereby put this static conception into motion.

1.4.2.1. Alienation of object

An important part of my argument that will I introduce in chapters five and six is that the section 'Estranged Labour' from Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in which Marx presents his theory of alienation, begins with comments on the reproduction of the worker in his or her commodity form – it is also noteworthy to comment that this is also a central idea of Marx's *Capital vol. I*. Notwithstanding, from the perspective of these four vantage points, the section 'Estranged Labour' in *The Paris Manuscripts* begins with the presentation of philosophical notes that emerge from an empirical analysis of the worker's

[1] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 94

alienation of the object of labour. The worker's production of the object under capitalism is mediated by the wage-labour relation, the private property relation and the exchange relation. As Mészáros argues, following Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 'the central idea of Marx's system is his critique of the alienation of labour [which is produced] through the reified mediations of WAGE-LABOUR, PRIVATE PROPERTY and EXCHANGE.'[1] It is important to note that these relations are ontologically connected to one another; wage-labour *entails* private-property and exchange in an ontological sense; private property and exchange are an intrinsic part of what wage-labour *is*. As such, my invocation of any of these three mediations ontologically implies the others and is merely deployed as a vantage point on this unitary relation. When the worker works the object he or she is immediately separated from that object in accordance with the wage-labour relation and its attendant norms of private property and exchange. The worker's property – labour-power – has been exchanged with the capitalist (at its exchange-value, measured in the universal means of exchange – money) and thus belongs to the capitalist for the allotted period, during which it is set to work on the capitalist's property – the object. Marx's analysis of the alienation of object, nonetheless, does not merely go beyond the philosophical conclusion regarding the shattering of the first-order ontology of "man", "industry", and "nature". Marx extends the philosophical problematic in order to encounter and include within it the question of value.

Marx most clearly unifies this philosophical critique with the critique of value in his examination of the alienation of object. For Marx, the object of labour is not merely an individual instance of a particular arrangement of matter that is worked upon to produce a use-value – although in an important sense it is this. The object of labour is *the* organic and inorganic matter that makes up nature itself; the object is the external world. Wage-labour, private property, and exchange are therefore apparatuses through which objectification – the worker's interaction with the external world in order to produce a use-value that corresponds to a need – is separated from appropriation; the object, and the manner of objectification, is appropriated by capital, not the worker. Therewith 'objectification appear[s] as the loss of the object [and] the worker is robbed of the objects most necessary for not only for his life but for his work.'[2] When viewed from the vantage point of the object, labour under capitalism is the worker's objectification of the world as value and their simultaneous production of the world as something that is appropriated as capital by the capitalist. The production of value is the process of the worker's denial of the use-values they need and of the means to produce those use-values. I will address the liberal rejoinder to this critique of second-order mediations in

[1] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 96
[2] Marx *1844* 71

chapter four, and simply say for the moment that the capitalist's apologia – that the worker has alienated their property, their labour-power, in a market composed of free individuals, each with the right to dispose of and acquire objects in accordance with their own interests – foregoes any examination of the function of value in the politics of exchange and occludes entirely the politics of production.

As well as integrating his economic analysis within an ontological theory, Marx's examination of the question of value as it pertains to the alienation of the object demonstrates that it is not simply subjective feeling that is at stake in the critique of alienation. For Marx, although subjective feeling has a role to play in his theory, subjective feeling is not an indicator of either the presence or the absence of alienated relations. Marx's deployment of value, in relation to the mediations wage-labour, private property and exchange, demonstrates that what is at stake is power and freedom. The alienation of the object is the mechanism by which capital reproduces the social relations by which the worker comes to be dependent upon capital for the provision of needs. The alienation of the object is a two-fold process by which the world is reified as so many articles of private property – 'an immense accumulation of commodities' – and by which social relations are reproduced such that they foreclose on the possibilities for life outside capital relations.[1] Thus, the loss to the worker that is attendant to the alienation of the object is the loss of the means to work and the loss of the means to life. The reified mediations of wage-labour, private property and exchange result not merely in the worker's alienation of the world that he and she has produced, 'means not only that labour becomes an object...but that it exists *outside him*, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him.'[2] Marx extends his analysis of this political relation by considering it from the vantage point of labour activity.

1.4.2.2. Alienation of activity

By considering the object of production from the vantage point of the worker, Marx finds the estrangement of the object; that is, in the production of the object the worker estranges the world within the reified mediations that organise capitalism, namely the relations private property, wage-labour and exchange. From the vantage point of productive activity Marx finds that this estrangement of the world is simultaneously the process of the worker's estrangement of self. Marx's examination of activity in labour under capitalism proceeds within the critique of the same reified mediations. When considering the object, remembering the ability of the dialectical method to bring some relations more closely into view, the mediation "private

[1] Marx *Capital I* 43
[2] Marx *1844* 72. Emphasis in original.

property" is at the forefront of Marx's investigations. The mediation "wage-labour" is most explicit in Marx's analysis of activity and Marx's theory of the alienation of activity considers the same fundamental elements of the pernicious prescripts of the wage-labour exchange that he discusses in *Capital vol. I*, etc. These characteristics are discussed in chapter four, but in this discussion of the alienation of activity I draw particular attention to the forced character of wage-labour and the technical division of labour under capitalism, with reference to the reification of the world as private property; that is, to be considered fully, the forced character of wage-labour and the mediation of the worker's relationship to the object through the piece-meal division of labour tasks must be examined alongside the historical separation of the worker from the means of subsistence that is a central element of the worker's alienation from the object.

Marx's theory of alienated activity connects this active process of alienation more fundamentally to human ontology. 'Labour,' Marx states, 'is external to the worker.'[1] Why? What are the bases of this external character? Marx argues that a principal root of this external character is in the organisation of labour under capital as a process that is inchoate with the production of use-values for the satisfaction of corresponding needs. Therefore, at its most fundamental, Marx's theory of alienated activity is intimately connected to his ontological theory; specifically his theory of species powers and species needs. For Marx, powers are not simply faculties, abilities, capacities, etc., but are also the potentialities that are inherent within the dynamic character that pertains within the reciprocity of the development of human nature for the increasing fulfilment of these powers.[2] That is, this notion of powers and their development functions within Marx's ontological theory of the interaction between "man" and "nature" through "industry".[3] As Ollman argues, the exercise and development of species powers results in a concomitant expansion of the system of needs; this expansion is simultaneously the means or the mode by which humanity becomes aware of its powers and their potential.[4] Thus it is incorrect to read a parochial and utopian ethic into the significance of the relation between the production of values, the articulation of powers and the satisfaction of needs in Marx's theory; the incongruence in their relation does not simply pertain at an individual level, but rather pervades across the complex of social and economic relations. The capitalist division of labour in its reciprocal relationality with the forced character of the wage-labour exchange is at the root of this condition.

[1] Marx *1844* 74
[2] Ollman *Alienation* 74
[3] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 103
[4] Ollman *Alienation* 76

It is not simply the *fact* of forced labour but its *form* that bears upon the stunting of powers. As a result of the technical division of labour and its attendant separation of the productive tasks required to produce a given use-value, as a result of the worker becoming an appendage of the machine, and as a result of the abstraction of labour-power as variable capital, the worker 'in his work...does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy' because the worker 'does not freely develop his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind.'[1] Labour is coerced and limiting; 'the worker, therefore, only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself' because his or her work 'is not his spontaneous activity.'[2] As such, the alienation of activity in terms of specifically human powers pertains from a relation between three conditions that proceed alongside each other such that each of these conditions is actually a fundamental characteristic of the others. These conditions are: first, the forced character of the fact of wage-labour, i.e., that wage-labour has become the sole means of subsistence because the worker has been separated from the means of production; second, the limiting character of the form of wage-labour, i.e., that the capitalist division of labour disconnects the worker from the object as a whole and relegates him or her to the production of only a part of a use-value; and third, the alien character of the object, i.e., that it belongs to another. The combination of these three conditions – the relation that they form – is the fundamental part of the complex of alienated labour that necessitates the worker's self-estrangement of that part of their Being that is most human. Thus, as Mészáros notes, Marx concretises the binary demarcation 'between labour as *Lebensäusserung* (manifestation of life) and as *Lebensentäusserung* (alienation of life)' by framing it within a critical understanding of the reified mediations private property, wage-labour, and exchange.[3] Labour under capitalism is not 'merely a means to satisfy needs external to it'; it is the means by which work itself is transformed from being the means to the realisation of life and the potential of human life to being the means by which human capacities and potentialities are alienated from the humans that embody them.[4] And in turn, humans are alienated from that which makes them human.

1.4.2.3. Alienation of species-being

I noted at the beginning of this discussion of the conceptual structure of Marx's theory of alienation that Marx bookends his discussion of alienated labour with comments on the

[1] Marx *1844* 74
[2] Marx *1844* 74
[3] Mészáros *Marx's Theory of Alienation* 91
[4] Marx *1844* 74

reproduction of the worker in his or her commodity form.[1] 'Production,' Marx states, 'does not simply produce man as a *commodity*...it produces him in this role as a *spiritually* and physically *dehumanised* being.'[2] Marx is not simply talking about labour activity here but about all spheres and processes of the capitalist mode of production, while also arguing that activity is the fundamental element of this production of the worker as less than human. At the centre of this reified and alienated production of humanity, within a system of reciprocal relationality that pertains between the apparatuses and processes of the production of value under capitalism, is a fundamental power relation: 'the external character of labour for the worker appears in the fact that it [labour activity] is not his own, but someone else's... that in it *he* belongs, not to himself, but to another... It is the loss of self.'[3]

Thus Marx's examination of alienated labour as it is manifested within the labour process flows into the ontological problem: what are the consequences of labour under capitalism to Being? As Nick Dyer-Witheford states, this problem is the 'appropriation [by capital] of humanity's capacity to co-operatively change the conditions of its collective existence – indeed to transform its very own nature.'[4] This is the negative problem posed by the alienation of species-being in Marx's theory of alienation and is framed as a positive critique by Marx in 'Theses on Feuerbach' and in *Capital vol. I*. I discuss this framing at further length in chapter four. There I argue that the problem of species-being is the philosophical framing of the political problem of the annexation of the potential for praxis in emergent forms of labour. With the range of vantage points produced by both these positive and negative forms of critique in mind, what is the alienation of species-being?

Alienated labour from the vantage point of species-being immediately inserts Marx's ontological theory within the examination of the labour process in such a way as to also integrate an anthropological theory. That is, the critique of species-being immediately illuminates the second-order mediation of the "man", "industry", "nature" relation under private property alongside a historically-grounded characterisation of the human as having

[1] Comments on this relation appear at the beginning of the section [Estranged Labour] and at the beginning of the next section [Antithesis of Capital and Labour: Landed Property and Capital]. These section headings are not Marx's but were inserted by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. It is important to note here that the first 39 pages of the second manuscript, to which the latter section belongs, have been lost; therefore we don't know how Marx drew together this relation, if in any detail at all, but we do know that this investigation regarding the reproduction of labour-power does span the first and second manuscript. However, we also know that, unlike the key aspects of Marx's analysis in *The Paris Manuscripts*, a more full analysis of the reproduction of labour-power does not reappear in Marx's later writings and the discussion of reproduction in *Capital vol. I* is contained within the same dimensions as the discussion here. Marx's analysis of the reproduction of labour-power is addressed in more detail in chapter five.

[2] Marx *1844* 86

[3] Marx *1844* 74. My emphasis.

[4] Dyer-Witheford '1844/2004/2044: The Return of Species Being' 3

needs for specific use-values and the powers to fulfil – and expand – those needs. As Marx states, 'in estranging from man (1) nature, and (2) himself, his own active functions, his life-activity, estranged labour estranges the *species* from man. It turns for him the *life of the species* into a means of individual life.'[1] At its most tangible, then, the alienation of species-being describes the separation of the worker from his and her human specificities; that is, the ability to set their labour-power to work on producing use-values that contribute to the fulfilment of their needs and the potential for the expansion of these specifically human powers.[2] This separation is effected by the wage-labour exchange in combination with the power relations and the impact on technique that is attendant to the capitalist division of labour. As Marx states, 'it estranges man's own body from him,' but not just the body; the human potential of the worker is estranged also as the development of powers is stunted and the range of needs is organised not by need *per se* but by the logic of capital accumulation.[3] The production of commodities, as opposed to the production of use-values, does not proceed according to need but according to the realisation of surplus-value. Thus the alienation of species-being is not simply the process by which the capitalist labour process stunts the growth of specifically human powers but is also constituted by the intervention of capital in, and attendant perversion of, needs. Two fundamental features of human Being become distorted. The first, as Ernest Mandel argues, is creativity.[4] Second, people's needs, and thus a fundamental aspect of who we are, come to be shaped and determined according to the same logic of the realisation of surplus-value. Workers have no control over production therefore they have no control over consumption. As Ollman argues, 'the very character of man,' our species-being, 'is at the mercy of his products, of what they make him want and become. These products are responsive to forces outside his control, serving purposes other than his own.'[5] Mandel goes further to argue that these purposes are to create 'permanent and meretricious dissatisfactions in human beings... Capitalism would cease to exist if people were fully and healthily satisfied.'[6] The theory of the alienation of species-being encompasses these objective conditions that are brought to bear on powers and needs by the second-order mediations of private property, wage-labour and exchange, and the subjective lack that so often accompanies life. As Marx states,

[1] Marx *1844* 76. Emphasis in original.
[2] This will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter on the distinction between work and labour.
[3] Marx *1844* 78
[4] Ernest Mandel. 'The Causes of Alienation' in Ernest Mandel and George Novack. *The Marxist Theory of Alienation*. (New York: Pathfinder, 1995). 23.
[5] Ollman *Alienation* 146
[6] Mandel 'The Causes of Alienation' 25

'estranged labour turns...*man's species being*, both nature and his spiritual species property, into a being *alien* to him.'[1]

1.4.2.4. Alienation from other humans

The final vantage point from which Marx considers alienated labour is the alienation of people from each other. This separation of humanity from humanity occurs as a consequence of the qualities of these three alienated relations and presents itself in two important ways. Firstly, if one person is alienated from their own object, activity and their species life, they are alienated from the objects, activities and species life of all others; objects, activity and species life only pertain within the complex of the system of alienations and are only accessible as alienated manifestations.[2] Secondly, 'only man himself can be this alien power over man'; this class-bound power relation separates human beings from one another.[3] The alienation of human beings from each other follows from the alienation of the object, life, and activity because these alienations create class society. 'Labour for the worker,' Marx states, 'is not his own but someone else's... it does not belong to him and in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another.'[4] That is, the world, human activity, life itself, 'is owned by a capitalist, *whose interests are directly opposed to my own*.'[5] In short, the complex of alienations is produced and reproduced by means of a separation of human beings from each other, i.e., by means of class domination.

1.5. The Method

This is the method of the thesis and its ontological theory. My thesis engages in a systematic critique of representations of the changing character of labour under capitalism, namely the concepts of aesthetic labour, affective labour, emotional labour, and immaterial labour. I identify contradictions and lacunae that follow from a negative critique of the internal logic of these concepts and examine the contradictions and similarities between them. I investigate theories on developments in the character of the production of politics in labour under capitalism that are attendant to these concepts. I bring this analysis to bear on an empirical examination of labour processes that illustrate these purported developments, further examining the rigour of the concepts and situating these representations within a theoretical examination of the politics of the capitalist labour process. I produce a positive critique by

[1] Marx *1844* 78
[2] Marx *1844* 78
[3] Marx *1844* 78
[4] Marx *1844* 74
[5] Ollman *Alienation* 147. Emphasis in original.

analysing the processes of the articulation of power, the relations of political subjects, the technical and social relations of production, and, ultimately, the function of the body under capitalism, developing a dialectical concept of body work. Finally, I propose a theory of alienation in emergent forms of labour and examine the politics of alienated labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism.

Chapter Two. Concepts of Emergent Forms of Labour

"Something significant has changed in the way capitalism has been working since about 1970"

David Harvey[1]

2.1. The Conceptual Landscape of Emergent Forms of Labour

As noted in the introduction, David Harvey's observation of a transition in capitalism, a new and distinctive phase or period, is far from unique but is indicative of a rich stream of contending characterisations of how capitalism operates and the sort of political environment it creates. My key argument throughout this thesis is that when viewed from the perspective of the political this 'something significant' is labour. The concrete forms that labour takes have changed, the ways in which labour is organised within value production has changed, the ways in which the form of the labour process connects to forms of the reproduction of labour-power have changed. The relations between workers, the objects of work, and their own bodies have changed. As such, my thesis is predicated on the problematic that politics is attendant to these changes in the realm of labour and this problematic begins from studies on the relationship between the organisation of labour and politics in previous phases and systems of production. As such, I make the provocation that if the organisation of labour has changed then we might expect a reconfiguration of the politics of production. The empirical starting point for my examination of the politics of work in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism is a set of concepts of labour that have been used to describe changes in the way work is organised and changes in the character of the concrete activity that work involves. The labour that these concepts seek to explain principally takes place in what has been described as the "post-industrial" society, the "new economy" and the "knowledge economy".[2] I examine what I argue are the most important and most influential concepts of labour that have been devised with this aim in mind, namely 'emotional labour', 'aesthetic labour', 'immaterial labour', affective labour' and 'biopolitical production'.

I argue that the problems that emerge from these concepts of labour are multi-fold. There are analytical problems. In terms of their conceptual development they only take limited account of

[1] David Harvey. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990). 173.
[2] E.g., Bell. *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*; Norene J. Pupo and Mark P. Thomas (eds). *Interrogating the New Economy: Restructuring Work in the 21st Century*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).; Walter W. Powell and Kaisa Snellman. 'The Knowledge Economy', *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: (2004). 199-220.

one another, there are internal contradictions within each of the concepts, and there are contradictions between the concepts. These analytical problems pertain even though the objects of analysis are incredibly similar. The concepts of emotional and aesthetic labour take one another to account to a certain extent. For example, the progenitors of the concept of aesthetic labour argue that 'the concept of aesthetic labour builds on and significantly extends the seminal work of Hochschild on emotional labour' and there is work on emotional labour that takes aesthetic labour into account.[1] Much of the latter has been undertaken from the perspective of aesthetic labour but there are examples from the perspective of emotional labour and examples that are more evenly balanced between the two.[2] Notwithstanding, my analysis demonstrates that the concept of aesthetic labour discards Hochschild's fundamental vantage point onto emotional labour: the pernicious ontological consequences of changes in the organisation of labour. Furthermore, although I argue that Hochschild's analysis of the reproduction of labour-power is incomplete, aesthetic labour abandons this aspect of analysis. The post-*operaisti* concepts of immaterial labour, affective labour and biopolitical labour do not engage with aesthetic and emotional labour; in my comprehensive research on post-*operaismo* I have not found a single reference to either of these two concepts. Yet they are all very similar, particularly in terms of how they bring historical developments in the utilisation of certain properties of labour-power to the centre of the analysis and how these developments can be seen – although to widely varying extents – to link labour to life outside production.

There are political problems that pertain from these analytical problems as well political problems that are maintained within the concepts. Both emotional labour and aesthetic labour naturalise the "labour market", although they do so in a slightly different fashion. Paradoxically, these concepts are predicated on historical transformations in capitalist production yet they exclude the possibility for an historical transformation in production, i.e., the supersession of the capitalist mode of production. As such, the politics that emerge from these concepts are framed within a capitalistic characterisation of the political space of production; namely, the negotiation of the division of labour tasks, questions of distribution, and the rate of the exploitation of labour time. At this point I note that the concept of emotional labour tackles these questions head-on while they are ignored by the conceptualisation of aesthetic labour, and as such I deduce them. The politics of immaterial/affective labour}biopolitical production are radically opposite to those of emotional and aesthetic labour;

[1] Anne Witz, Chris Warhurst and Dennis Nickson. 'The Labour of Aesthetics and the Aesthetics of Organization' *Organization* 10:1 (2003). 50.
[2] Kjerstin Gruys. 'Does This Make Me Look Fat? Aesthetic Labor and Fat Talk as Emotional Labor in a Women's Plus-Size Clothing Store', *Social Problems* 59:4 (2012). 481-500.; Vandana Nath. 'Aesthetic and emotional labour through stigma: national identity management and racial abuse in offshored Indian call centres', *Work, Employment & Society* 25:4 (2011). 709-725.

the post-*operaisti* not only connect the politics of work to anticapitalist politics they argue that anticapitalist politics – and the supersession of capitalism – is immanent in the historical transformation of the organisation of labour that is the object of all of these concepts of labour. The post-*operaisti* take a radically different approach to the problematic and conclude on a radically different politics; they argue that the 'exodus' from capitalism is implicated by an organisation of labour that has the figure of a worker who is already autonomous from capital at its centre.

I argue that the analytical and the political problems of these concepts of labour are intertwined. The ways in which these concepts characterise the politics that are attendant to these historical changes in production varies widely because they frame the problematic in fundamentally different ways. These concepts are nonetheless important to my problematic because they each propose that there is a general relation between the historical development of capitalist production, changes in the organisation of labour and the production of politics. The aim of this chapter is to examine the politics that each of these concepts propose and, in order to do so, I examine what they say labour activity is, what sort of labour their concepts apply to, what they say the power relations that pertain to labour activity are, and I examine their arguments regarding how labour activity relates to life. In doing so, I examine the consistency of each of these concepts, look for internal contradictions and note the similarities and the differences between each of their conclusions on the politics of work, on the concrete organisation of work and the social, cultural, and political consequences of these purportedly new forms of labour. As such, my investigation into the production of politics in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism begins with a charting of the existing conceptual landscape of labour.

Before I examine these concepts, however, there is an important conceptual distinction that needs to be made between "work" and "labour". As has been noted in the first chapter, I make this distinction because this distinction allows me to have an historical understanding of purposive activity toward the production of use-values and allows me to make a conceptual distinction between the concrete qualitative character of activity and its abstract character as activity for the production of value. This distinction is also important because it is central to Hochschild's concept of emotional labour; the concept of aesthetic labour is regarded as an extension of Hochschild's concept thus the distinction between work and labour also has specificity here. I argue that this distinction between work and labour can also offer a useful perspective on the possibilities for 'self-valorisation' in the Autonomist Marxist

characterisation of the politics of work.[1] As such, after discussing this distinction I examine each of these concepts of labour in turn and end by discussing the Autonomist Marxist concepts of immaterial, affective and biopolitical labour together because they are intrinsically connected to one another.

2.2. What is Work, and what is Labour under Capitalism?

2.2.1. The Historical Character of the Distinction between Work and Labour

Engels makes a distinction between work and labour. He stresses that 'the labour which creates use-value and counts qualitatively, is *Work*, as distinguished from *Labour*; that which creates value and counts quantitatively, is *Labour* as distinguished from *Work.*'[2] In this sense, work is not simply an instrumental activity, even under capitalism; it produces use-values and thereby is simultaneously the production of our natural environment and of ourselves. Work is thus a universal category; people in all societies, no matter the specific organisation of productive activity, work. Labour, as defined mainly in the Marxist tradition, is instrumental activity; labour is activity not with the aim of producing use-values but with the aim of producing value. Labour is activity that workers undertake in return for the wage and is activity undertaken so that surplus-value can be exploited. As such, I argue that it is important to make the distinction; if we are to look at labour under capitalism and imagine that this form of interaction with the objective world is eternal and immutable then it would be no surprise if we were to agree with the mercantilists that there is no intrinsic satisfaction to be had from work. From the perspective of the worker, work under capitalism is most oftentimes a painful drudge and it might be argued that a "progressive" approach to a form of social organisation that forces billions of people to do certain things and to do them in a certain way and threatens them with starvation and eviction if they do not comply would be to abolish work as quickly as possible. On the other hand, if we were to look at work and imagine that this form of interaction with the objective world is an eternal and immutable condition we would occlude entirely the politics and the political economy of the capitalist mode of production. That is, if we were to conflate work with labour. Of course, this conflation and the notion of work as simply a means to the acquisition of money were refuted as early as Adam Smith. Marx takes the critique of the mercantilist view of work as simply a painful yet utilitarian cross which must be borne to where Smith never could. He does so by linking the phenomenon of subjective feelings

[1] Antonio Negri. 'Domination and Sabotage' in Sylvere Lotringer and Christian Marazzi (eds). *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics*. (New York: Semiotext(e), 1980). 62-71.
[2] Friedrich Engels (Editor's Note) in Marx *Capital vol. I* 54fn. Emphasis in original.

regarding the drudgery of work to history and to the organisation of work. As Spencer puts it, both the Mercantilists and the Classical Political Economists 'were guilty of seeing only the negative aspects of work, and were unable to relate such aspects to the capitalist system.'[1]

Marx refutes the claims of mercantilism and of Smith by considering them in their historical context. In sketching out Marx's conception of work, it is important to remember that this is an exposition of the dialectical development of humanity's 'place' within the world, as discussed at length in the previous chapter. This is not a static, synchronic evaluation of the properties of the "human" but is a dynamic, diachronic examination of the relation between humanity and nature. "Human nature" is therefore, for Marx, a development in itself, and one that pertains within the production of the natural world of which humanity is a part. As Marx argues, the character of the activity by which humanity appropriates nature is simultaneously a process of the production of nature and a process of the production of humanity. Marx states that 'all history is nothing but a transformation of human nature.'[2] Work, in the process of shaping the world, shapes the people who do it. It is in this context that work is the practice by which humanity realises its creative potential. In capitalism, work is seen as a drudge, as painful, as a purely instrumental means by which to obtain the necessaries of life because work is organised *under capitalism*. As discussed in chapter one, the wage, exchange relations and the system of private property alienate the worker from the object of their labour, from their activity, and from the rest of humanity by virtue of the power relations that result from the organisation of work. In doing so, the capitalist organisation work alienates us from the possibility to interact with the objective world in a way that is coordinate to what Marx calls our 'species powers'. This alienation and the primacy of value over use-value in labour *makes* work under capitalism a painful and instrumental graft.

2.2.2. Work and Labour under Capitalism

Why is the organisation of work under capitalism as labour important and why is work so important to life that its significance goes beyond its mere biological reproduction? Work is essential; work creates life, reproduces it, and affirms it. As Marx states, work is, 'in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material re-actions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces...in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a

[1] Spencer *The Political Economy of Work* 47
[2] Marx cf. Ollman *Alienation* 79

form adapted to his own wants.'[1] Work is not a biological need. Before the discovery of fire there were peoples who did not work, but who simply 'seize[d] upon the materials of nature ready made.'[2] The need for use-values produced by work is a need that has developed as humanity has worked. As Sean Sayers states, 'subject and object change and develop in relation to each other.'[3] It is in this sense of the co-development of humanity and the material world that Marx argues that 'human action with a view to the production of use-values...is the everlasting Nature-imposed condition of human existence.'[4] Existence in the absence of this quality of action would be something very different, and humanity would be something very different, than it is today. Thus work creates life, i.e., the form of life. As people work to produce use-values coordinate to needs so they are altered through the act of production. Thus work does not only provide the means of subsistence but is the principle mechanism by which we engage with our environment. It is in this double-sense that I say that work creates life. Work creates life not simply by producing the use-values necessary for its reproduction in the biological sense but also by forming it in the existential sense. As the principle mechanism by which we engage with the world, it is through work that we affirm our 'species-being' and develop our 'slumbering powers.'[5] It is for this reason that Marx states that 'productive life is the life of the species. It is life-engendering life.'[6]

Labour is distinct from work. The aim of labour under capitalism is to produce value not use-value and, as such, it is organised in such a way so as to make it impossible for humans to realise their capacities for existing in the world in a consciously free way, i.e., to engage with the world and formatively shape it in such a way to use one's powers to satisfy needs. What are the key features of labour, and which characteristics are most important when thinking of theses on the potential for work under capitalism to be a source of self-valorisation? Labour under capitalism is wage-labour; the possibility for this character of the organisation of work persists from two conditions: private property and the concomitant possibility for the worker to be separated from means of production, and what Gayatri Spivak calls the 'irreducible structural super-adequation' of the subject, i.e., the ability of the worker to produce greater values than he or she needs for their own reproduction as a producer of use-values.[7] The structural character of this super-adequation emerges from the universal capacity of subjects to

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 173
[2] Harry Braverman. *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998). 31
[3] Sean Sayers. 'The Concept of Labor: Marx and his Critics', *Science & Society* 71:4 (2007). 435..
[4] Marx *Capital vol. I* 179
[5] Marx *1844* 75; Marx *Capital vol. I* 173
[6] Marx *1844* 76
[7] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value' in *In Other Worlds.* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006). 216.

create surplus-value. These two conditions make the commodification of labour-power possible. Labour-power – those capacities of bodies which are exercised when creating use-values, as distinct from labour which is labour-power in use – is a commodity.[1] It has both a use-value and an exchange-value. It is, however, the most peculiar of commodities in that its use-value is that 'its use creates value.'[2] Its exchange-value is of a lesser magnitude than the exchange-values of the use-values it is able to produce. It is possible therefore to exploit surplus-value from the exchange of the wage for labour-power and the putting of labour-power to use in the production of value. Therefore, under capitalism 'man has no human needs and money is the only true need produced in capitalism.'[3]

It is these conditions of labour that follow from the possibility of the exploitation of surplus-value which make it impossible for labour, according to Marx, to be 'free, conscious activity' through which humanity can 'realise [its] slumbering powers.'[4] Workers are alienated from their labour activity, from its product, from humanity's other subjects, and from what it is to be human. The separation of the worker from the means of production, along with the species character of work in which the worker designs the alteration of the object from the commencement of labour, i.e., before and throughout sensuous engagement with the object, creates the possibility for this alienation from the potentialities that can only be fulfilled through work. This alienation occurs through the control of the labour process, and the ownership of the object of labour, by something alien to the worker, i.e., someone else, the capitalist. Thus, labour is work in a society in which the worker has been separated from the means of production, the worker's labour-power is exchanged for a wage, the labour process is designed and controlled by an 'alien power', i.e., the capitalist; the use-values that are produced by labour are the property of this alien power. Labour is what work becomes under capitalism: it is the production of use-value solely to the ends of the production of value, and in its identities as exchange-value and surplus-value.

Work is the process by which humanity realises its potential; labour is a process in which work is transformed such that this potential is stunted. It is an important part of Marx's analysis of labour under capitalism that those characteristics that follow from the fact of capital's control over the labour process preclude the possibility for labour under capitalism to offer potential for the development and realisation of human capacities. There are a group of theorists however, the post-*operaismo*, who are also gathered together under the broad epithet of

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 164
[2] Marx *Capital vol. I* 224
[3] Ollman *Alienation* 92
[4] Marx *1844* 76; Marx *Capital vol. I* 173

Cognitive Capitalism theorists and generally influenced by the Italian Autonomist Marxist tradition, who argue that developments in the character of labour under capitalism indicate that there is an immanent tendency toward labour being the source of the sort of self-realisation that Marx describes. Labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism, they argue, is a means by which human potentialities can be realised and, further, contemporary forms of labour represent a mode of being from which an exodus from capitalist relations will follow. To approach this, I examine the contemporary conceptual landscape of labour by analysing a set of concepts that have been used to describe contemporary variations in wage-labour: the concepts of emotional labour, aesthetic labour and the linked concepts of immaterial labour, affective labour and biopolitical production.

2.3. Emotional Labour

The concept of emotional labour was introduced by Arlie Russell Hochschild in what has become a seminal work in the field of labour studies and in feminist approaches to work, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. In it, Hochschild principally examines the labour of flight attendants in the airline industry and conducts a more limited study of debt collectors. She observes that there is a form of work under capitalism, emotional labour, 'which requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others.'[1] The legacy of *The Managed Heart* is evident in the enduring impact of the emotional labour thesis and its application to work as varied as nursing, entertainment, retail, childcare, teaching, psychotherapy, sex work, call centres, and hospitality.[2] Hochschild prefigures the impact of the emotional labour thesis in her argument in the book that 'nurses or lawyers or salespeople' would be equally suitable sites for the study of

[1] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 7

[2] Steven Lopez. 'Emotional Labour and Organized Emotional Care: Conceptualising Nursing Home Care Work', *Work and Occupations* 33:2 (2006). 133-160.; Desmond Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker. 'Creative Work and Emotional Labour in the Television Industry', *Theory, Culture &Society* 25:7-8 (2008). 97-118.; Yoon-Na Chun, Brian Rutherford and Jung Kun Park. 'Emotional Labor's Impact in a Retail Environment', *Journal of Business Research* 66:11 (2013). 2338-2345.; Carol Vincent and Annette Braun. 'Being "fun" at Work: Emotional Labour, Class, Gender and Childcare', *British Educational Research Journal* 39:4 (2012). 751-768.; Lynn Isenbarger and Michalinos Zembylas. 'The Emotional Labour of Caring in Teaching', *Teaching & Teacher Education: An International Journal of research and Studies* 45:6 (2006). 120-134.; Benjamin Gray, E. Ogbonna and L. C. Harris. 'Work intensification and emotional labour among UK university lecturers: An exploratory study', *Organization Studies*, 25:7 (2004). 1185–1203.; Camelia Truta. 'Emotional Labor Strategies adopted by School Psychologists', *Social and Behavioural Sciences* 33: (2012). 796-800.; Dina Pinsky and Tania G. Levey. '"A World Turned Upside Down": Emotional Labour and the Professional Dominatrix', *Sexualities* 18:4 (2015). 438-358.; Kate Mulholland. 'Gender, Emotional Labour and Teamworking in a Call Centre', *Personnel Review* 31:3 (2002). 283-303.; Hyun Jeong Kim. 'Hotel Service Providers' Emotional Labour: The Antecedents and Effects on Burnout', *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 27:2 (2008). 151-161.

this purportedly new aspect of wage-labour.[1] Hochschild states that jobs which call for emotional labour 'have three characteristics in common.' First, these jobs 'require face-to-face or voice to voice contact with the public. Second, they require the worker to produce an emotional state in another person. Third, they allow the employer, through training and supervision, to exercise a degree of control over the emotional activities of employees.'[2] Thus, the concept of emotional labour can be seen to identify a tendency that is concomitant to the development of capitalist production and the concept itself emphasises 'the relational rather than the task-based aspect of the work.'[3] Novel aspects of labour-power are utilised in forms of production that involve contact with the public, in this case the ability of people to manage emotional responses to the world and to formatively shape the emotional responses of others. In this discussion of emotional labour I will demonstrate that Hochschild's concept is a construct that pertains from a matrix of concepts that operate in relation to one another within her theory of emotion. These concepts are: the "instrument" of the labour process; "private life", "public life", and "the transmutation of feeling"; "surface acting" and "deep acting"; and "estrangement". In this part, I will trace out how Hochschild defines these concepts and how they relate to one another in her theory. This examination of the key concepts of emotional labour leads me to a critique of emotional labour through the prism of what Paul Brook calls 'Hochschild's half-made theory of alienation.'[4] The incompleteness of Hochschild's integration of alienation theory in her concept of emotional labour results in her inability to take a position on the politics of work in which the indeterminacy of labour-power and concomitant practices of compliance with and resistance to labour is obviated within an inadequate theorisation of the relationship between "surface" and "deep acting".

2.3.1. Hochschild's Conceptual Matrix

To frame this investigation, it is necessary to examine an important epistemological assumption in Hochschild's understanding of emotion. Hochschild argues that emotion has a 'signal function.'[5] Hochschild argues that emotions signal something to us about the world. Hochschild follows Freud here, transposing his theory of the signal function of anxiety onto

[1] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 12
[2] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 147
[3] Steinberg and Figart cf. Claire Williams. 'Sky Service: The Demands of Emotional Labour in the Airline Industry', *Gender, Work and Organization* 10:5 (2003). 514.
[4] Brook 'The Alienated Heart'
[5] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 17

emotion.[1] She argues that this signal function operates with reference to emotional states other than anxiety, 'such as joy, sadness, and jealousy.'[2] From this signal function, the two points of intersection between Hochschild's theory of emotions and her emotional labour thesis follow: feelings are central to how we interact with the world, and feelings can be managed. 'From feeling,' she argues, 'we discover our own viewpoint on the world.'[3] Feeling, as a capacity, as something which our bodies can do, is a 'biologically given sense', Hochschild argues.[4] We experience or use this sense (to be able to feel an emotion) when we see or imagine the world around us. The capacity to feel an emotion, emotion-as-sense, is connected to our senses of sight and touch and hearing, etc., and to our capacity to be conscious of ourselves within the world. This is why, Hochschild argues, we name feelings, because the naming of feelings indicates our standpoint to the object of our experience; because 'feeling signals perception and expectation to us.'[5] As such, according to Hochschild's theory of emotion, feelings emerge in the mediation of the world through our conceptions of our own 'prior self' and in terms of our expectations. 'When an emotion signals a message...to us,' Hochschild argues, it therefore 'involves a reality newly grasped *on the template of prior expectations*.'[6] The existence of prior expectations, for Hochschild, 'implies the existence of a prior self that does the expecting.'[7] It is within the relationship between feeling, the subject's sense of a prior self, and expectation, that the capacity to manage feeling pertains.[8]

2.3.2. The Concept of Emotional Labour

In emotional labour, the emotional capacities and the ability of workers to manage emotions are made an instrument in a labour process. Feelings can be managed. These capacities and the possibility of their management – the possibility that they can be given determinate form within a labour process – are rendered as the instruments of the emotional labour process. The work of emotional labour is the production of value through the production of an embodied emotional state of comfort, ease, welcome, and care, within the customer. The worker's emotions and their capacities to manage them are the primary tools utilised to achieve this intended aim of the labour process. That is, the worker's emotions and his or her capacity to

[1] Sigmund Freud. 'Lecture XXXII: Anxiety and Institutional Life' in Peter Gay (ed.), *The Freud Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989). 774.
[2] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 231
[3] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 17
[4] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 229
[5] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 233
[6] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 231 emphasis in original
[7] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 17
[8] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 228-232

manage them is made an instrument. The emotional labourer is mandated to produce and manage feeling in accordance with the design of the labour process, which is in turn driven by norms of capital accumulation; the provision of this character of so-called customer service is an integral part of the commodity "air travel", for example. The buyer exchanges money for commodity in the expectation that the commodity "air travel" is inclusive of the production of these emotional states for the customer. The production of emotional states is an intrinsic part of the commodity. It is important to emphasise the complexity of these emotional interactions and modes of self-management. In their examination of emotional labour in beauty salons, Merran Toerien and Celia Kitzinger find that the worker's responses within customer interactions are often 'creative and multi-faceted, but the crucial element, is that she tailors all aspects of her response to the client's concerns.'[1] Thus, Hochschild builds on C. Wright Mills' identification of the instrumentalisation of 'personality' in the labour process of the 'new middle classes.'[2] In *White Collar*, Wright Mills states that worker and customer 'secretly tries to make an instrument of the other, and in time a full circle is made; one makes an instrument of himself and is estranged from it also.'[3] The customer makes an instrument of the worker, a phenomenon that Hochschild points to when examining the demands that customers make of the flight attendants in seeking what they regard as their rights to comfort, care, and safety. As one trainer at Delta Airlines puts it, 'the passengers are just like children.'[4] The worker makes an instrument of the customer by managing their demands within the exigencies of this particular form of commodity production. Of the greatest analytical importance to my purposes, workers manage customer demands by managing their own emotional responses and the form of the bodily display that the worker presents while doing this work. The worker's ability to manage feeling is an intrinsic part of the commodity.

Feeling, for Hochschild, is mirrored in display. She argues that we often "act-out" our emotions. Hochschild offers as an example a professional sports player's emotions after making an error in her play and notes how her emotions are reflected in the display she makes, including the reddening of the face, a stamping of her foot, and the hitting of a tennis net with her racket.[5] Using this example, Hochschild states that 'we infer other people's viewpoints

[1] Merran Toerien and Celia Kitzinger. 'II. Emotional Labour in the Beauty Salon: Turn Design of Task-directed Talk', *Feminism and Psychology* 17:2 (2007). 166.
[2] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* ix; C. Wright Mills. *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). xvi-xvii.
[3] Cf. Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 24
[4] Cf. Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 110
[5] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 31. Hochschild also argues the gendered character of these displays of emotions here, noting the surprise at which the TV commentators at this competition survey the so-called becoming professionalism of women in the sport, indicating that male professionals desire to win and their frustration at mistakes in play is simply given.

from how they display feeling.'[1] Furthermore, feeling is not simply an embodied response to external stimuli, but is 'something we *do* by attending to inner sensations.'[2] We shape and reshape our emotional responses to external stimuli with recourse to our expectations, of others and of the world, and our sense of self. We define situations in certain ways and manage our emotions through an internal process of mediating our relation to the world. Knowing that we can infer the viewpoints of others by the manner in which they display feeling, we also know that others can infer our viewpoints by the manner in which we display feeling. The distinction between processes of producing display, that is, surface acting, and the production of deep acting, occurs in the midst of these two co-productive tensions of a subjective awareness of the ability to infer feeling from display and our ability to attend to inner sensations.

In our private lives, Hochschild argues, 'we are capable of disguising what we feel, of pretending to feel what we do not.'[3] This is 'surface acting'; we know that we do not feel the emotion that we are feigning, but we feign so that we might deceive others as to the true nature of our feelings. 'In deep acting,' Hochschild argues, 'we make feigning easy by making it unnecessary.'[4] We often engage in deep acting in our private lives when we wish to conform to social customs, such as feeling sad at funerals, happy at weddings, or to convince ourselves that we actually *do* love our romantic partners.[5] Sensing that we do not feel the emotions we are expected to feel, either in particular or in terms of degree, we engage in deep acting when we invoke imaginaries or stir memories that may provoke feelings of sympathy or empathy with the situation that faces us in order to conform to the social expectations of feeling.[6] We also undertake processes for the production of deep acting in order to protect ourselves from psychological harm that might be caused by feelings we feel but wish we did not, for example, unrequited love.[7] This 'double pretending' can, however, lead to psychological harm. Hochschild states that to pretend to oneself that one feels a certain feeling and to pretend this feeling to others requires the constant maintenance of what sort of feelings should be consciously recognised, and what feelings should be repressed.[8] Unsurprisingly, this often results in what one college student reports as a 'secret nervous breakdown.'[9] In work, we often call this "burn-out". To examine the distinction between surface and deep acting further, and to develop Hochschild's conception of public and private life, it is important to examine the

[1] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 32
[2] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 27. Emphasis in original.
[3] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 33
[4] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 33
[5] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 39, 59-63, 45
[6] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 42-3
[7] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 43-4
[8] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 45
[9] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 45

process that Hochschild claims mediates the passage of emotion management through these two spheres: the process of "transmutation".

In wage-labour, the instrumentalisation of emotions and the capacity to manage them proceed from, according to Hochschild, a "transmutation" of feeling in the movement from their use in 'private life' to their commercialisation in 'public life'. This passage of feeling management from private uses to its instrumentalisation in the public sphere, i.e., in wage-labour, is central to Hochschild's understanding of emotional labour and to her critique of the human consequences of the 'commercialisation of human feeling.' The centrality of the relation between public and private uses of feeling management in Hochschild's theory is indicated by her separation of *The Managed Heart* into two parts, the first titled 'Public Life', the second 'Private Life'. The importance of this relation follows from the principles of Hochschild's theory of emotion. As noted earlier, for Hochschild, emotion is a point of mediation between us and the world; through feeling we experience, in an embodied way, our viewpoint on the world. The transmutation of emotional capacity and management from public to private uses pertains across 'three basic elements of emotional life: emotion work, feeling rules, and social exchange.'[1]

First, emotion work is defined by Hochschild as 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display.'[2] Hochschild makes a distinction between 'emotion work' and 'emotional labour' in accordance with Marx's labour theory of value and the distinction made by Engels which I introduced at the beginning of this chapter. "Emotion work" is done in a private context and therefore she argues that these acts of emotion work 'have *use value*... Emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange-value*.'[3] Thus, Hochschild implicates Marx's category of commodity, and labour-power as a commodity, in order to define what emotional labour is.[4] Emotion work undergoes a 'transmutation', Hochschild argues, from being a private practice in the production of use-value to becoming a 'public act, bought on the one hand and sold on the other' and therein becoming labour that produces value.[5] Hochschild also explicitly introduces Braverman's critique of the impact of Taylorisation upon the worker's control of their own labour process, arguing that the worker is no longer in sole control of their own emotion management, which is

[1] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 118
[2] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 7fn.
[3] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 7fn. Emphasis in original.
[4] Paul Brook. 'In critical defence of "emotional labour": refuting Bolton's critique of Hochschild's concept', *Work, Employment and Society* 23:3 (2009). 538.
[5] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 118

instead directed by managers, trainers, and supervisors.'[1] Second, "feeling rules" undergo transmutation in emotional labour. Feeling rules for the worker are not only decided by the capitalist, but are also published in training manuals and implied by marketing which 'promises service that is "human" and personal' and often sexualised.[2] Furthermore, as argued by Steve Taylor and Melissa Tyler, emotional labour is most oftentimes within modes of 'sexual difference, and the consolidation of gendered power relations, [that] are produced through historically-situated capitalist and gendered labour processes.'[3] As such, the gendered and sexualised character of emotional labour is an important aspect of what it is, a dimension overlooked in Catherine Hakim's relatively uncritical examination of what she calls 'erotic capital' in which the power relations of work and the capacity of the labour market to bear upon embodiment are unfortunately absent.[4] For Hochschild, therefore, 'feeling rules are no longer simply matters of personal discretion' when the worker does emotional labour, but are exempt from interpersonal negotiation and decided by another, viz. the capitalist, and are made public.[5] In the third element of Hochschild's transmutation, "social exchange", 'there is much less room for individual navigation of the emotional waters' of social exchange because workers' capacities for emotion management are codified in a fixed set of feeling rules within the inequality of the wage-labour exchange and the inequality between service-giver and the receiver of services.[6]

2.3.4. The Politics of Emotional Labour

Hochschild attempts to integrate a notion of the indeterminacy of labour-power, and therefore the possibility of resistance, in her exposition of the relationship between the instrumentalisation of emotion and capacities for emotion management and the tension between surface acting and deep acting that persists amongst the prerogatives for the transmutation of feeling. With the significance that Hochschild ascribes to emotion, as a sense through which we relate to the world around us, her discussion of emotional labour sets out from the deleterious consequences of the phenomenon of emotion management as an instrument in the production of value.[7] When the capacity to manage emotion, emotions

[1] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 118-9
[2] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 93
[3] Steve Taylor and Melissa Tyler. 'Emotional Labour and Sexual Difference in the Airline Industry', *Work, Employment and Society* 14:1 (2000). 79.
[4] Catherine Hakim. 'Erotic Capital', *European Sociological Review* 26:5 (2010). 499-518.
[5] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 119
[6] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 119
[7] As opposed to its use in the production of use-values.

themselves, and the aesthetic clues of bodily 'display' that signify emotion are each made into the instrument of the labour process in waged labour, 'the worker,' Hochschild argues, 'can become estranged or alienated from an aspect of self – either the body or the margins of the soul – that is *used* to do the work.'[1] However, as Paul Brook argues, Hochschild's 'half-made theory of alienation' results in an ambiguous position on the possibilities for an unalienated *experience* of labour under capitalism.[2]

Paul Brook has undertaken a longstanding and passionate defence of the concept against Sharon C. Bolton's reconfiguration of Hochschild's emotional labour. The apparently 'depoliticised workplace' that follows from Bolton's reconfiguration, indicates the urgency of what is at stake in this examination of the changing landscape of work.[3] Following Brook, I argue that a fundamental problem with how Hochschild reads the relationship between the power relations of emotional labour and the consequences of emotional labour upon the worker's ontology is that she concludes that emotional labour is 'a task of *managing* an estrangement between self and feeling and self and display.'[4] Hochschild argues that the potentially pernicious ontological consequences of emotional labour can be obviated by a conscious management of the self within the mediation between surface and deep acting. For Hochschild, existential crises occur for the worker when they cannot estrange themselves – or rather, their 'self' – from their labour and when they cannot 'depersonalise' the bad things that happen in work.[5] Bolton claims that Hochschild argues that 'the self is damaged' by emotional labour; therefore, 'for Hochschild, there is no way out.'[6] As such, Bolton takes a simplistic reading of transmutation as a denial of indeterminacy as opposed to being a process by which labour and labour-power are socially-fixed. I argue that it is the ambiguity between this conclusion and the Marxist interpretation of concepts such as labour-power and alienation in Hochschild which results in the tension within the LPA tradition that has played out between Brook and Bolton. Brook, almost certainly following Braverman's critique of the fascination of contemporary social science to concern itself only with the subjective feelings of people, at the expense of a thoroughgoing integration of subjective feeling with the objective conditions of society as accomplished by Michael Burawoy for example, has spent a great deal of effort attempting to both retrieve and reconfigure the concept of emotional labour in line with its Marxist core.

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[1] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 7. Emphasis in original.
[2] Brook 'The Alienated Heart' 18
[3] Brook 'In critical defence of "emotional labour"' 545
[4] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 131. My emphasis.
[5] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 130-6
[6] Sharon C. Bolton. 'Getting to the heart of the emotional labour process: a reply to Brook', *Work, Employment and Society* 23:3 (2009). 551.

Hochschild's deployment of Marxist concepts has been at the centre of Brook's argument. According to Brook, Hochschild 'defines emotional labour by its commodification as labour-power rather than by its commercialisation as a service product.'[1] The vanishing of Hochschild's use of Marx's concepts has been at the centre of Bolton's argument. 'Apart from the short introduction to the practices involved in emotional labour,' she claims, Hochschild 'barely mentions Marx.'[2] As noted above, Hochschild makes the distinction between work and labour, and does so with specific reference to Marx's *Capital, volume I*. *The Managed Heart* opens with a discussion of the similarities between Marx's analysis of factory work and Hochschild's own analysis of emotional labour. Furthermore, Hochschild proposes a theory of alienated emotional labour and does so with reference to both *Capital, vol. I* and to Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Bolton however, as Rachel Lara Cohen finds, 'argues that it is managerial control over workers' emotions, rather than the sale of labour-power that marks the transition from emotional work to emotional labour.'[3] Bolton thereby depoliticises the labour process of emotional labour and thereby further limits the scope of alienation solely to the object of the worker's labour. By ignoring the sale of labour-power as a commodification of the capacity to work Bolton amputates the alienation from activity, and the notion of authentic self that is so important to Hochschild, from the *possibility* of analysis. Bolton simply does not recognise the validity and rigour of approaches to labour that consider the commodification of labour-power. I argue that because Hochschild deploys a Marxist conception of labour-power and of alienation, because there is this Marxist core, that when Marx is absent from Hochschild's thesis, such as in the possibility for the overcoming of estrangement through an appropriate subjective approach to the vicissitudes that emotional labour brings with it and with the centrality of a Freudian conception of the relation between subjective feeling and the objective world, Brook continues to read Marx into Hochschild. Or rather, reads Marx back in. Bolton is engaged in similar project to read Marx out of Hochschild's theory of emotional labour. She asks, 'did I miss something in *The Managed Heart*?'[4] It is disingenuous to ignore Hochschild's deployment of Marx's analysis and his concepts – albeit a deployment that is not without its problems. The concepts of alienation, estrangement, exchange-value and use-value are each fundamental points of Hochschild's analysis and all intersect within Hochschild's conceptual matrix. Furthermore, Brook's argument that the concept of emotional labour rests on the 'distinction between emotion work and emotional labour' is entirely coordinate with the structure of the book and with

[1] Brook 'In critical defence' 539
[2] Bolton 'Getting to the heart of the emotional labour process' 551
[3] Rachel Lara Cohen. 'When it pays to be friendly: employment relationships and emotional labour in hairstyling', *The Sociological Review* 58:2 (2010). 199.
[4] Bolton 'Getting to the heart of the emotional labour process' 551

Hochschild's theory itself.[1] If we remove these concepts from Hochschild's argument, then there is no argument left; only speculation on the relationship between emotions and labour, which is easily twisted and turned when subject to analysis based on surveys of subjective feeling alone.

As such, the attempt by Bolton to amputate Marx from emotional labour and to focus solely on the subjective experience of labour and also Brook's attempts to reconfigure the Marxist core of the emotional labour thesis and thereby rehabilitate it as a political economic critique of labour should be understood as a distinction of ideology, not as a distinction between the concrete conditions of emotional labour. I argue that Bolton's thesis is predicated by an understanding of emotional labour, as argued by Gavin Poynter, as 'fertile ground for further distancing the subject from such "dated" structural determinist theories as Marxism' and, as such is composed as much by a misunderstanding of Marxism as it is by a political aim to demonstrate that capitalism can be organised such that workers are not damaged.[2] I argue that Marxist approaches are regarded as dated because it is argued that they do not consider that 'employees maintain spaces to "be themselves" and...choose to do *emotion work* in which they proactively foster wellbeing.'[3] This idea betrays an entirely uncritical approach to notions such as "choice" and "authenticity" within the power-relations that are attendant to any form of production; ideas that are central to Hochschild's conclusions on emotional labour and ideas that I will examine in later chapters. I argue that it also displays an ignorance of the capacity of a Marxist approach to consider this aspect of labour and my thesis will demonstrate this. This criticism of Brook also ignores his efforts to not so much rehabilitate Hochschild's thesis but rather to understand it within 'a materialist theory of labour subjectivity.'[4] A Marxist approach is capable of examining the notion that work is a site of the production of the subject and that the idea of choice is not synonymous with the idea of freedom. Bolton regards a Marxist approach to service work as 'a retreat to orthodoxy.'[5] I argue that it is a critical process towards the exit from capitalist ideology and abstraction.

Brook is right when he argues that, from an historical materialist perspective, Hochschild's emotional labour is 'under-developed and lacks a dialectic understanding of the dynamic

[1] Brook 'In critical defence' 513
[2] Gavin Poynter. 'Emotions in the Labour Process', *European Journal of Psychology, Counselling & Health* 5:3 (2002). 248.
[3] Steve Vincent. 'The emotional labour process: An essay on the economy of feelings', *Human Relations* 64:10 (2010). 1371.
[4] Paul Brook. 'Emotional labour and the living personality at work: Labour power, materialist subjectivity and the dialogical self', *Culture and Organization* 19:4 (2013). 332.
[5] Thompson and Smith. cf. Bolton 'Getting to the heart of the emotional labour process' 552

contradictions that mark both workers' consciousness and the service labour process.'[1] This underdevelopment is most apparent in Hochschild's theory of alienated emotional labour and the absence of a dialectical understanding brings itself to bear on Hochschild's conclusions on the politics of emotional labour. Most pertinently, it allows Hochschild to entertain the notion that there is a possibility of a public self and a private self and that the ontological consequences of emotional labour under capitalism can be addressed by the worker choosing a psychologically appropriate subject position to the deleterious requirements of the commodification of the capacity to manage emotion. Hochschild only relates two aspects of Marx's theory of alienation to emotional labour, namely the alienation of the worker from his or her activity and the alienation of the worker from the object of work. In doing so, Hochschild foregoes an analysis of how the alienation from the object and the activity of emotional labour relate to how we might conceive of the impact of emotional labour upon the development of human capacities and how the altered character of the object and the activity might produce new dimensions to the way in which people are separated from one another. I argue that a consideration of these two factors of Marx's theory of alienation have the potential to be deployed in the navigation of the public-self/private-self dichotomy on which Hochschild's theory concludes. Chris Yuill argues that the labour process factors of Marx's theory of alienation should not be separated from the factors that derive from an analysis of the proliferation of capitalist social relations, that is, alienation from fellow humans, or from the factor that derives from Marx's theory of human nature, that is, alienation from species life.[2] Such a half-made theory cannot possibly consider the ontological consequences of labour, that is, the effect of labour upon Being. As noted by Brook, Hochschild's position on estrangement is that is not an interminable condition of labour under capitalism. He argues that Hochschild 'seems to suggest that workers can avert alienation by successfully managing their "true self."'[3] Hochschild is able to propose the possibility of a successful mediation of deep and surface acting which, I argue, also results from an inadequate theorisation of a purported distinction between the public and private sphere which in turn results from a failure to consider all four factors of Marx's theory of alienation.

Nonetheless, Hochschild makes an important contribution to the examination of the labour process factors of alienation, i.e., alienation from activity and alienation from object. First, she highlights that the alienation of the worker from his or her own labour activity represents an instrumentalisation of the worker's body. While simultaneously drawing the relation between

[1] Brook 'In critical defence' 544
[2] Chris Yuill. 'Forgetting and remembering alienation theory' *History of the Human Sciences* 24:2 (2011). 103-119.
[3] Brook 'The Alienated Heart' 18

work under capitalism in general and this 'new' form of wage-labour, Hochschild states that the 'nineteenth-century child working in a brutalising English wallpaper factory and a well-paid American flight attendant have something in common: in order to survive in their jobs,' she proposes, 'they must mentally detach themselves.'[1] The arms and legs and cognitive functions that drive factory workers into the doing of prescribed labour activity are made an instrument in labour processes in which a physical object is formatively shaped. According to Hochschild, then, the factory worker may detach themselves from a notion of their arms and legs and mind belonging to them, and instead come to recognise that these parts of their bodies belong, as part of the labour-power that is now labour activity, to the capitalist who has paid for the use of them. As well as undertaking analogous physical activities, the emotional labourer must detach themselves from their own bodies as a result of the same process of the making as instrument their ability to manage emotions and their ability to smile. In formatively shaping the object the worker must make an instrument of themselves.

2.4. Aesthetic Labour

The concept of aesthetic labour was developed by a group of researchers with strong links to the Business School of the University of Strathclyde. As such, the researchers who developed the concept of aesthetic labour are often referred to as the Strathclyde Group. Aesthetic labour, in simple terms, is labour which relies 'to a large extent upon the physical appearance, or more specifically, the embodied capacities of those to be employed or are employed.'[2] Aesthetic labour is about 'looking good and/or sounding right.'[3] Richard Hall and Diane van den Broek argue that 'aesthetic labour has become an important analytical category in contemporary research on interactive service work, complementing the importance attributed to attitude and emotions in research on emotional labour, with the recognition of the additional significance of physical appearance.'[4] In this section, I first examine the theoretical development of the concept, with particular reference to the stated intention to extend Hochschild's concept of emotional labour. The Strathclyde Group argue that, following from *The Managed Heart*,

[1] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart* 110
[2] Chris Warhurst, *et al.* 'Aesthetic Labour in Interactive Service Work: Some Case Study Evidence from the "New Glasgow"' *The Service Industries Journal* 20:3 (2000). 2.
[3] Chris Warhurst and Dennis Nickson. 'Becoming a Class Act? Reflections on Aesthetic Labour' *International Labour Process Conference*, Strathclyde. 2005. 1.
[4] Richard Hall and Diane van den Broek. 'Aestheticising retail workers: Orientations of aesthetic labour in Australian fashion retail', *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 33:1 (2012). 85.

'embodiment is empirically and conceptually retired in subsequent research and debate.'[1] Second, I examine the key features of the Strathclyde Group's concept of aesthetic labour, focusing on how aesthetic labourers can be seen to enter the labour market and engage in the wage-labour exchange. Finally, I argue that the Strathclyde Group's conception of aesthetic labour represents a depoliticised workplace because in their rediscovery of the embodied character of emotional labour thesis they forgo Hochschild's key concern, the consequence of wage-labour upon the integrity of what Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wissinger call the 'body/self,' instead prioritising the notions of "skill", "employability", and the functioning of the capitalist labour market.[2]

2.4.1. The Conceptual Development of Aesthetic Labour

The Strathclyde Group's concept of aesthetic labour was developed as the result of an initial research study on employment in 'designer retailers, boutique/lifestyle hotels and style bars, cafes and restaurants.'[3] By examining 'personal physical capacities and attributes demanded by employers' they identify what they call the "style" labour market from which employers draw their aesthetic labourers.[4] As such, the Strathclyde Group acknowledge the 'niche' character of their early work.[5] Nonetheless, it is from this niche aspect of the concept of aesthetic labour that broader tendencies in the utilisation of workers' capacities for the management and deployment of their aesthetic capacities have been identified. From a general analysis of the retail and hospitality sectors in Glasgow, they report a 'high level of demand for aesthetic skills.'[6]

From their empirical focus on hospitality and retail workers, the Strathclyde Group argue that the concept of emotional labour, which had to that point been the dominant concept for the explanation of interactive service work, retires the notion of the embodied character of emotion.[7] This analysis leads them to conclude that the concept of aesthetic labour is both a rediscovery of the embodied character of service work present in Hochschild's concept of emotional labour and a necessary extension of the concept of emotional labour. That is, they

[1] Dennis Nickson and Chris Warhurst. 'Opening Pandora's Box: Aesthetic Labour and Hospitality' in Conrad Lashley, Paul Lynch and Alison Morrison (eds). *Hospitality: A Social Lens.* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2007). 158
[2] Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wissinger. 'Keeping up appearances: aesthetic labour in the fashion modelling industries of London and New York', *The Sociological Review* 54:4 (2006). 774.
[3] Nickson and Warhurst. 'Opening Pandora's Box' 159
[4] Nickson and Warhurst. 'Opening Pandora's Box' 156
[5] Nickson and Warhurst. 'Opening Pandora's Box' 159
[6] Dennis Nickson, Chris Warhurst and Eli Dutton. 'Aesthetic Labour and the Policy-Making Agenda: Time for a Reappraisal of Skills?' *SKOPE Research Paper* 48 (2004). 2.
[7] Nickson and Warhurst 'Opening Pandora's Box' 158

argue that the concept of aesthetic labour can encompass the appropriation and regulation of corporeality as a complement to examinations of the appropriation and regulation of feeling. What the Strathclyde Group identify as a growing prominence of the embodied capacities and attributes in interactive service work is not an entirely new development they argue; 'looking good and sounding right' has been a feature of work in the past and they point specifically to the workers in Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms in order to demonstrate this historical context.[1] I argue therefore that aesthetic labour is an example of the tendency to what David Harvey calls the 'body as an accumulation strategy.'[2] As Entwhistle and Wissinger argue, there is an 'ongoing tendency to extract value from bodies.'[3] Although the Strathclyde Group's conception of aesthetic labour notes that, 'the mobilisation of this [aesthetic] labour is increasingly a *corporate strategy*', I argue that they forego the examination of the body as a subject of value and a subject of power.[4] Instead, their focus on the conceptualisation of 'skills', the question of 'employability' and 'class' lead them to naturalise the conditions of the labour market and depoliticise the question of the subjectivity of workers.

2.4.2. The Valorisation of Aesthetic Labour

The Strathclyde argue that aesthetic labour occurs following from a linear process of the recruitment, selection and training of workers. They argue that these three distinct stages proceed in a fashion that is attendant to the requirements that the employer prescribes to the worker. First, they argue that prior to the intervention of the labour process the aesthetic labourer is the bearer of a set of embodied set of attributes, or rather a 'disposition' in the Bourdieusian sense.[5] This disposition is not necessarily "finished" in the eyes of the employer but is nonetheless one which is made up of appropriate capacities and potentialities that can be shaped at a later stage. This disposition is selected by the employer through the placing of job advertisements in media selected for its ability to target workers of appropriate dispositions.[6] The Strathclyde Group do not explore the processes of the production of this well-disposed subject in their conception of aesthetic labour but rather assume that the subject who is ready for entry into the "style" labour market exists. Although they do argue that there is a class

[1] First opened in Glasgow in 1878, Miss Cranston had the decor designed and employed certain types of workers with an intended aim to produce a certain aesthetic. Nickson and Warhurst 'Opening Pandora's Box' 157
[2] David Harvey. 'The body as an accumulation strategy' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16 (1998). 401-421.
[3] Entwhistle and Wissinger 'Keeping up appearances' 780
[4] Nickson and Warhurst 'Opening Pandora's Box' 159. Emphasis in original.
[5] Dennis Nickson, *et al*. 'Bringing in the Excluded? Aesthetic Labour, skills and training in the "new" economy' *Journal of Education and Work* 16:2 (2003). 188.
[6] Nickson and Warhurst 'Opening Pandora's Box' 162

character to the dispositions that are deployed as labour-power in aesthetic labour. Thus, a fundamental characteristic of the Strathclyde Group's concept of aesthetic labour is that these capacities and attributes of workers, this disposition, is 'possessed [by workers] at the point of entry into employment.'[1]

Second, following recruitment, employers engage in a process of selection. Employers use interviews in order to select workers according to a predetermined idea of the characteristics of the desired worker disposition. Employers determine the acceptable style.[2] Management use interviews to evaluate whether workers have the potential capacity to bear, display, and ultimately embody the appropriate aesthetic for the company. Furthermore, Warhurst and Nickson report that 'management seek workers with personal characteristics likely to make them interact spontaneously and perform effectively.'[3]

Third, the employer then goes on to 'mobilise, develop, and commodify' these capacities.[4] The Strathclyde Group frame the mobilisation, development, and "commodification" of embodied capacities as a unitary process instigated by the employer that proceeds in order 'to attempt to overcome [the] indeterminacy of labour by systematising it.'[5] According to them, this "systematisation" of the indeterminacy of labour-power in work comprises processes of the directing of the labour process (i.e., a hierarchical technical division of labour under which the labour process is supervised and regulated), regimes of management control in which the labour process is evaluated, and concomitant systems of reward and discipline.[6] This process is also most often prefigured by employee training.[7] However, the Strathclyde Group do not demarcate these processes of mobilisation, development and commodification, nor do they explain what they mean by these terms.

In summary, according to the Strathclyde Group the aesthetic worker results from these processes. First, the potential worker is the bearer of a particular kind of disposition. Second, this worker is identified and located by the employer and engaged in a wage-labour exchange. Finally, the worker's embodiment of aesthetic qualities and their capacities for regulating their aesthetic is subject to management regulation in a workplace that is more or less characterised by a particular aesthetic model and which is, therefore, a normative site in which the self-regulation of one's own aesthetic is overtly promoted by management. I argue that the key

[1] Warhurst *et al.* 'Aesthetic Labour in Interactive Service Work' 3
[2] Nickson *et al.* 'Bringing in the Excluded?' 186
[3] Warhurst *et al.* 'Aesthetic Labour in Interactive Service Work' 3
[4] Warhurst *et al.* 'Aesthetic Labour in Interactive Service Work' 3
[5] Nickson and Warhurst 'Opening Pandora's Box' 158-9
[6] Nickson and Warhurst 'Opening Pandora's Box' 158-9
[7] Nickson and Warhurst 'Opening Pandora's Box' 163

problems with the Strathclyde Group's analysis are the absence of an analysis of the production of dispositions, how this is related to the labour process of aesthetic labour, and their approach to the class character of desired dispositions in the recruitment of aesthetic labour. That is, on this last point, I argue that to presuppose that 'aesthetic labour has to be at the heart of the progressive agenda,' and that governmental and cultural efforts should be made to include the post-industrial working class in the aesthetic labour market immediately closes off political questions regarding the relation between labour and capital.[1] Second, I argue that there are problems with how they draw the relation between the 'spontaneity' of workers and micro-instances of autonomy or action that proceeds according to individual choice and within the processes by which capital socially-fixes labour-power. That is, there is a tension between the Strathclyde Group's notes on acts of 'spontaneity' amongst workers and their observations of the processes by which aesthetic labour is "systematised" as aesthetic labour-power. As such, there are further problems regarding the tension between a purported need of capital to employ spontaneity and its need to determine indeterminate labour-power. Third, although it is clear what is meant by the "mobilisation" and "development" of the aesthetic capacities of workers, it is unclear exactly what they mean by the "commodification" of these capacities.

2.4.3. The Politics of Aesthetic Labour

I argue that the Strathclyde Group understand labour under capitalism in such a way that facilitates the functioning of capitalism. Of course, there is merit in this approach. They have engaged in important work to encourage government to foster employment in aesthetic labour industries for the working class in post-industrial areas like Glasgow, Newcastle and Liverpool, which of course addresses itself to 'surface modifications' of the existing order that can ameliorate important problems with capitalism, such as poverty, but do nothing to address the problem of capitalism itself.[2] There are fundamental and urgent limits attendant to narrowing the political focus of research into labour to, for example, the desirability of "soft skills" in "entry-level" employment.[3] There is a focus on methods by which aesthetic labour skills can be introduced to the working class in order to improve 'employability.'[4] I argue that, as a result of this focus, the Strathclyde Group interpellate the working class as mere labour-power and

[1] Chris Warhurst and Dennis Nickson. *Looking good, sounding right: style counselling in the new economy.* (London: The Industrial Society, 2001). 2.
[2] Rosa Luxemburg. 'Reform or Revolution' in Helen Scott (ed.). *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg*. (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2008). 90.
[3] Dennis Nickson, *et al*. 'Soft skills and employability: Evidence from UK retail', *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 33:1 (2012). 65-84.
[4] Nickson *et al* 'Bringing in the Excluded'

reduce the politics of the working class to the ability to be able to access wage-labour. This (inadequately) addresses the symptom that Marx identifies in the *Paris Manuscripts* – when he says that 'labour itself becomes an object which he can get hold of only with the greatest effort and with the most regular interruptions' – but not the cause.[1] The Strathclyde Group's problem-centred approach to examining unemployment in former-industrial areas through a skills framework does not consider the political consequences of the production of workers' disposition to certain embodied forms of labour activity, but rather insufficiently interrogates the notion of a disposition as something which the worker possesses prior to employment in the so-called style labour market. That is, they do not consider the co-production of dispositions alongside the labour process that valorises them. As such, I argue that the Strathclyde Group depoliticise work because they pay scant attention to the notion of the worker as a subject, but rather reify the worker as a bearer of labour-power whose character can be formatively shaped according to the requirements of production without any negative physiological, political or ontological consequences.

I argue that this reification is, paradoxically, most evident in their argument that aesthetic labour represents 'a potential new labour aristocracy.'[2] In their investigations of concrete forms of aesthetic labour, the Strathclyde Group highlight a number of empirical examples in which aesthetic labour purportedly subverts the subordinate and servile character of "service", and argue that this represents an opportunity for workers to be 'superordinate' to the people they serve.[3] In this sense, the 'potential labour aristocracy' is a niche of a niche of the contemporary landscape of labour. This labour aristocracy represents but a stratum of the practice of aesthetic labour and emerges from an 'examination of the observable social practices and material conditions of the work and employment of [aesthetic] workers.'[4] I argue, however, that there is a paradox that pertains between this production of service encounters in which the (aesthetic) worker is superior to the customer, reversing the traditional service relationship, and the social-fixing of the worker as labour-power. Although the Strathclyde Group argue that the key process in the production of aesthetic labour is the mobilisation, development, and commodification of the embodied capacities of worker, the bearing of a worker made into a commodity as a result is all too often absent from their analyses. This paradox is merely an analytical one, rather than a real one. I argue that the worker appears as superior to the customer only because the wage-labour relation, i.e., the relation between the worker and their

[1] Marx *1844* 71
[2] Chris Warhurst and Dennis Nickson. 'A New Labour Aristocracy? Aesthetic labour and routine interactive service', *Work, Employment and Society* 21:4, (2007). 787
[3] Warhurst and Nickson 'A new labour aristocracy' 793
[4] Warhurst and Nickson 'A new labour aristocracy' 790

employer, is made absent by the Strathclyde Group. Furthermore, I argue that capital comes into view only fleetingly in their conception of aesthetic labour; capital recruits and selects labour, trains it, develops it, mobilises it, and "commodifies" it. However, when the examination of aesthetic labour ventures into the realm of power, capital is made absent; the analytical terrain that should be occupied by an examination of capitalist power and the struggle over embodied subjectivity is replaced in this case with the recourse to subjective feeling and an analysis of a relation between purportedly formally autonomous customers and workers. In the Strathclyde Group's discussion of the politics of aesthetic labour, we have entered the hidden abode of aesthetic production yet the capitalist is conspicuously absent.

2.5. Immaterial Labour/Affective Labour}Biopolitical Production

*2.5.1. The Post-*Operaisti *Concepts of post-Fordist Labour*

The concepts of immaterial labour, affective labour and biopolitical production are closely linked in terms of how and why they were developed, the philosophical assumptions that underpin them and their attendant methodological prescriptions. These concepts are a particularly autonomist Marxist understanding of changes in the form of labour. Therefore, I examine this conceptual development historically, beginning with Maurizio Lazzarato's initial conception of immaterial labour. Lazzarato first proposed the concept of immaterial labour in a chapter of the same name from the edited volume *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*. It is not simply the medium of communication that illuminates the historical lineage of the concept. As I will demonstrate below, the concept of immaterial labour follows from Italian Autonomist Marxist projects to understand alterations in class-composition and purportedly immanent tendencies that are concomitant to a transition from the Fordist organisation of production to a post-Fordist or post-modern organisation. As such, I argue that the concept of immaterial labour is historically connected to Romano Alquati and Antonio Negri's idea about "self-valorisation" in wage-labour that appears around the time that Negri proposes a 'crisis in the law of value' at the turn of the 1980s.[1] The concept of immaterial labour is intimately connected to other conceptual understandings that pertain within the post-*operaismo* epistemological outlook. I examine this outlook more fully in the next chapter, focusing here on the concept itself and do not examine its connection to theses on general intellect, their ideas about the categorical autonomy of living labour, and I only briefly discuss Mario Tronti's

[1] Negri 'Domination and Sabotage' 63; Antonio Negri. *Marx Beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse*. (London: Pluto Press, 1991). 59-104. First published in 1979.

inversion of the Second International's crude characterisation of Marx's theory of the labour/capital antagonism. Following a discussion of Lazzarato, I examine how Hardt and Negri develop the concept in their works *Empire*, *Multitude*, and *Commonwealth*, focusing particularly on how they integrate the concept of affective labour within immaterial labour and how this bears on their subsequent conceptualisation of biopolitical production.

2.5.2. Lazzarato's Immaterial Labour: a politics of post-Fordism

According to Lazzarato, immaterial labour is 'the labour that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity.'[1] In Lazzarato's conception, immaterial labour does not produce the commodity *as such*, but rather is the labour that defines and fixes the 'cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms and…public opinion' that produce the ideological environment in which commodities are exchanged.[2] In this sense, the commodity of immaterial labour is a bearer of cultural political economic signs. Immaterial labour is the work of producing those signs and therein is the work of both producing and reproducing commodity fetishism. As I have argued in the previous sections of this chapter, this work of producing tastes, fashions, and opinions can also be applied to types of work that have been associated with both emotional and aesthetic labour. I argue therefore that the concept of immaterial labour should be understood as a generalising concept which draws together an examination of technical changes in the organisation of work with reference to attendant changes in the relationship between production and consumption and changes in what Lazzarato calls the 'subjective-political composition of the working class.'[3]

Unlike the concepts of aesthetic labour and emotional labour the concept of immaterial labour is immediately situated with a theory of capital formation and this theory of capital formation is particular to this historical conjuncture. It is intrinsic to the concept that immaterial labour itself is determinant of and determined by a development of the capitalist mode of accumulation. Importantly, Lazzarato argues, this development presents us with a 'curious paradox.'[4] The Fordist worker – who was the subject of the Fordist organisation of the relation between production and consumption that was mediated by higher wages and a tripartite political organisation made up of the state, trade unions and capital – has been defeated by capital, Lazzarato claims. Lazzarato proposes that immaterial labour is a significant factor in capital's

[1] Maurizio Lazzarato. 'Immaterial Labor' in Paulo Virno and Michael Hardt (eds). *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). 133.
[2] Lazzarato 'Immaterial Labor' 133
[3] Lazzarato 'Immaterial Labor' 133
[4] Lazzarato 'Immaterial Labor' 134

responsive strategy to the wage struggle and attendant forms of resistance to work, namely the sabotage of production and strikes. The paradox, he argues, persists in the subjective-political composition of the working class: an intellectualised working class that is autonomous from capital has emerged from the capitalist strategy to subvert the Fordist worker's resistance of labour. This strategy, according to Lazzarato, has proceeded through the organisation of production in such a way as to exploit surplus-value from 'the forms of "self-valorisation" that the struggle against work has produced.'[1] Thus immaterial labour is not simply a concept of work that is proposed to help illuminate particular kinds of labour processes and their politics; it is a theory of the post-Fordist configuration of capitalist production.

While it is not simply a concept of labour, immaterial labour still is one, and Lazzarato deploys it in order to explain the power relations of sites of production which valorise knowledge, information, culture and attendant ideological and aesthetic norms. As such, jobs in branches of industry as diverse as cultural production, software development, biomedicine and call centres have been described as immaterial labour and I argue that if we were to take the concept uncritically, any job involving the communication of information could be described as immaterial labour.[2] In addition, as Stefano Harvey argues, 'language, image, and ambiance production…increasingly gather under the banner of immaterial labour.'[3] Lazzarato understands that these forms of work and attendant power relations do not emerge from no-place but are a product of the antagonisms and contradictions of previous forms of political economic organisation. Lazzarato's immaterial labour is predicated by the Trontian inversion of the labour/capital antagonism, in which it is working class resistance to capital that produces capitalist organisation, not capitalist organisation that produces the working class.[4] Capital's response to the purportedly autonomous and purportedly self-valorising modes of activity undertaken by the Fordist worker has been to re-integrate it within the mode of accumulation. Immaterial labour, it is argued, is the valorisation of "mass intellectuality" as wage-labour, and as such proceeds alongside alterations in state-formation with regard to new assemblages of the reproduction of labour-power, such as education and welfare. Thus immaterial labour is a concept that describes the integration of forms of subjects' "self-valorisation" into capitalist

[1] Lazzarato 'Immaterial Labor' 134
[2] Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt. 'In the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work', *Theory, Culture & Society* 25:7-8 (2008): 1-30.; Ergin Bulut. 'Glamor Above, Precarity Below: Immaterial Labor in the Video Game Industry', *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 32:3 (2015): 1-15.; Robert Mitchell. 'US Biobanking strategies and biomedical immaterial labor', *BioSocieties* 7:3 (2012). 224-44.; David Harvie and Massimo De Angelis. '"Cognitive Capitalism" and the Rat-Race: How Capital Measures Immaterial Labour in British Universities', *Historical Materialism* 25:7-8 (2009). 1-30.; Enda Brophy. 'The subterranean stream: Communicative capitalism and call centre labour', *Ephemera* 10:3-4 2010: 470-483.
[3] Stefano Harney. 'Programming Immaterial Labour', *Social Semiotics* 16:1 (2006) 75.
[4] Mario Tronti. 'The Strategy of Refusal' in Sylvere Lotringer and Christian Marazzi (eds.) *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics*. (New York: Semiotext(e), 1980).

processes of the production of economic value. This will be examined further in the following discussion of Hardt and Negri's extension of the concept of immaterial labour.

2.5.3. Hardt and Negri's Extension of Immaterial Labour

Hardt and Negri contribute to the concept of immaterial labour in two important ways. First, they build on Lazzarato's definition of immaterial labour as the labour that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity; they expand on Lazzarato's definition and situate it more specifically within contemporary political economy. Second, they further expound the logic of immanence that is present in Lazzarato's concept by deploying it as a way to bring a previously absent production in to Foucault's theory of biopolitics.[1]

In *Empire*, the first of their trilogy on the contemporary form of globalisation, they disaggregate immaterial labour into a tripartite formation of labour. First, Hardt and Negri argue that immaterial labour is practiced in 'the communicative labour of industrial production.'[2] There has been a structural change in industrial production which can be understood as a passage from the Fordist to the Toyotist organisation of production that has resulted in 'a newly central role' for communication and information in industry.[3] Second, the service sector, they argue, 'present[s] a richer model of productive communication' than industrial production does.[4] The third and final category of immaterial labour as set out in *Empire*, is the production and manipulation of affects, such as feelings of ease or satisfaction. Despite the corporeality of this form of production, which Hardt and Negri acknowledge, they also argue that it is immaterial.[5] The production of services, they argue, 'results in no material and durable good.'[6] Thus, according to Hardt and Negri, in agreement with Lazzarato, services, cultural products, knowledge and communication are 'immaterial good[s].'[7] There is obviously a philosophical question here regarding what exactly is "immaterial" which I obviate for the moment with recourse to the sensibility that Hardt and Negri propose this conceptualisation in good faith, arguing that this labour is immaterial 'in the sense that its products are *intangible*'

[1] Michel Foucault. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79*. Tr. Graham Burchell. Ed. Michel Senellart. (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
[2] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 30
[3] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 290
[4] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 290
[5] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 292
[6] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 290
[7] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 290

and that there is a distinction between a product of labour that can be touched and a product of labour that cannot.[1]

Hardt and Negri's conception of immaterial labour develops as their writings progress; notably that by the publication of *Multitude* immaterial labour in industrial production is more holistically integrated with immaterial labour in the production of services. That is, they no longer make a clear distinction between the practice of immaterial labour in different branches of industry. Importantly, Hardt and Negri deploy this key idea of "immateriality" in order to unify the concepts of immaterial and affective labour as 'biopolitical labour.'[2] Thus Hardt and Negri integrate the concept of immaterial labour within Michel Foucault's theory of biopolitics. Questions of production, Hardt and Negri argue, are absent from Foucault's description of the historical passage from the 'disciplinary society to the society of control.'[3] As understood by Hardt and Negri, Foucault's 'disciplinary society' is such that 'social command is constructed through diffuse networks of *dispositifs* or apparatuses,' such as the prison, the school, the asylum, and the factory, 'that produce and regulate customs, habits and productive practices.'[4] In the disciplinary society, obedience to power is secured by means of these disciplinary institutions. Foucault identifies a biopolitical turn in the exercise of power toward the end of the modern period, such that mechanisms of command are 'increasingly interiorised within the subjects themselves.'[5] In the society of control, 'what is directly at stake in power is the production and reproduction of life itself.'[6] This is "biopower". In this sense, we can see that Hardt and Negri situate Lazzarato's immaterial labour within a Foucauldian analysis of power. Given what is directly at stake in power, Hardt and Negri maintain that biopolitical labour is a fundamentally necessary addition to Foucault's schema because it is the 'labour that creates...relationships and ultimately social life itself.'[7] Biopolitical production is the homologous political economic tendency to the development of the postmodern *raison d'état* identified by Foucault.

Thus, like Lazzarato, Hardt and Negri integrate their theory of labour within a theory of capital *and* within a theory of power. Both capital and power, they argue, make up the processes of the production and reproduction of life. There is purportedly an immanent tendency of the development of processes of capital accumulation and the form of exploitation that is political.

[1] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 293. My emphasis.
[2] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 109
[3] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 22-3
[4] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 23. Emphasis in original.
[5] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 23
[6] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 24
[7] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 109

'Immaterial labour,' they argue, 'has become *hegemonic*.'[1] In making this argument, Hardt and Negri point to the three economic paradigms and the two concomitant passages of production since the Middle Ages: first, agricultural and raw material extraction, second, there is the passage to the industrial paradigm, and third, the passage to the present paradigm of the so-called 'informatisation of production.'[2] In making the case for the hegemony of the particular types of production and labour in each paradigm, Hardt and Negri argue that it is not quantitative superiority that is important but rather qualitative dominance. They argue that in the passage from agriculture to industry that although agricultural and raw material extraction remained quantitatively superior in terms of the total value produced and the labour employed, these were nonetheless subject to a decline as a result of the industrialisation of production in these sectors. Thus, there is a 'hierarchy among the economic sectors in each paradigm' in which the paradigmatic form of production reproduces itself in other forms. As such, Hardt and Negri argue that just as agriculture was industrialised during the paradigm of industry, so in the present 'informatisation of production' both industry and agriculture are becoming "informatised". Immaterial labour practices, Hardt and Negri argue, extend out from informational industries into the other branches of industry and those branches are transformed in accordance with 'the informational revolution.'[3]

2.5.4. The Revolution of Living Labour: politics and problems

The essence of the conception of biopolitical labour is its autonomous constitution. Hardt and Negri argue that 'labour tends to be increasingly autonomous from capitalist command' because the production of productive cooperation is inherent to it.[4] It is this purported autonomy of immaterial labour in combination with what immaterial labour produces – 'life itself' – that undermines the totalitarian implications of biopower and produces the potential for insubordination and revolt.[5] This is a simple continuation of Lazzarato's argument that 'the subjugation of this form of cooperation and the "use value" of these skills to capitalist logic does not take away the autonomy of the constitution and meaning of immaterial labour.'[6] Thus, the autonomy of immaterial labour is its "essence" in the fullest meaning of the word; both Lazzarato and Hardt and Negri acknowledge the potential for pernicious ontological

[1] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 109. Emphasis in original.
[2] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 280
[3] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 285
[4] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Commonwealth.* (Cambridge, MA.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). 173.
[5] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 258
[6] Lazzarato 'Immaterial Labor' 145

consequences to the practice of immaterial labour, i.e., the possibility for the interiorisation of capitalist norms of accumulation, commodity fetishism, and alienation from the capacity to feel, but obviate these consequences by ascribing a philosophical priority to the autonomy of living labour as opposed to an examination of impediments to praxis.

Knowledge, affects, culture and semiotics are central to this purportedly hegemonic form of labour; Hardt and Negri, and thinkers from across post-*operaismo,* argue that immaterial labour/affective labour}biopolitical labour is the form of labour that characterises contemporary capitalism. Furthermore, they argue that the form of immaterial labour – the concrete qualities of immaterial labour and what immaterial labour produces – creates social life itself. In this sense, by introducing an analysis of production into Foucault's theory of biopower, Hardt and Negri attempt to undermine the pessimism that results from Foucault's conclusion that life itself becomes the object of power. How do Hardt and Negri do this? On the one hand, Hardt and Negri acknowledge that the form and the power relations of biopolitical labour involve the worker's interiorisation of capitalist command.[1] On the other, they state that this purportedly hegemonic form of labour produces cooperation autonomously from capitalist command. Thus there is a paradox in the theory of biopolitical labour, and one that is intentional. Hardt and Negri argue that the interiorisation of capitalist power is attendant to biopolitical labour but the power of capital to formatively shape the subject in the image of its disciplinary force is always undermined by the autonomous cooperation that is required for the production of value. I argue, however, that that the processes by which capitalist command is interiorised and the political consequences thereof is obviated in the work of Hardt and Negri at the expense of a prioritisation of the power of a purportedly autonomous worker to resist, subvert and sabotage capitalist apparatuses of control. Furthermore, I argue that this obviation of the possibility for a capitalistic shaping of subjects functions as an apologia for the more general post-*operaisti* claim that there is, in the development of the social relations of capitalism and forces of production, an immanent tendency toward the autonomy of labour from capital. Thus, the pessimism regarding an anticapitalist future which proceeds from Foucault's observation that life itself has become an object of power and his recognition of the subject's interiorisation of power are brushed aside in Hardt and Negri's argument that the apparent interminability of capitalist power is in fact the development of a political economic environment that will lead to an exodus from capital by the revolutionary class. As they put it, in the passage to the informatisation of production 'the increasingly intense implication of all social forces that capitalism has pursued has now been fully realised' yet this realisation has

[1] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 23

'activate[d] the critical elements that develop the potential of insubordination and revolt through the entire set of labouring practices.'[1] As such, the purported politics of immaterial labour appear to enter the analysis from outside the analysis; that is, from outside the labour process. As Thomas Atzert notes, it is a common argument that 'the analysis of immaterial labour does not adequately capture the production process and thus negates the salience of exploitation.'[2] I will develop this argument more fully in the next chapter, but for now I contend that the concept of immaterial labour does not merely negate the politics of exploitation, it empties the politics out from the concrete form of exploitation and refills it with a transcendent and presupposed figure of an autonomous worker.

With this in mind, the analytical problems of post-*operaisti* conceptions of immaterial labour/affective labour}biopolitical production cannot be resolved with a mere conceptual analysis. These three unified concepts of labour emerge from a notion of the autonomy of labour from capital and a transformation in the organisation of production such that workers organise their labour processes autonomously from capital. But the autonomy of labour is not demonstrated; it is asserted on the basis an epistemological assumption that follows from the condition of labour as the producer of capital. As such, I argue that the resolution of this problem requires a theoretical and empirical examination because the positing of autonomy is both a theoretical and an empirical question. Furthermore, I argue that these questions are of great importance because of the fundamental character of the political problem that is attendant to the question of subordination and domination in labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism. I argue that a mere conceptual reading of the post-*operaismo* theory of labour does not reveal a theory of praxis and that it does not illuminate a concern with the extents of "biopower" or the processes of transforming what appears to be a formal autonomy into strategies for subversion and resistance but rather, as Finn Bowring argues, represents 'a theoretical retreat towards a more elusive form of abstraction.'[3] The question is what this elusiveness actually means for the theory's political and analytical potency.

2.6. Confluences, Contradictions, and (mis)Communications

I have charted some of the important features of the conceptual landscape of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism in terms of how these different kinds of framing affect

[1] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 24-5, 29
[2] Thomas Atzert. 'About Immaterial Labour and Biopower', Tr. Frederick Peters. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 17:1 (2006). 59.
[3] Finn Bowring. 'From the mass worker to the multitude: a theoretical conceptualisation of Hardt and Negri's *Empire*', *Capital & Class* 28:2 (2004): 127.

how we understand the politics of work. I have found it to be a place of confluences and contradictions. All of these concepts claim to have something of the now and the new about them. Hochschild's emotional labour pertains from developments in the qualities of labour-power that capital commodifies as wage-labour. The proliferation of branches of production that involve face-to-face and voice-to-voice communication and the expansion of this tendency across a variety of branches of production has resulted in the valorisation of elements of labour-power that pertain to the management of emotion. The Strathclyde Group note the same tendency as one that also engages the management of the aesthetic and embodied properties of workers. Post-*operaismo* understands this tendency as one that valorises the communicative capacities of workers. As such, these different contributions to the conceptual understanding of developments in the form of labour are actually very similar to one another. The idea of the subjective, "living" capacities of labour is at the centre of each. However, theories of the politics that is attendant to these developments vary widely and they each propose a political space that has specific dimensions and characteristics and that are incompatible with one another. Hochschild's emotional labour brings questions of domination and resistance to the fore by examining how workers are alienated from the 'parts' of their bodies that they use to do the work. The Strathclyde Group generally forego political questions, but there is nonetheless a proposed politics that is attendant to their depoliticisation of work. First, they consider the role of class in tandem with the implication that access to the capitalist labour market is an example of progressive politics. Second, they consider subjective perspectives on superiority and servility in worker and consumer relationships but omit a consideration of the power relations between labour and capital. The unified conceptions of immaterial labour/affective labour}biopolitical production proposed by the post-*operaisti* present a landscape of labour that has at its centre the figure of a worker autonomous from a capital that will always tend to foster worker autonomy. While there are clear similarities between the characterisations of developments in the form of labour, arguments regarding the politics that are attendant to these developments differ widely. Hochschild presents a workplace in which workers resist the domination of capital by altering their subject position to the work and by engaging in acts of sabotage, such as the go-slow and the engagement of transparent forms of surface acting. The Strathclyde Group restrict the site of politics to questions regarding access to the labour market that should be engaged by government policy. The post-*operaisti* subsume questions regarding capitalist domination beneath a tendency for labour to be autonomous that is immanent of the capitalist organisation of production.

I examine these confluences and contradictions in the following chapters. I analyse the labour process of these forms of labour in chapter four, examine properties of labour-power in terms of their embodied character in chapter five and examine emergent forms of labour from the perspective of alienation in chapter six. In the next chapter I examine the potency of the post-*operaisti* critique of capitalist production, characterised by John O'Neill as the idea that 'once the industrial working class loses its hegemony, the proletariat becomes the universal figure of labour, a Spinozan multitude produced within and by Empire, which will end alienation.'[1]

[1] John O'Neill. 'Empire versus Empire: A Post-Communist Manifesto', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 19:4 (2002). 202.

Chapter Three: Post-*Operaismo* and Alienation

> *"It is impossible, then, to share the optimism of people like Negri and Hardt, who in recent years have argued that the new forms of production the global restructuring of the economy has created already provide for the possibility of more autonomous, more cooperative forms of work."*
>
> Silvia Federici[1]

3.1. The Crucial Consequences of the Changing Landscape of Labour

Following from my examination of the conceptual landscape of contemporary forms of labour I argue that a fully adequate account of the political forces at work in contemporary production, labour, and life is yet to be produced but, as indicated in the previous chapter, the theoretical school of post-*operaismo* and its conception of affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production 'is central in [the project of] explaining the "post" in post-Fordism.'[2] The reach of post-*operaismo* is more extensive than just theories of work; as Adelino Zanini points out, post-*operaismo* theories of cultural political economy, the state, and globalisation have become 'a globally acknowledged theoretical and political point of reference.'[3] Nonetheless, as also noted, there is a fundamental lack in the post-*operaisti* project to explain labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism because it takes no account of investigations into aesthetic or emotional labour. In this chapter I examine the post-*operaisti* conceptions of alienation in terms of their understanding of the transformation in labour and simultaneously locate the centrality of the notion of alienation to the key concept of their revolutionary thesis – the general intellect. In doing so I demonstrate that their theories on the political economy of work engage important questions regarding the relation between the organisation of labour and the production of political subjectivities. Paradoxically, I also argue that their framing of these questions is deeply flawed. From my

[1] Silvia Federici. 'The Reproduction of Labor Power in the Global Economy and the Unfinished Feminist Revolution' in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012). 106.
[2] Steve Wright. 'Back to the Future: Italian Workerists Reflect Upon the Operaista Project', *Ephemera* 7:1 (2007). 276.
[3] Adelino Zanini. 'On the "Philosophical Foundations" of Italian Workerism: A Conceptual Approach', *Historical Materialism* 18: (2010). 16.

analysis I argue that the post-*operaismo* extension of Marx's general intellect is not adequate to the description of the organisation of labour under capitalism today and does not support the theories of 'rentier capital' or 'exodus' which the post-*operaisti* claim they do. I argue, along with other critics of theories of "cognitive capitalism", that the post-*operaisti* offer an unduly optimistic thesis of contemporary capitalism. They do not demonstrate the idea of a post-Fordist worker who is autonomous from capital and who is a political subject enacting the 'exuberance of possibilities' attendant to general intellect and, as such, their prefiguration of an immanent becoming of labour's exodus from capital is precarious indeed.[1] Rather, their revolutionary thesis forgoes an examination of the labour process and is instead constructed upon a series of epistemological assumptions regarding the relation between labour and capital. I conclude this chapter by arguing that the post-*operaismo* theory of praxis is an assertion of the autonomy of immaterial labour from capital and that it situates the development of the form of labour in contemporary capitalism within a teleological theory of revolution. I argue that this sort of characterisation of the autonomy of labour and the relations between the development of fixed capital and political subjectivity as "immanent" requires a more rigorous approach to the concrete conditions of the capitalist labour process and the labour process in emergent forms of labour than the post-*operaisti* offer. As such, my critique of post-*operaismo* indicates that a more systematic approach to the labour process of emergent forms of labour, its attendant social relations, and particularly to the ways in which the properties of labour-power that the post-*operaisti* code as 'general intellect' are alienated, is fundamental to the project of understanding the production of politics of work today. This chapter proceeds as follows.

First, I examine Antonio Negri's conception of alienation in affective/immaterial labour} biopolitical production. He claims that alienation is 'one of the crucial effects of production,' and bears greater significance now than it ever did in the past.[2] For Negri, and for me, this increased significance of the concept of alienation results from changes in processes of the production of economic value, although unlike Negri I argue that alienation is a rubric for understanding the production of politics in all forms of class society, not merely in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism. However, despite Negri's clear statements regarding the contemporary importance of the concept of alienation this importance is sporadically attested and unaccompanied by any sustained analysis. Therefore, to continue my examination

[1] Paulo Virno. *Grammar of the Multitude*. Tr. Isabella Bertoletti, James Cascaito and Andrea Casson. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007). 70.
[2] Cesare Casarino and Antonio Negri. 'Vicissitudes of Constituent Thought' in Cesare Casarino and Antonio Negri. *In Praise of the Common: A Conversation on Philosophy and Politics.* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2008). 178.; Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 111

of work, bodies, and the politics of alienation in contemporary capitalism, I examine Negri's theories on the political economy of the changing landscape of labour and use them in part to elicit a post-*operaismo* perspective on the qualities of this purportedly crucial effect of production. That such a prolific writer as Negri to propose the validity of a concept so emphatically and unequivocally but then forgo its systematisation within his conceptual thematic opens up a field of critical enquiry with which I interrogate Negri's theories, concepts and methods. In this chapter, I elicit a conceptualisation of alienation that is coordinate to Negri's writings on the matter and to key principles of Negri's epistemology.

Second, I go on to expand this conceptualisation to include what Guido Borio, Francesca Pozzi and Gigi Roggero call the 'common theoretical matrix' of post-*operaismo* by engaging an examination of alienation in the post-*operaisti* interpretation of Marx's theory of general intellect.[1] I approach this interpretation from two sides. First, I approach general intellect from the perspective of the development of the form of the labour process and the relations between this development and the production of free time. From this perspective the general intellect is a rubric for the relation between the production of political subjectivity and the relative development of forces of production. Second, I approach the post-*operaisti* interpretation of general intellect from the perspective of alienation. As demonstrated in chapter one, of alienation theorists Marx in particular sets alienation within the context of the material relations of production and the production of economic-value. Thus, for Marx, alienation is an analytical concept which examines the links between processes of the production of value and processes of the production of life. The post-*operaisti* concept of 'general intellect' also occupies this same analytical territory and traverses labour and life. Furthermore, I argue that the concept of alienation is at the centre of Marx's theory of general intellect and that the post-*operaisti* make alienation absent from their interpretation because it fundamentally undermines their characterisation of the politics of work in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism. As such, my piecing together of a post-*operaismo* theory of alienation offers a framework for a critique of post-*operaisti* concepts, methods and philosophical assumptions and allows me to engage a materialist theory of alienation with emergent forms of labour.

Third, I examine the post-*operaisti* characterisation of an autonomous worker in light of my investigations into alienation and general intellect. The autonomy of labour from capital is central to post-*operaismo*; although the notion of a shared theoretical outlook amongst post-*operaisti* is not without its problems, I argue that the validity of such a view centres on the

[1] Guido Borio, Francesca Pozzi and Gigi Roggero cf. Steve Wright. 'Mapping Pathways within Italian Autonomist Marxism: A Preliminary Survey.' *Historical Materialism* 16: (2008). 114.

notion of autonomy. I recognise the divergence and difference in theoretical frameworks and concepts of many thinkers who are labelled as post-*operaisti*. Notwithstanding, I argue that there is a common theoretical framework operating amongst these tensions that emerges from a shared philosophical principle: the primacy of an antagonistic relation between labour and capital in which capitalist development is always a consequence of class-composition and struggle. Post-*operaismo*, and its antecedent theoretical schools *operaismo* and *autonomia*, consider the character of every stage of capitalist development as capital's responses to working class autonomy. I use the concept of alienation to critique the post-*operaisti* prioritisation of this dynamic and their assumption of its immanence by exploring how this key epistemological assumption affects their conceptions of alienation and affects how they characterise the concrete conditions of labour under capitalism.

3.2. Negri: From exploitation to alienation

Negri's deployment of the concept of alienation has been a slow evolution in contrast to Marx's volleying of alienation amongst the opening salvos of his critique of capital. Alienation has been elbowing its way into Negri's conceptual lexicon by degrees. In his 2008 conversation with Cesare Casarino, Negri speaks of periods of reflection on Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and the questions he was asking of Adorno in the 1950s. Critical of Adorno's lack of interest in production in general, and his attempts to identify values 'outside the logic of capitalism,' Negri still esteems Adorno's investigations: 'but he was always very interested,' he says, 'in one of the crucial effects of production, namely, in alienation.'[1] However, if Negri had a concern for this crucial effect of production during the thirty years from 1950, his published work belies it. Instead, Negri's works suggest that his recourse to the concept of alienation has resulted from a growing awareness that the concept of exploitation has become increasingly unable to explain processes of exploitation in what they argue is a transformed form of the organisation of production. Negri has undertaken a category shift, and his writings show that he has been progressively discarding the concept of exploitation in favour of alienation. Negri's works also suggest that his conception of alienation has expanded as his analysis of the consequences of so-called biopolitical production upon subjectivity has progressed.

In *Marx Beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse*, Negri's 1979 exploration of class struggle and revolution by means of Marx's theories on value in capitalism, Negri uses the concept of

[1] Casarino and Negri 'Vicissitudes of Constituent Thought' 178.

alienation solely in a formal way. It is noteworthy to comment on the unusualness of this understanding given that Marx prioritises the function of alienation in terms of entfremdung in *Grundrisse*. For example, Marx speaks of 'the *alien quality* [*Fremdheit*] of the objective conditions of labour' and Marx deploys his arguments on this alien quality of the conditions of labour in his analyses of processes as general as 'the creation of the conditions of social life.'[1] However, Negri limits his discussion of alienation to entäusserung and veräusserung, thinking alienation only in these formal terms of objectification, appropriation and the sale of labour-power.[2] In *Marx Beyond Marx*, Negri conceives of alienation in the same way as Hegel and the Classical Political Economists; alienation is something that happens when one person sells property to another and appropriation is merely objectification. And so Negri does not address the alienation of the *Paris Manuscripts*, despite the persistence of its arguments throughout *Grundrisse*. As such, the notion of alienation as the worker's separation from some intimate or essential quality of the self through a process of objectification is not present in Negri's theory because this character of separation is always subordinate to the autonomy of "living labour" and its new role as the producer of the field of social cooperation. I argue that this Hegelian tendency to regard labour as mere objectification remains in Negri's thought.

Despite the lack of a positive enquiry into the power relations which proceed from alienated labour in *Marx Beyond Marx*, the inability of Negri's conception of exploitation to explain the relation between the worker and the object of labour take a much more prominent role in his later taking up of 'the conclusions of [his] previous works on the theory of value.'[3] *Marx Beyond Marx* is fundamental to these previous works.[4] Negri repudiates his earlier proposition in *Marx Beyond Marx* that 'the theory of surplus-value is...immediately the theory of exploitation' because, he argues in 'Twenty Theses on Marx', labour under capitalism has changed to such a degree that 'value cannot be reduced to an objective measure.'[5] Abstract labour, he argues, can no longer be regarded as commensurate to value; living labour, the qualitative character of labour-in-motion, is the aspect of labour that is most important to the production of economic value in the contemporary economy. Therefore, and Negri is alluding to the form of labour that he will later conceptualise as immaterial labour here, he argues that exploitation cannot be understood in terms of *quantity* of abstract labour time but only with

[1] Marx *Grundrisse* 452, 162
[2] Negri *Marx Beyond Marx* 34
[3] Antonio Negri. 'Twenty Theses on Marx: Interpretation of the Class Situation Today' in Saree Makdisi, Cesare Casarino and Rebecca E. Karl (eds.) *Marxism Beyond Marxism* (Routledge: New York, 1996). 149. Written in 1992/3.
[4] Negri 'Twenty Theses on Marx' 180 fn.1
[5] Negri *Marx Beyond Marx* 74; Negri 'Twenty Theses on Marx' 151

reference to the 'labour time of full, whole social cooperation' because the new forms of labour, in terms of their production of economic value, cannot be understood in terms of units of value-producing time.[1] Conceptual distinctions between use-value and exchange-value have evaporated, Negri argues, as a result of the profound socialisation and complexification of abstract labour, that is, as a result of the increasing importance of the qualitative aspects of labour and the concomitant negation of the analytical value of the concept of homogenous abstract labour. Negri thus rejects the validity of notions of abstract labour and surplus-value as reference-points to the understanding of exploitation in contemporary society, instead seeking to account for exploitation as 'the production of an armoury of instruments for the control of the time of social cooperation.'[2] This kind of account requires more than a technical appraisal of the production and allocation of economic value. Insofar as cooperation is contingent upon subjectivity, it is explicit here that these beginnings of Negri's reformulation of the concept of exploitation are central to his analysis of the production of subjectivity under contemporary capitalism.

The concepts of immaterial/affective labour}biopolitical production are fundamental to Negri's questions on value and to his analysis of the production of subjectivity. His investigations into the changing character of labour are the genus of this rethinking of exploitation. Negri argues that labour has been subject to a paradigmatic reconstruction.[3] Therefore, he argues, the Marxist distinctions between abstract and concrete labour, productive labour and unproductive labour, production and reproduction require revision. This paradigmatic reconstruction of labour is constituted amongst the correspondence between the technical mechanisms of production and a social composition characterised by cooperation, and thereby forms new processes and apparatuses of exploitation. Social cooperation for Negri is the labour which 'directly determine[s] the networks of productive cooperation that create and re-create society', that is, immaterial and affective labour.[4] Negri's critique of the efficacy of the concept of exploitation in what he calls the phase of 'the real subsumption of society under capital' stems from this analysis.[5] In *Marx Beyond Marx* Negri argues that the development of the *form* of labour creates the form of the *constitution* of a determinate society; therefore the analysis of labour is the analysis of this constitution, its

[1] Negri 'Twenty Theses on Marx' 154
[2] Negri 'Twenty Theses on Marx' 154
[3] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 111; Antonio Negri. 'Archaeology and Project: The Mass Worker and the Social Worker' in *Revolution Retrieved: Writings on Marx, Keynes, Capitalist Crisis and New Social Subjects (1967-83).* (London: Red Notes, 1988). 201. First published in *Macchina Tempo*. (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1982.)
[4] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Labor of Dionysus: A Critique of the State Form* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995). 10.
[5] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 365

norms, its processes of production, distribution and exchange, and, ultimately, its system of accumulation of capital and the concomitant relations that produce subjectivity.[1] Labour has changed. Immaterial labour, Hardt and Negri argue, has usurped industrial labour of its hegemony at the end of the 20th century and forms the content of labour activity in the fastest growing industries of the most developed economies. As such, they continue, the Marxist theory of the exploitation of surplus-value produced by abstract labour time cannot comprehend either the production or the expropriation of value under contemporary capitalism nor can it illuminate the human cost of labour under capitalism with the same potency as it does for industrial production. In *Multitude* Hardt and Negri begin to touch upon a more apposite conceptual guide to the power relations and politics that surround emerging forms of labour.

The conceptual content of Hardt and Negri's notion of alienation limits itself to the explanation of new qualities of the processes of the exploitation of affective and immaterial labour. 'Alienation,' according to Hardt and Negri, 'was always a poor concept for understanding the exploitation of factory workers.'[2] It is only the affective turn of wage-labour, they maintain, that gives validity to alienation as an analytical concept, albeit in this limited sense. Because they view notions of alienation in industrial labour as invalid, their understanding of alienation is intrinsically bound to theories and concepts which explain the changing landscape of labour. In light of their concept of immaterial labour, and its extension as biopolitical production inclusive of the concept of affective labour, it is not surprising that Hardt and Negri look to the concept of alienation to explain this character of exploitation but rather that it took so long for them to do so. Hardt's earlier work on the co-opting of affective labour under the auspices of Lazzarato's concept of immaterial labour makes no mention of the potential for alienation or the consequences of the exploitation of affective abilities upon the person.[3] However, alienation had already been linked to this realm of labour by C. Wright Mills' at the beginning of the 1950s.[4] In *Multitude* Hardt and Negri propose that in 'affective labour, as well as knowledge production and symbolic production...alienation does provide a useful conceptual key for understanding exploitation.'[5] Hardt and Negri use alienation in their immaterial and affective labour in a very similar way to Mills' use for his 'new middle class.' There is a development in Hardt and Negri's understanding of alienation, moving away from strictly *veräusserung* understandings and approaching a consideration of *entfremdung*. 'When

[1] Negri 'Twenty Theses' 150
[2] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 111
[3] Michael Hardt. 'Affective Labor' *Boundary2* 26:2 (1999). 89-100.
[4] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 111; Wright Mills *White Collar*
[5] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 111

affective production becomes part of waged labour,' they argue, 'it can be extremely alienating: I am selling my ability to make human relationships, something extremely intimate, at the command of the client and the boss.'[1] The nexus of exploitation, the exchange of labour-power, the wage and the exploitation of surplus-value cannot fully capture the political economic dimensions of the expropriation of the value produced by affective labour.

One of the three key arenas of affective labour activity is the 'culture industry', in which affective labourers sell their ability to engage in the work of the productive shaping of affects.[2] Therefore, a key quality of the exchanges surrounding affective labour-power is that the wage-labour relation amounts to the worker selling his or her ability to persuade and coerce, to use powers of communication and imagination to manipulate and shape the subjectivities of other people according the requirements of the production and realisation of economic-value in the work of subjective interaction and the production of 'affects'. From this point of an initial consideration of the potential for emergent forms of labour to be alienating I argue that they are not merely the reduction of the human relationship to an exchange-value to be exploited as a surplus-value but are constituted by a process which perverts those 'intimate' qualities that create such relationships. To what extent, therefore, do Hardt and Negri share this view that immaterial/affective labour}biopolitical production may result in a capitalistic shaping and perverting of these intimate qualities of living labour? What do they propose are the politics of the alienation of 'something extremely intimate' under capitalist command?

We are living, the post-*operaisti* attest, in the time when 'social relations become moments of the relations of production.'[3] Furthermore, Hardt and Negri argue, there have been *paradigmatic* changes in the social and technical composition of labour that render the concept of alienation uniquely able to explain exploitation in a world where there are 'increasingly blurred boundaries between labour and life, and between production and reproduction.'[4] Biopolitical production, it is claimed, is the immediate production of social relations by the activity of living labour operating amidst but apart from capitalist apparatuses of domination. Hardt and Negri are at pains to sketch out the externality of capitalist accumulation to the production of value but to also give account to the power of capital over this production process. Cooperation, they argue, is produced by immaterial and affective labour autonomously from capitalist command and the economic-value produced by this

[1] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 111
[2] Hardt 'Affective Labor' 94.
[3] Mario Tronti in Quaderni Rossi no. 2, cf. Nicholas Thoburn 'Autonomous Production? On Negri's "New Synthesis"' *Theory, Culture & Society* 18:5 (2001). 78.
[4] Hardt and Negri *Commonwealth* 134

cooperation is expropriated by capital in the form of rent.[1] In biopolitical production it is argued, unlike in industry, capital has no role in the organisation of cooperation but merely absorbs the surplus-value created by the collectivity of social labour. Therefore, Negri argues, it is important to recognise that 'this pull to the category of alienation is also due to the fact that some characteristics closely tied to exploitation, particularly those designating capital's productive role, have faded.'[2] Capital, once parasitical of and dominant over labour, is according to Negri now only a leech upon biopolitical production, extracting surplus-value in the form of a rent levied upon the value-created by autonomous networks of social labour. I argue that this concept of capital is inchoate with the alienated labour process that Negri acknowledges.

This is not to say that Negri always underplays the human cost of biopolitical labour, or life, under capitalism; he doesn't. But it is to say that he hides the ontological consequences of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism in the shadow of the revolutionary figure of the autonomous worker. Using Giorgio Agamben's concept of bare life, Negri posits the consequences of the domination of the constituted power of capital and the state over the constituent power of the 'Multitude' as an intended form of life designed to terrorise and oppress forces of resistance to capital and to the state.[3] Bare life is a 'nakedness imposed by ideology and by the violence of Power', a perpetually intimidating apparatus of suffering.[4] Bare life is a program of oppression, the denial of hope and resistance, the terminal production and reproduction of a monstrous form-of-life which is the result of the transfer of power from the individual and the community to sovereignty. This domination, oppression, and perversion of life, Negri states, is 'an apologia of alienation.'[5] The rule of the 'well-born' – those who organise constituted power – is an apparatus designed to push life toward an imperative to maintain only that *biological* life, life at its most instrumental. Negri argues that the form of power that produces bare life – the oppressive rule of the 'well born' – transcends the historical categories of political economy because it extends back to the city-states of Ancient Greece. The historical continuity of oppression notwithstanding, Negri argues that the new modes of exploitation and alienation of labour under capitalism establish the struggle

[1] Hardt and Negri *Commonwealth* 140
[2] Hardt and Negri *Commonwealth* 140
[3] Negri's 'The Political Monster: Power and Naked Life' translates '*la nuda vita*' to 'naked life' throughout. For the sake of correspondence with English translations of Agamben I amend Negri's use in this translation to 'bare life'.
[4] Antonio Negri. 'The Political Monster: Power and Naked Life' tr. Maurizio Boscagli in Casarino and Negri. *In Praise of the Common.* 208-9.
[5] Negri 'Political Monster' 210. English translation states 'apology'. However, while the Italian '*apologia*' in the original text can translate to 'apology', given the context the most appropriate translation here is clearly the English 'apologia'. Both the Italian and the English derive from the Ancient Greek '*ἀπολογία*'.

between constituted and constitutive power on the ideological plane. From well-travelled observations on tendencies toward the socialisation of production, Negri proposes the formation of a political struggle that is unique to this phase of capitalism.

On the one side of this struggle, there is the stripping down of life that is the basis and the result of capital and the state's defence of the alienation of labour. Discourses extolling competition and the articulation of individualistic affects dominate. This, Negri argues, is the 'well-born' attempt to negate opposition and resistance by means of the perpetuation of economic rationality throughout non-economic spheres of life and thereby maintain its hold on power. '*On the other side*' of this struggle '*there's the monster...*'[1] Negri's monster is a communistic one, a metaphor for *Potenza*, the mediating of the multitude and its opposition to, resistance from and attack upon constituted Power. Life, Negri argues, is not the ordeal of eternal suffering with which the ideological claim of bare life seeks to terrorise us, but one which is constituted by the 'power of Being', a power that is the articulation of cooperation and struggle.[2] For Negri, this power is the outcome of the communist monster's becoming biopolitical. The worker, in the 'monstrous' form, has occupied the entire space of production with 'his immaterial labour force'[3]

Negri is critical of the idea that capital's domination over social reproduction is enduring, and he approaches this critique on the basis of a purported autonomous character to immaterial and affective labour activity. I argue that from the perspective of Hardt and Negri's theory of immaterial/affective labour}biopolitical production, that is, on the own terms of the post-*operaisti*, that domination, oppression and perversion of life is only made more pronounced. First, although Hardt and Negri argue that 'capital alienates from the worker not just the product of labour but the labouring process itself, such that workers do not feel their own capacities for thinking, loving, and caring when they are on the job,' Negri continues to claim that there is a qualitative difference between the lack of control over one's labour activity writ large and a surfeit of subjective control over activity in biopolitical production, even when that subjective control is objectively commanded under capitalist power relations.[4] As such, I argue that they eulogise apparent moments of micro-autonomy in the labour process at the expense of a consideration of how capitalist control over production is in relation to the production of subjectivity. First, they argue that the production of value in immaterial/ affective labour}biopolitical production is contingent upon labour-power that can adapt and

[1] Negri 'Political Monster' 194. Emphasis in original.
[2] Negri 'Political Monster' 209-210
[3] Negri 'Political Monster' 212
[4] Hardt and Negri *Commonwealth* 140

direct itself, but do so while also being productive of surplus-value. Second, to exercise significant caution in generalising claims, at the very least these forms of labour are a conduit for the dissemination and articulation of alienation given that they constitute the entirety of the labour of communication and knowledge – to accept the post-*operaisti* concepts uncritically for the moment. As a result of what I argue is a failure to consider ways in which capital may annex subjectivity, Negri argues that because 'capital...does not organise productive cooperation' in biopolitical production therefore the Multitude is immune from 'traditional regimes of discipline and control.'[1] To say that capital does not organise productive cooperation is a vast and unsubstantiated claim and it is difficult to see how this, if it was the case, might translate into the invulnerability of the labouring class to the many iron fists of the state.

Alienation does have a place in Negri's conceptual thematic. Despite the critique I have made, Negri's deployment of alienation identifies new properties of labour-power which can be commodified and indicates what is at stake in the utilisation of previously ignored use-values of labour-power. According to Negri, alienation is a process that occurs in the organisation of production which in turn requires a supportive apparatus of relations to sustain it; that is, it requires bare life. As such, Negri indicates that it is useful to look outside the labour process for the consequences of alienation. But, for Negri alienation is a process which has negligible and insubstantial negative effects upon his autonomous worker, and no effect at all upon the potential for networks of production to detach themselves from a rentier capitalism. That is, alienated bare life or not, for Negri autonomy and exodus are immanent of the so-called 'informatisation of production.' Alienation is a process which Negri remembers and forgets. When he is confronted with the inadequacies of the concept of exploitation there is a necessary remembering. Alienation does explain the exploitation of emerging forms of labour in a more holistic way than the concept of exploitation. When confronted with the human costs of so-called biopolitical production, Negri subsumes them under the might of the autonomous, revolutionary figure of the Multitude. Or, as Ernesto Laclau puts it, 'from Hardt and Negri's rejection of any inherent negativity in political subjects it follows that the power inherent in the multitude has to be a disruptive power.'[2] I argue that, as such, they veer dangerously close to obliterating the object of analysis. To investigate this more closely, in the next section I discuss a framework that Negri and the post-*operaisti* prioritise above all others – the general intellect. I demonstrate that the post-*operaisti* toss the alienated worker

[1] Hardt and Negri *Commonwealth* 140, 145
[2] Ernesto Laclau. 'Can Immanence Explain Social Struggles?' in Paul A. Passavant and Jodi Dean (eds). *Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri*. (New York: Routledge, 2004). 21.

aside when alienation intervenes against their prefiguration of autonomy, their theories of mass intellectuality, and the potentiality for self-emancipation from capital.

3.3. Oppression, Liberation, and General Intellect

My positioning of Negri's alienation in his broader conceptual schema is still not complete. My drawing out of the relations and relevance of alienation in Negri's theory notwithstanding, it is important to reiterate that he does not regard alienation as a central or overarching concept. Alienation can rather be seen as a link between his main theoretical concerns; a link which he nonetheless introduces and which, I argue below, both undermines his main concerns and is more central to them than he accounts for. There is a conceptual category which is not only more central to Negri's philosophy but is also fundamental to post-*operaismo*; general intellect. For Marx, alienation is a category which bridges oppression and liberation. In the *Paris Manuscripts* he asserts that the dehumanising consequences of labour under capitalism are one of many spurs to the revolutionary transformation of society, one in which the practice of labour as 'conscious life-activity' can be achieved.[1] Like alienation, the general intellect as a category covers the entire range of relations, and therefore the contradictions and conflicts, which produce social, political, and economic life. Negri and the post-*operaisti* deploy general intellect to explain and critique the dynamic between oppression and liberation.

I argue that Marx's concept of 'general intellect' offers four approaches to examining alienation in emergent forms of labour and alienated labour in post-*operaismo* thought. First, Marx proposes the general intellect as a prediction of new qualities and processes of the exploitation of surplus-value and of a new character to this exploitation which comes as a result of a growing centrality of knowledge in the production process. The category of general intellect is not a mere law of value but is a category that accounts for the extent to which 'the conditions of the process of social life' and the degree to which 'the powers of social production have been produced...as immediate organs of social practice.'[2] According to Marx, general intellect is a category that applies to labour in society when general social knowledge has become a *force of production*; that is, when knowledge has become both a means of labour as well as a property of labour-power. The post-*operaisti* claim that this condition is the definitive characteristic of our contemporary political economy; general social knowledge

[1] Marx *1844* 76
[2] Marx *Grundrisse* 706

is a force of production. Second, there is broad assent to the importance of the general intellect by post-*operaisti*. Antonio Negri, Paolo Virno, Carlo Vercellone, Maurizio Lazzarato, and Franco "Bifo" Berardi, the most prominent of post-*operaisti*, emphasise the operation and significance of general intellect in their investigations to understand exploitation, the labour process, production, the production of life, and the production of subjectivity. Third, the post-*operaisti* are unique among Marxist scholars in ascribing significance to the general intellect. Marx uses the term only once, in the 'Fragment on Machines' from *Grundrisse*.[1] The post-*operaisti*, however, argue that characteristics of this category of general intellect remain throughout the works of Marx following *Grundrisse*.[2] Finally, I argue that the concept of alienation is central to Marx's general intellect because Marx predicates the general intellect on the basis of the absence of alienated labour time.[3] The post-*operaisti* forego the consideration of this element of Marx's theory. These four approaches that I take to examine the contradictions and antagonisms of the contemporary constitution of capitalism allows me to broaden the enquiry and consider the contribution of those who share a similar epistemological position with Negri, further examine the qualities of Negri's and the post-*operaisti* notions of alienation, and to begin to explore the post-*operaisti* claim that a qualitative distinction must be made between the nature of capitalist control over the labour process in monopoly capitalism and the role of power in the labour process today.

If we were to assume that the post-*operaisti* justification for the priority for Marx's concept of general intellect is its conceptual prescience in terms of the organisation of production in contemporary life, its significance lies in their notion that in it, they argue, Marx foresaw the coming 'hegemony of intelligence' in which 'knowledges make up the epicentre of social production and pre-ordain all areas of life.'[4] The key to the Fragment's significance, they argue, is that it offers 'elements that allow for the identification of the radically new character of the contradictions and of the antagonism that traverses cognitive capitalism.'[5] Thus the post-*operaismo* interpretation of general intellect is that it is a signifier for a new phase in the development of the capitalist mode of production. As intelligence and knowledge are essentially embodied characteristics of subjects, at least in the first instance, the general intellect is a category which purports to describe a new form of subjectivity. Therefore,

[1] Although he does underline it twice.
[2] Marx *Grundrisse* 690-712
[3] Marx *Grundrisse* 705
[4] Antonio Negri. *Reflections on Empire.* Tr. Ed Emery. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008). 126.; Paulo Virno. 'General Intellect'. *Historical Materialism* 15:3 (2007). 3-4.
[5] Carlo Vercellone. 'From Formal Subsumption to General Intellect: Elements for a Marxist Reading of the Thesis of Cognitive Capitalism.' *Historical Materialism* 15: (2007). 15.

general intellect is a term which purports to describe a phase of capitalism, a particular form of subjectivity within that phase, and a particular form of the processes of the production of subjectivity. What then according to Marx's Fragment on Machines might these new features of the capitalist mode of production be and what are the conditions of their development?

Marx's aim in the Fragment on Machines is to historically categorise the material conditions of the forms of production processes which correspond to the concept of capital. Capital, he says, sorts itself into three qualitatively different elements: '*the material of labour*,' or circulating capital, '*the means of labour*', or fixed capital, and '*living labour*', or variable capital. The labour process, he argues, is the 'moving unity' of these three elements within a production process.[1] Marx's focus in the Fragment is to examine the effect of the development of capital in its different forms, and he takes the development of fixed capital towards its most adequate form – the machine – as his vantage point. With the development of the means of labour, Marx argues that workers become 'conscious linkages' within a process of production over which they are 'watchmen.'[2] This development is two-fold in character. First, the development of fixed capital is a process of the objectification of the knowledge of living labour as machines and is contingent on the diffusion of general social knowledge.[3] Second, Marx argues that the development of fixed capital creates the conditions for 'the free development of individualities.'[4] Taking these two conditions together, the Fragment should be read in part as a product of Marx's assessment and reassessment of the antagonism he presents in *The Communist Manifesto* when he argues that 'not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons.'[5] As a result of the application of scientific knowledge to production the labour time necessary for the reproduction of capital is reduced and is therefore replaced with a non-labour free time; I demonstrate below that this 'therefore' is a problem here. For Marx this is a general condition of production – the application of knowledge is always able to be a source for the reduction of labour time – and is a condition of capitalist production, which is visible particularly when viewed from the perspective of the production of relative surplus-value. The distinction here, Marx argues, is that with this stage of the development of fixed capital surplus-time cannot be appropriated as surplus-labour. As such, Finn Bowring summarises, 'surplus-value cannot be converted into capital – and thus capitalist social relations cannot be smoothly reproduced – when the income distributed for

[1] Marx *Grundrisse* 691
[2] Marx *Grundrisse* 692
[3] Marx *Grundrisse* 694
[4] Marx *Grundrisse* 699 and 706
[5] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. Tr. Samuel Moore. (London: Penguin Classics, 2002). 226.

the consumption of an expanding volume of commodities is allocated to individuals in proportion to their labour time, which is now "an infinitesimal, vanishing magnitude."'[1] Thus the development of fixed capital creates the social conditions for the general intellectuality which will prefigure what the post-*operaisti* call the exodus from capital; what Alberto Toscano defines as '*communism* as *separation*.'[2] In this way, the post-*operaisti* interpret this section of the Fragment as Marx's prediction of our contemporary capitalism. This development of fixed capital, and this is the key focus of post-*operaismo* thought on the general intellect, results in paradigm altering consequences in terms of the social productions which proceed from realignments in the loci of the production of economic value and the concomitant alterations in the organic composition of capital. This dialectical development of capital in turn bears upon the political composition of the working class, forms of the production of political subjectivity and, therefore, upon the potential for liberation from capital and the supersession of bare life.

There is a distinct tension between Marx's writings in the Fragment and the post-*operaisti* interpretations. I argue that this tension centres upon approaches to understandings of transformations in the labour process in this phase of the capitalist mode of production. The post-*operaisti* go beyond Marx and depart from Marx in two important ways. First, they depart from Marx by inverting Marx's theories on alienated labour, arguing that the capacity for alienated labour to distort, pervert and prevent the development of human potentiality is actually a means by which the full realisation of the refusal of and liberation from capital is to be realised. It is by means of this reconfiguration that the post-*operaisti*, in a philosophically idealistic manoeuvre, transform the politics attendant to capital's enduring ability reabsorb surplus-time as labour time, and present these politics as being characteristic of political liberation. Second, they go beyond Marx – paradoxically – by inferring the concrete labour process from the theories of Marx. As a result they amputate the central point of Marx's theory of general intellect – that the general intellect is characterised by the absence of alienated labour time. Instead, they propose that the free development of individualities *can* proceed under the conditions of wage-labour and thereby transpose the conditions of the production of subjectivity in "free time" onto the labour time of immaterial labour.

[1] Bowring 'From the mass worker to the multitude' 114; Marx *Grundrisse* 704
[2] Alberto Toscano. 'Chronicles of Insurrection: Tronti, Negri and the Subject of Antagonism', *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 5:1 (2009). 77. Emphasis in original.

3.4. Fixed Capital and the Production of Subjectivity: Post-Operaismo Beyond Marx

Marx argues that the development of fixed capital is related to the production of subjectivity by means of two relations that are intrinsically connected to the organisation of the labour process. First, the development of fixed capital leads to a diffusion of general social knowledge as labour processes are transformed and knowledge becomes more central to value production. Second, the development of fixed capital leads to the freeing of labour time. Free time is created for the working class. However, whereas in previous phases capital has been able to reappropriate the free time it creates as surplus-labour it can no longer do so because of the twin contradictions of overproduction and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall that are attendant to the development of fixed capital. A key consequence of the development of the form of fixed capital is the transformation of the labour process; as machines become more technologically advanced the necessity for the intervention of directly productive labour activity declines. The labour time that is devoted to direct production becomes more productive and therefore labour time that was once necessary to direct production of commodities at a given rate becomes extraneous to direct production at the same rate, the labour time for the production of fixed capital withstanding. Therefore, in one sense, the labour process is altered so that the activity of living labour can be immediately replaced by a machine that is constituted by the appropriation of the knowledge of living labour as private property. In another sense, and this is fundamental to the post-*operaisti* interpretation of The Fragment, the process of this appropriation of knowledges is simultaneously a new kind of labour process by means of an expansion of branches of industry beyond the agricultural and the industrial; these branches of industry are part of what Hardt and Negri call the informatisation of production and this labour process is the immaterial labour process. These new branches of industry and this new kind of labour process necessitate a change, they argue, in the locus of the cognitive control over the technical division of labour. For Carlo Vercellone, ‘the productive value of intellectual and scientific labour becomes dominant’ and it is this which constitutes the potential for the overturning of the capitalist division of labour and the revolutionary potential of the mechanisms of the production of subjectivity that pertain in these forms of labour.[1]

In light of Virno’s assessment of Marx’s neglect of the idea that general intellect is embodied in living labour, the post-*operaisti* read Marx’s proposal that the production process becomes subsumed under the technological application of science as an account, at least in part, of the

[1] Vercellone ‘General Intellect’ 19

everyday activity of the worker within the labour process.[1] It is workers who apply science and their 'living' knowledge to the production process. Therefore the ideal division of labour of Taylorist fantasies, which attempts to impose a partition between the cognitive factors of production and the manual factors, can no longer function. As such the post-*operaisti* argue that worker control over the cognitive aspects of the labour process is concomitant of the development of fixed capital and, more importantly, is a definitive feature of contemporary capitalism. Nonetheless, the post-*operaisti* offer a different and extended account of the labour process to that offered Marx. They extend his account, and his account must be either extended or discarded, because the contemporary political economic constitution is not one in which labour time has been reduced nor has free time for the development of individualities has been created. Therefore, firstly, I argue the post-*operaisti* reading of the Fragment on Machines is not merely an interpretation. As Vercellone says, the Fragment offers 'elements' for the understanding of contemporary political economy and I argue that the post-*operaismo* reading of the *Fragment* is an extension of Marx's ideas, albeit one which is nonetheless essentially tied to Marx's description of the consequences of the development of fixed capital. In their extension however, I argue that they transpose his prediction of the ontological consequences of the development of fixed capital – the reduction of socially-necessary labour time and the production of time for the free development of individualities – onto our political economic reality; they recognise that the conditions are different, produce a cogent analysis of these conditions, but apply the politics of Marx's general intellect to the contemporary political economy of work anyway.

To summarise the relevance of Marx's general intellect to the production of politics: Socially-necessary labour time is reduced as machines become more automatic. The development of fixed capital causes a rupture in the tendency for capital to create free time and then 'convert it into surplus labour.'[2] If this tendency were to continue along with the development of fixed capital, Marx argues, a crisis of overproduction would result. Thus, the contradiction that Marx predicts is that capital tends to create free time by means of the development of fixed capital, but the consequences of the development of fixed capital in terms of the organic composition of capital renders capital unable to reabsorb this free time as directly productive surplus labour. Capital 'is thus, despite itself, instrumental in creating the means of social disposable time in order to reduce labour time for the whole society to a diminishing minimum, and thus free everyone's time for their own development.'[3] Marx, of course,

[1] Virno 'General Intellect' 5
[2] Marx *Grundrisse* 708
[3] Marx *Grundrisse* 708

assumes that this tendency does continue and his theory on the development of fixed capital forms part of his theory of revolution. It is at this point that the post-*operaisti* extension begins. Marx underestimates the ability of capitalism to temporarily resolve and relocate its contradictions and so assumes that capital is unable to reabsorb the free time it creates as directly productive labour and therefore argues that the development of fixed capital must lead to the workers' reappropriation of this time.[1] Nonetheless, despite capital's ability to continue to reappropriate the free time it creates as labour time, the post-*operaisti* still regard 'the tendency described by Marx [as] actually fully realised' because of their presuppositions of an autonomous labour process and their prefiguration of an autonomous worker.[2]

The post-*operaisti* take Marx's proposition that the development of fixed capital creates time for the 'full development of the individual, which in turn reacts back upon the productive power of labour', and examine it in terms of the changing landscape of labour in post-industrial times and places.[3] The development of fixed capital, the reconstitution of the functions of circulating capital, and the consequences upon the organic composition of capital, they argue, is driven by 'the production of knowledges by means of knowledges connected to the increasingly immaterial and cognitive character of labour.'[4] They argue that much of the technique of labour and capacities of labour-power in what Hardt and Negri call biopolitical production is predicated on processes of subjectivation which occur outside of work time and place. On the one hand, approaching the value theory of labour from the perspective of capital's exploitation of the qualitative aspects of labour-power opens up the critique of capitalist power.[5] When we consider the 'concrete' and qualitative aspects of labour today I argue along with the post-*operaisti* that we are forced into making the distinction between the inside and outside of capitalist norms of accumulation, thereby concluding that the institutional limits of processes of the production of subjectivity have broken down and that 'the inside and outside are becoming indistinguishable.'[6] Many of the exchange-values that are created in the labour processes of the new forms of labour emerge from properties of labour-power produced by processes of subjectivation which occur outside the labour-process. For example, much service labour is a commodification of the use-values of 'thinking, caring, loving' and the 'capacity to enjoy' of which Virno, Hardt and Negri

[1] Marx *Grundrisse* 708
[2] Virno 'General Intellect' 4
[3] Marx *Grundrisse* 711
[4] Vercellone 'General Intellect' 16
[5] Diane Elson. 'The Value Theory of Labour.' In Diane Elson (ed.). *Value: The representation of Labour in Capitalism.* (London: CSE Books, 1980).
[6] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 196

speak, use-values produced at home, school, play, etc.[1] From this vantage point the intellectual and affective character of labour is an extension of capitalist norms of accumulation and their exploitation of use-values which have their genesis outside the factory gates. Therefore, are home, school, play, *etc*., just alternative representations of the capitalist (social) factory? On the other hand, the post-*operaisti* interpret this development in the relations of production, and the power relations it represents, as paradigmatic form of labour activity that is governed by processes of subjectivation which occur in a world that is no longer separated by a distinction between the inside and the outside of capital, thereby forcing us to examine whether home, school, play, etc., are actually just alternative representations of the social (anticapitalist) factory. Notwithstanding this contradiction, the worker, they argue, is autonomous from capital.

With this in mind, amidst this extension and application of Marx to our contemporary political economy, both of these arguments neglect a vital characteristic of Marx's definition of the qualities of the relations of production that offer the potential for liberation from capital. Furthermore, consideration of this characteristic also has the potential to negotiate the consequences of the delimiting of the distinction between the inside and outside of capital in terms of the power relations that subsume processes of the formation of subjectivity. That is, these positions each forego an analysis of the alienation of labour that is so central to Marx's theories on the production of political subjectivity in the Fragment.[2] Post-*operaismo* thought does, however, offer elements from which this analysis can proceed. 'The disproportion between the role of knowledge objectified in machines and the decreasing relevance of labour time has,' Virno states, 'given rise to new and stable forms of domination.'[3] When we look at capital synchronically in what Virno calls post-Fordism, it has been unable, unwilling nor found it necessary to reabsorb all of the free time it creates. This has created modes of life that can be initially and tentatively categorised in two distinct forms: one of outright subjugation and one of apparent 'free development'. The free time that has been created by the development of fixed capital, which ought to be, according to Marx, time for 'the development of an individual potential' manifests itself as redundancy, structural unemployment and those pockets of time that exist amidst precarious labour.[4] For this other form, I think well-described by Bifo's 'cognitariat', capital in post-Fordism annexes the changes in the mode of life which occur outside labour time and which, according to the

[1] Virno 'General Intellect' 5
[2] Marx *Grundrisse* 708
[3] Virno 'General Intellect' 5
[4] Marx *Grundrisse* 711

thesis of general intellect, would result in free time for creativity and other factors that would contribute to the potential for interaction with nature according to first-order mediations. This philosophy of liberation notwithstanding, it is in this way that the post-*operaisti* propose that capital exploits the knowledges produced in non-labour time and utilises them within capitalist production processes. It is this putting into motion of these qualities in an autonomous labour process that is the genus of the post-*operaismo* efforts to transpose Marx's definition of free time upon immaterial/affective}biopolitical labour time.

The workers of Bifo's cognitariat are mobile, adaptable, and communicative; they follow rules and make choices which remain within the bounds of the framework of capitalist processes of accumulation. These characteristics are, the post-*operaisti* assert, all 'results of a socialisation that has its...centre of gravity *outside of the workplace*.'[1] Virno maintains that the changes in capitalist processes of the production of economic value have instituted the conditions of free time which have 'naturally transformed its possessor into a different subject' who is capable of committing a 'mass defection from the state.'[2] This assessment of contemporary and future political action is one, with various limits and caveats, upon which the post-*operaisti* agree and they legitimate their position with recourse to this section of the Fragment:

> '*The development of fixed capital indicates to what degree general social knowledge has become a* direct force of production *and to what degree, hence, the conditions of the process of social life itself have come under the control of the general intellect and been transformed in accordance with it.*'[3]

Insofar as general social knowledge is possessed and articulated by the workers, Marx's category of the general intellect is a representation of the relative characteristics of phases of capitalism and the potential for subjugation or liberation within the social constitution. Today, this character, for the post-*operaisti*, unerringly swings toward liberation. The post-*operaisti* reading of the Fragment identifies a causal relation between the extent of the development of fixed capital and general social knowledge but they prioritise this relation alone at the expense of other aspects of our contemporary political economy. I argue that in Marx, and in the Fragment, there is another set of relations which measure the *actuality* of a counter-capitalist revolutionary change: the theory of alienation.

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[1] Paulo Virno. 'The Ambivalence of Disenchantment' in Paulo Virno and Michael Hardt (eds.). *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). 14. Emphasis in original.
[2] Marx *Grundrisse* 712; Virno. 'Virtuosity and Revolution' 197
[3] Marx *Grundrisse* 706. Emphasis in original.

The post-*operaisti* overlook this key characteristic of Marx's general intellect despite a clear indication of its importance in the Fragment and despite the integration of a concept of alienation elsewhere in their corpus. In the phase of the general intellect, Marx argues that 'the *theft of alien labour time, on which the present wealth is based*, appears a miserable foundation in the face of this new one.'[1] Marx states that the production of economic value in the phase of the general intellect is not based upon the 'theft of alien labour time' but 'on the power of the agencies set in motion during labour time.'[2] Therefore I argue that it is cogent to align with the post-*operaisti* argument that there is a growing centrality of the role of knowledge in production, I assent to the validity of the examination of the extent to which 'general productive knowledge' develops outside of labour time, and the extent to which it 'in turn reacts back upon the productive power of labour as itself the greatest productive power.' But these examinations, especially if they take so much of their potency from elements of Marx's texts, must consider the question of alienation that is so central to Marx's theory. And not simply for reasons of textual fidelity but because the theory of alienation has the analytical strength to examine what is really just an assertion at the heart of post-*operaismo*: the autonomy of the worker from capital.

The absence of the question of alienation in post-*operaismo* thought on general intellect, in light of its importance to Marx's general intellect, is deeply problematic. But this is not to say that the question of 'alienated time' is absent from post-*operaismo* entirely therefore my analysis of their theories has aimed to fill in the gaps in an effort to understand what they are trying to say about alienated labour in the general intellect. The impact of alienation has caused somewhat of a schism between the post-*operaisti*. On the one hand, Bifo argues that the semiotics of contemporary capitalist economy forbid the free development of individual potentialities.[3] But he also, as Steve Wright argues, has 'an optimistic view that sees the possibilities for the self-organisation of cognitive labour.'[4] On the other, Negri's theory of a revolutionary Multitude does not merely obviate questions regarding the authenticity of subjectivation under capitalist power relations but is attendant to the idea that 'freedom is today, in a fundamental sense, part and parcel of the labour process.'[5] Nonetheless I argue that we should not overplay this schism because the two hands can be seen to meet on the question of the *potential* for autonomy. The post-*operaisti* interpretation of Marx's general intellect, in

[1] Marx *Grundrisse* 705. Emphasis in original.
[2] Marx *Grundrisse* 706
[3] Franco "Bifo" Berardi. *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy.* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009). 64.
[4] Wright 'Mapping Pathways within Italian Autonomist Marxism' 121
[5] Antonio Negri. 'Postmodernity and Liberty: A talk at Pordenonelegge event, Pordenone, 21.11.2003' in *Empire and Beyond*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008). 164.

which the alienation of labour is absent, is central to their proposal of autonomy, notwithstanding whether that proposal is a mere potential for autonomy, 'virtual' autonomy, or actually existing, practical and critical autonomy in action.

By examining the post-*operaisti* extension of Marx's general intellect in light of the centrality of Marx's contingency that general intellect is defined by an absence of alien labour time, it becomes clear that work on the renewal of the praxis of a purported free development of individualities cannot begin if the relationship between freedom and individualities remains in such a state of inadequate examination. The question of 'general intellect' must be both reconfigured in light of an examination of the labour process of emergent forms of labour and its relations and this reconfiguration must account for the alienation of labour. I argue that the politics of the subsumption and valorisation of affective, emotional, aesthetic and biopolitical abilities in the processes of commodity production are occluded entirely by conceiving of alienation as merely a characteristic of processes of socialisation which 'now unfold outside the productive cycle.'[1] Such an argument is predicated on the idea that alien labour time *is not* the foundation of the production of wealth; on the basis of my conceptual examination of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism I argue that this assertion is untenable. I will, therefore, begin to close this investigation into post-*operaisti* thought on the politics of the new landscape of labour by examining their treatment of autonomy amidst this alienation.

3.5. Autonomy and Alienation

My examination of post-*operaismo* thought on the political consequences of the changing landscape of labour by positioning their use of the concept of alienation within the matrix formed by their more central categories and theoretical concerns has led me to the identification of two major internal contradictions in their account of contemporary life. The first of these contradictions has its origins in Negri's failure to adequately conceive of alienation or integrate a notion of what alienation might be within his conceptual thematic. The relation he proposes between bare life and constituent power, which appear to be internally valid explanations of an immanent interaction between social processes, disintegrates upon contact with even his own limited conception of alienation. This relation disintegrates because he cannot account for the contradiction between the ideological domination of the commodity and a purported autonomous worker. For example, Lazzarato is clear on the compulsion for 'workers...to become "active subjects" in the coordination of

[1] Virno 'The Ambivalence of Disenchantment' 26

various functions of production' and that the work of immaterial labour is the production of ideological commodities.[1] As such the subjective character of labour, its commodities and the consumers of those commodities carry something of capitalist domination and alienation. I argue that when barriers to revolutionary potential emerge in their analyses the post-*operaisti* hide them under the blanket of autonomy. And so Lazzarato, together with Negri, retreats to the argument that 'work [today] is immediately something free and constructive' because the 'meaning' of immaterial labour is its autonomous constitution – the producers of ideological commodities will always overcome the limits of capitalism in the theories of post-*operaismo* because labour is prefigured as autonomous.[2]

My examination of alienation has revealed a second contradiction in post-*operaismo*. All of the post-*operaisti* who have done any significant work on Marx's general intellect ignore the contingency that alien labour time is not the basis of production in the phase of the general intellect, but rather the power of the agencies set in motion is the foundation of wealth. However, I argue that any empirical examination – an examination that I will present in the next chapter – would demonstrate the persistence of alienated labour time. That they go on to transpose Marx's proposed conditions of the 'free development of individualities' on to our contemporary political economy of work and thereby posit a revolutionary class is the consequence of their failure to address these contradictions; I argue that they have confused an idea about the concrete conditions of society – namely Tronti's conception of the labour/capital antagonism – with the concrete conditions themselves. In the hope of navigating these inconsistencies, I will now examine what the most systematic and comprehensive attempt to account for alienation to have emerged from post-*operaismo*, Franco "Bifo" Berardi's *The Soul at Work*.

Bifo's 2009 work is an extension and clarification of three interlinked notions regarding contemporary political economy from his earlier works, 'Technology and Knowledge in a Universe of Indetermination' and his book *Il Sapiente, Il Mercante, Il Guerriero* (The Sage, the Merchant and The Warrior).[3] These three notions are the 'speeding-up' of processes of economic valorisation, the increasing involvement of affective, emotional, and creative capacities in work, and a concomitant psychic collapse of the worker and a resulting pharmacological dependency. In *The Soul at Work*, Bifo systematises his previous attempts to

[1] Lazzarato 'Immaterial Labor' 135, 146
[2] Lazzarato and Negri cf. André Gorz. *Reclaiming Work: Beyond the Wage-Based Society*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999). 40.
[3] Franco "Bifo" Berardi. 'Technology and Knowledge in a Universe of Indetermination.' *SubStance*, 36:1 (2007). 57-74. First published 1998.; Franco "Bifo" Berardi. *Il Sapiente, Il Mercante, Il Guerriero.* (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2004).

form 'a psychochemistry of the infospheric environment that studies the psychopathogenic effects of exploitation on the human mind' within a theory of alienation.[1] Bifo states that the term *Compositionism* best describes the 'philosophical style of Italian Workerism', and offers a framework for the compositionist understanding of alienation.[2] The compositionist alienation, he argues, is not predicated on a static and fixed human essence therefore, he argues, it differs radically from Hegelian, Marxist and existentialist theories of alienation. In chapter one I demonstrated that this characterisation of Marx's theory of alienation is simply incorrect. Further, in this part of my argument I demonstrate that Bifo relies more on a fixed notion of human essence than he accounts for. Following Tronti's reconfiguration of Marx's theory on the relation between the development of capital and working class power, the ontology of Bifo's compositionism is anti-labourist and he therefore conceives of alienation as a positive estrangement *from* labour under capitalism, qualified in the context of the *operaismo* tenet of the refusal of work. The essence of anti-labourism is Tronti's theory that 'capitalist power seeks to use the workers' antagonistic will-to-struggle as a motor of its own development.'[3] Bifo argues that workers are estranged from labour as a result of 'radical inhumanity' of their existence, bare life we might say, and by the systems of control which make up work.[4] In this way, Bifo argues that 'what is seen by the negative thought of humanistic derivation as a sign of alienation, is seen by the Workerist-Compositionists as a sign of estrangement and a refusal to identify with the general interest of capitalistic economy.'[5] This epistemological principle illuminates Negri's negligent use of the concept of alienation. In these terms, of course Negri is able to highlight the growing exploitation of the qualitative aspects of labour, and to point to "intimate" or "essential" qualities of labour without further discussion because this alienation becomes fire to the flames which make for the revolutionary exodus of the Multitude. Therefore, I examine Bifo's theory of alienation in consideration of this purportedly post-*operaismo* method of the interpretation of signs of apparent alienation as signs of the refusal of capitalistic interests. I also examine Bifo's characterisation of his own theory and will demonstrate here that Bifo overlooks its Hegelian elements.

There is today, Bifo argues, a 'new love of working' which has resulted from a new form of labour process which allows the worker to exercise their intellectuality.[6] The communicative forums of workers' organisations, communist and anti-capitalist groupings have been

[1] Franco "Bifo" Berardi. 'Schizo-Economy' *SubStance* 36:1 (2007). 77.
[2] "Italian Workerism" is a further cognate to "*operaismo*" and "post-*operaismo*". Berardi *Soul at Work* 44
[3] Tronti 'The Strategy of Refusal' 29
[4] Berardi *Soul at Work* 44
[5] Berardi *Soul at Work* 46
[6] Berardi *Soul at Work* 83

subsumed under capital within the new cognitive labour processes, which has coincided with the proliferation of 'economistic ideology.'[1] This has resulted in the de-politicisation, de-eroticisation and the decline of solidarity in daily life. Furthermore, a fundamental part of this economistic ideology has been the creation of the political conditions in which state welfare has been dismantled. In short, there has been a transformation of culture which corresponds to the new preponderance of cognitive labour and the metamorphosis of Fordist capitalism into what Bifo calls Semiocapitalism. This economistic ideology, he argues, makes work the means by which we close ourselves off from a barbarous world by isolating ourselves in it.[2] It is important to make clear that Bifo proposes that the capacity for self-realisation which work now offers – in lieu of the lost eroticism and solidarity of daily life – is limited to a privileged class of worker. Bifo demarcates this class by separating cognitive labour from other forms of labour and further distinguishing between "brain workers" and "chain workers". According to Bifo, 'brains workers' form a "cognitariat" who do 'properly cognitive labour', and 'chain workers' do cognitive labour of a 'purely applicative kind.'[3] This so-called cognitariat is Bifo's revolutionary class, the vanguard of Hardt and Negri's "multitude". Bifo argues that the labour-process of the cognitariat emerges from two transformations. First, the digitisation of information allows capital to capture different fragments of labour time that can be co-ordinated as a flow irrespective of spatial proximity. As we know, the revolution in communication technologies means that these fragmented productions can be unified irrespectively of the distance between the geographical locations of the original sites of work. Secondly, the labour process has been distributed amongst 'formally autonomous' productive nodes. [4] Unlike Negri and Lazzarato, Bifo argues that these productive nodes are merely formally autonomous because, although the development of these new forms of labour process have been accompanied by the withering away of formal hierarchies of control, the interdependent character of fragmented production imposes a dominance upon the labour process which is, he argues, more substantive than under industrial production.

The concept of alienation in Bifo's *Soul at Work* is firstly, 'a specific psychopathological category.' Secondly, alienation is 'a painful division of the self.' Thirdly, alienation is 'a feeling of anguish and frustration related to the inaccessible body of the other, to the dis-tonic feelings of a non-sympathetic organism incapable of living a happy relation with otherness and therefore with itself.'[5] It is this latter aspect of alienation that Bifo regards as the best

[1] Berardi *Soul at Work* 81
[2] Berardi *Soul at Work* 104
[3] Berardi *Soul at Work* 87
[4] Berardi *Soul at Work* 88
[5] Berardi *Soul at Work* 108-9

description of our times. Bifo's conceptualisation of alienation prioritises de-realisation over reification.[1] That is, he prioritises the examination of the anguish and anomie that results from the de-eroticisation of everyday life over the becoming thinghood of the self. In doing so he foregoes the consideration of the making of the body as something alien that is attendant to labour under capitalism. As such, I argue that he underplays the first and second aspects of his own conceptualisation in favour of a focus on feelings of anguish that result from life in 'Semiocapitalism.' In this way Bifo is concerned with what he calls the 'collective psyche that is becoming the object of exploitation' in which the flows of signs throughout life are attendant to and shaped by hyper-exploitative norms of capitalist accumulation.[2]

I argue that Bifo highlights the alienating processes which occur outside labour in a much more systematic way than Marx, but does so at the expense of a systematic critique of the labour process. 'Everywhere,' in work and outside of it, 'attention is under siege.' Our entire existence plays out in 'a cognitive space overloaded with nervous incentives to act. This,' he says, 'is the alienation of our times.'[3] Semiocapitalism articulates a constant assault upon the senses by means of what Bifo describes in a later work as the "info-sphere", which is 'the interface between the media system and the mind.'[4] For the worker, the rapid advance in communication technologies means that he or she must continually receive, interpret, decode, reconfigure and relay symbols that have not only an operational value but which may either impel or dissuade, and are laden with affective and emotional values. Privacy is constantly invaded by the advertising which occupies almost every public space; this gives lie to the possibilities for the distinction between public and private in our age, in addition to my arguments in chapter two and my forthcoming analysis in chapter five. Bifo is arguing here that the assault which we undergo, perpetrated by the symbols in work and the symbols on billboards and TV, is a systematic peddling of 'illusions, and therefore disillusions...of competition and defeat, euphoria and depression.'[5] Thus, the ideological functions of advertising – style over substance, appearance over reality, desire over need – combine with the ideological functions of work – competition, success, failure – and thereby create the economic function of consumer capitalism.

Bifo argues that 'there is no possibility of political resistance to the absolute domination of Semiocapitalism.'[6] Bifo's research does not, however, address itself to political resistance to

[1] Berardi *Soul at Work* 109
[2] Berardi *Soul at Work* 134
[3] Berardi *Soul at Work* 108
[4] Berardi *Precarious Rhapsody* 39
[5] Berardi *Soul at Work* 92
[6] Berardi *Soul at Work* 138

capitalism nor to political resistance to work under capital. Rather than examining life in its 'cognitive labour' guise in a fundamental way, I argue that he idealises it. He argues that work is done within 'productive islands [which are] formally autonomous.'[1] Bifo tacitly acknowledges the forthcoming empirical critique and attempts to obviate it by claiming that the organisation of work within autonomous productive islands represents the vanguard tendency of work, thus all work will soon be organised in such a way. He does not attempt to assess hierarchical systems of control in work but merely asserts that command is internalised in the conjunction that exists between the semiotic flow of the production of economic value and the ideology it creates. Unlike Lazzarato, Bifo rejects the connection between the worker and the object and thereby ignores the power relations that mediate the worker's production of the object. Bifo regards the worker's interaction with the object as just one link in a chain of semiotic production. Furthermore, he appears to regard the production of any given sign as something which initially has its origins in a set of norms outside of the particular labour-process, thereby reducing the worker to an interpreter, decoder and relayer of signs with no awareness of or desire for propriety over the objects he or she creates. If the cognitariat are the class of creative workers, yet remain subject to the governance of these norms, surely something other than 'gratuitous, pleasurable and erotic contact' is alienated in this process?[2] Both the object and the labour-process we are discussing here is communicative, but Bifo disregards that the communication must necessarily, by definition, be political. Bifo ignores the political aspect of production thus rejecting without examination that work itself can be a site of political resistance.

3.6. The Post-*Operaismo* Landscape of Anticapitalist Praxis

Post-*operaismo* offers two different, albeit linked, conceptualisations of alienation. Negri conceives of alienation solely as an analytical tool with which contemporary processes of the exploitation of surplus-value can be pried open and unpacked. Specifically, he argues that alienation should occupy that conceptual space which was once taken up by theories of surplus-value and exploitation. In doing so, nonetheless, he disavows the humanist and/or existentialist content of theories of alienation. This is not to say that Negri does not recognise the human consequences of the power-relations of production. I have discussed his application of Agamben's 'bare life' within his conceptual thematic and have concluded that he shields his theory of a revolutionary multitude from the view of any notion of pernicious

[1] Berardi *Soul at Work* 88
[2] Berardi *Soul at Work* 87

ontological consequences to labour under capitalism. Bare life does not figure negatively in his proposed mechanisms for the production of subjectivity and he does not consider the alienation of intimate qualities of personhood as something which is important in our contemporary political economy. In fact, with his attempt to integrate the category of bare life into his theory of revolution, Negri implies that the alienation of these intimate qualities plays a foundational role in the formation of the power which resists, subverts, and sabotages capitalist power. Furthermore, he implies that in the context of the autonomy of labour, which will lead to the amputation of capital from production, these intimate qualities will then surely be retrieved. Within this framework, any notion of the effects of the alienation of activity, and the alienation of these intimate qualities of the self, is thus counterbalanced and negated. His assertion that 'cognitive labour...generally produce(s) cooperation autonomously from capitalist command' allows him to obviate questions regarding the effect of capitalist power relations upon the integrity of the person and to instead focus his attention upon the processes of subjectivation which ensue from these purportedly autonomously-produced cooperative arrangements.[1] I argue that Negri is not interested in the potential of the concept of alienation to examine the relation between labour and the production of life itself. This is not to say that Negri ignores this relation but that, in light of his assertions regarding the new nature of the organisation of productive cooperation, he prefers to highlight conceptual notions which contribute to his thesis of the emergence of a revolutionary multitude. I argue that he does this at the expense of an investigation into the possibility that the production and reproduction of the power relations in contemporary forms of production might create conditions which inhibit rather than enhance the potential for liberation from capitalism.

Bifo conceives of alienation in a similar way to Negri but he places a notion of the human consequences of labour under capitalism at the centre. First, the alienation of intimate qualities of personhood is a process which is fundamental to our contemporary political economy and is fundamental to the potential future development of political economy. Bifo retrieves the idea that activity, in both labour and consumption, can be alienated and this notion leads him to the conclusion that labour under contemporary capitalism has ontological consequences upon the self, but simultaneously generalises labour's impact on Being and attempts to form an immanent revolutionary critique on this basis. I argue that in this way he performs an interpretative reduction of political economic processes, particularly the function of command, which my theory of alienation must reconsider if it is to contribute to our understanding of social and productive life today.

[1] Negri *Commonwealth* 140

Concluding my analysis of post-*operaisti* understandings of alienation, I argue that the works of the post-*operaisti* illuminate important relations in the production of politics of work, in particular their argument regarding the blurring of the lines between the inside and outside of capitalist production and their indication towards the examination of the reproduction of labour-power. However, they forego the opportunity to contribute to the development of anticapitalist praxis, instead arguing that praxis is already in motion, engaged by a prefigured autonomous worker. The first point of reference in all the theories of all post-*operaisti* is Tronti's inversion of Marx's labour/capital antagonism.

The proletariat and the proletarian struggle, Marx argues, are called into existence as a consequence of the development of capitalism. Capitalism creates an assemblage of social and productive relations which create a proletariat and fosters a social, economic and political environment that is opposed to the interests of the proletariat. Consequently, the proletariat engages in struggle against capital and we see Marx reduce this relation to the polemical declaration that 'what the bourgeoisie...produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers.'[1] Tronti performs a 'Copernican revolution' by arguing that the development of all capitalist assemblages is actually a response to working class struggle. 'It is,' he argues, 'the specific moments of the class struggle which have determined every technological change in the mechanisms of industry.'[2] As Bowring argues, 'instead of the political mobilisation of workers being the final ingredient required by the Party to turn economic crisis into revolution, economic crisis was now the result of the insubordination and organised resistance of working people, and of capital's need to regain control over workers' command of the business cycle.'[3] This position is not an unattractive one and it illuminates a particular post-*operaismo* approach to changes in production which fundamentally shapes their conceptions of alienation.

Immanence is central to the political economy of the post-*operaisti*, and the nature of this immanence accords to Tronti's Copernican revolution. All of the concepts that populate the post-*operaismo* theoretical matrix have at their root the idea that labour, from the perspective in which we consider its 'form', develops within an immanent process which proceeds according to the epistemological principle that the 'capitalist class, from its birth, is in fact subordinate to the working class.'[4] Negri formulates the concept of alienation in such a way that it comes to illuminate the nature of exploitation under contemporary capitalism, so that it

[1] Marx *Communist Manifesto* 233
[2] Tronti 'Strategy of Refusal' 30
[3] Bowring 'From the mass worker to the multitude' 104
[4] Tronti 'Strategy of Refusal' 31

specifies the qualities of labour-power which produce economic value, and simultaneously limits the scope of the concept. Negri's conceptualisation of alienation does this because he reads the development of the form of contemporary labour as a consequence of a labour/capital antagonism in which capital is subordinate to labour, as a form of labour which has been determined by the labour-class as a reaction to the iniquities of Fordist labour and therefore a consequence of the *refusal to work*. Negri sees the contemporary form of labour as one which has resulted from class-struggle and one which is constituted in such a way that its labourers can now, finally, emancipate themselves from capital. Biopolitical production, therefore, is a reference point in an historically immanent process which began at the onset of the industrial revolution when 'the worker (became) the *provider of capital*.'[1]

Following from the centrality of the autonomous worker to this theory of immanence, I argue that Bifo's theory of alienation ends at the point, both conceptually and historically, at which his theory of anticapitalist social recomposition begins. His theory of what alienation *is* ends there and what follows is, first, a theory of the immanent development of mechanisms of the formation of subjectivity prefigured by an autonomous worker, superordinate to capital. General intellect stands at the centre of these mechanisms. As such, Bifo is able to argue that 'the cognitive worker's individual depression is not a consequence of the economic crisis but its very reason.'[2] He goes on to define our contemporary political economy according to a principle of 'the incompatibility or unfitness of the general intellect when confronted with' the 'hyper-exploitation' of the soul.[3] Notwithstanding, if the semiotic flows of productive life are governed according to the norms of capitalist accumulation, how is this not the making instrument of mind in the same way as industrial capitalism makes an instrument of the hand or foot? Not to reject Bifo's thesis of "de-realisation", but why does it exclude the possibility of reification in cognitive labour rather than posit itself as a complementary *extension* of how we understand reification? Why does the exploitation of affective, communicative and emotional capabilities, of our attention, the putting of the soul to work, not amount to the making of Being as an instrument?

The psychic collapse of the person, a process which he argues is immanent of the political-economic constitution he proposes and its future development that he predicts, necessarily follows. In this way, Bifo argues that the hyper-exploitation of the soul that is the condition of the increase of the velocity of information brought on by Semiocapitalism – upon which

[1] Tronti 'Strategy of Refusal' 30. Emphasis in original.
[2] Berardi *Soul at Work* 167
[3] Berardi *Soul at Work* 211, 209

Semiocapitalism founds its power – is synonymous to alienation.[1] For Bifo, the psychic collapse of the person is the first step in labour's self-estrangement from capital, as it produces the conditions for the possibility of 'collective political therapy'. The contemporary mode of the production of economic value cannot persist, Bifo argues, because of its consequences upon the integrity of the person. Therefore, I cannot read Bifo as proposing a humanistic *return* to essence, but rather as positing a universal essence or state of being that is produced by existence – I can only read all post-*operaisti* theories of social transformation as a *coming* to essence. This essence has a prefigured autonomous worker at its centre, defined according to Tronti's Copernican revolution. At this point we get to the heart of the problem of a post-*operaismo* theory of alienation.

Whereas Marx's formulation of the labour/capital antagonism includes the possibility that labour can be autonomously antagonistic from capital, Tronti's inversion precludes the possibility of Marx's position. That is, the post-*operaismo* formulations fail to consider the possibility that given formations of capitalist power might not be the final act of a historical process in which the autonomy of the working class is to be realised and, as such, I argue that the stated "immanence" which they argue produces the material conditions for exodus from capital is actually an abstract teleology. The post-*operaisti* argue that because the working class are the 'providers of capital' that the working class is *categorically* autonomous from capital, and cannot but be autonomous because they are the working class. I argue that, in order to maintain the validity of this principle, the immanent development of the conditions of capitalism proposed by the post-*operaisti* must obviate some key questions and problems that are apparent in our contemporary political economy, such as the problem of alienated labour and the processes of subjectivation that are attendant to the proliferation of economicist logics. The post-*operaisti begin* from the assumption that alienation under capitalism is the active self-estrangement of the autonomous worker from capital; this prefiguration colours all of their investigations. As a result, what might appear, in terms of the internal validity of the theory, as an assemblage of processes that is immanent of political economy is actually, as Zanini argues, a 'hypostatisation of the mechanisms of the reproduction of subjectivity.'[2] To propose the immanence of the formation of autonomous subjects within an autonomous class is, I argue, to presuppose the qualities of the processes which form subjectivity, to presuppose the qualities of subjectivities themselves, and to propose a Hegelian theory of human nature in which humanity is in a constant process of realising the Absolute Idea of freedom, or rather autonomy. This epistemological position explains how, for example, Lazzarato is able to

[1] Berardi *Soul at Work* 181-183
[2] Zanini 'On the "Philosophical Foundations" of Italian Workerism' 41

propose and autonomous yet subjugated worker. Zanini argues that this hypostatisation occurs only 'sometimes'. Nonetheless, I propose that because of the philosophy and the method implied by this interpretation of the labour/capital antagonism, the presupposition of processes of the formation of subjectivity, and a presupposition of the subject that supposedly emerges from these processes, is a key characteristic of post-*operaismo* and is intrinsic to their central epistemological assumption regarding the character of the labour/capital antagonism. Furthermore, despite post-*operaismo* proclamations of opposition to idealism, rejections of humanism, and denials of existentialism, we do not have to read too closely to see the ghosts of Hegel's Absolute and Feuerbach's rejection of God operating alongside a theory of the development the relations of production, guiding an historical subject toward Freedom, or, to use their parlance, autonomy. Negri's Multitude and Lazzarato's virtual communism demonstrate a tradition within post-*operaismo* in which freedom realises itself as social relations alter and subjects' understanding of the world increases with the development of general intellect. Bifo's argument that post-*operaismo* does not presuppose a 'universal principle from which workers' behaviours derive', thereby denying a place for notions of essence in the theory, while also arguing that 'the workers' position is...one of estrangement, situating itself outside the logic and general interest of capitalistic society' is drastically misplaced.[1]

The post-*operaisti* think of alienation as a process that can be overcome without changing the labour process relation or the object relation, and this overcoming occurs according to the development of a quasi-Hegelian consciousness of Freedom. They presuppose a class-subject who is a force of production and, as a result, they imply that it is not the means of production which need to be appropriated by a revolutionary class but that the subjects of the revolutionary class must reappropriate themselves. By rejecting all previous political economic theories of alienation, the post-*operaisti* limit the scope of the concept of alienation to within the bounds of notions of inter-subjectivity; therefore, they suggest, alienation can be overcome by the same inter-subjectivity. Therefore, it is not surprising that Bifo in particular underplays the potential for a political conflict that plays out in production, or that he proposes a unity of politics and psychotherapy to be enacted outside the sphere of the production of economic value as an appropriate method by which capital can be subverted and autonomy achieved.[2]

[1] Berardi *Soul at Work* 50-51
[2] Berardi *Soul at Work* 220-221

The post-*operaisti* project, as characterised by Harry Cleaver, 'to identify the possibilities of liberation inherent within the capacities of self-activity' is ultimately one-dimensional.[1] It is one-dimensional because it continually obviates the effects of alienation on the possibilities and potentialities of self-activity. Susan Ruddick argues that 'Hardt and Negri's intervention arguably served as a counterpoint to left melancholia.'[2] She is right. Anticapitalism needs its myths because anticapitalists need to get out of bed every day and engage in forms of politics that run counter to their own momentary subjective preferences and interests, which is not an easy thing to do in the absence of hope and in the face of a capital that appears as a totalising force of domination. But I argue that the post-*operaisti* formulations are a barrier to the realisation of the myth because they situate the transcendence of the capitalist political form outside of politics, in the figure of a predetermined anticapitalist worker who is produced as anticapitalist by virtue of something immanent in the organisation of emergent forms of labour. It appears as though all we must do is wait for autonomous living labour to emerge from the capitalist organisation of work and then we can begin our exodus from capital. By inverting the Second International's vulgarisation of Marx's theory of the labour/capital antagonism, Tronti and the other post-*operaisti* assume a unitary – albeit multitudinous – class subject. The key concepts of post-*operaismo* always tend to the justification of this fundamental and unchanging assumption, thus Negri's alienation does not affect the autonomy of his Multitude and Bifo's alienation creates the conditions for the exodus from capital. I suggest that this causes a great deal of harm to the potential for post-*operaismo* to illuminate the power-relations of work, its object relations, the politics that emerge from work, and the immediate impact of capitalism upon the body. Post-*operaismo* too often tends to the selection and conception of aspects of the processes of the production of subjectivity that justify their key epistemological assumption. Importantly, according to the post-*operaisti* these processes of the realisation of autonomy are inevitable and this view is essential to the post-*operaismo* approach to alienated labour. Capitalism, they argue, cannot become organised in such a way that would preclude the realisation of the autonomy of the working class and the subjects of which it is composed; therefore, the post-*operaisti* cannot acknowledge the possibility that the political problems of labour under capitalism might have an enduring character. In itself, the refusal to rest on a position that makes claims to the interminability of capitalist power is not an altogether problematic view. However, I argue

[1] Harry Cleaver. 'Marxian Categories, the Crisis of Capital, and the Constitution of Social Subjectivity Today' in Werner Bonefeld (ed.). *Revolutionary Writing: Common Sense Essays in Post-Political Politics.* (New York: Autonomedia, 2003). 49.
[2] Susan Riddick. 'The Politics of Affect: Spinoza in the Work of Negri and Deleuze', *Theory, Culture & Society* 27:4. (2010). 22.

that the refusal of the post-*operaisti* to consider this possibility actually presents itself in their work as a refusal to consider the potential for capitalist assemblages to form mechanisms of the production of subjectivity in any way except as part of the immanent process of the realisation of autonomy. Therefore, the conceptions of alienation they propose are either one-sided, as in Negri, or merely represent a starting point for the exodus of labour from capital, as in Bifo. In this way, they discard the central idea of Marx's theory of alienation as an attempt to understand the effect of labour under capitalism upon the worker and upon life, and instead substitute it with an attempt to understand the worker's response to capital's attempts at domination, a response which always begins from the principle that the processes of the production of subjectivity are autonomous from capital. As a result, the post-*operaisti* theory of alienation, and its accompanying theory of revolution, is inherently tendentious: the autonomy of the worker is the only possible consequence of labour under capitalism and this autonomy will be realised as a result of the particular conditions, which worker struggle has created, of this form of the capitalist mode of production.

I have no doubts about the desire of Hardt, Negri, Virno, Bifo, *et al*, to see the destruction of capitalism and the constitution of a society predicated on the free development of all. But my analysis leads me to Atilio A. Boron's idea that their work 'offers scant help to the social forces interested in transforming the national and international structures of world capitalism' in any way beyond performing a mythical function for the reproduction of anticapitalist subjects, and an ineffective one at that.[1] There is justification for the argument that a key problem with post-*operaismo*, because there is a great deal of insight amidst the contradictions, is that they eschew empirical analysis. As Steffen Bohm, Ana C. Dinerstein and Andre Spicer argue, 'the implication [of post-*operaismo*] is that "self-valorisation" contributes to a project of liberation from capital because it facilitates the creation of autonomous spaces disconnected from the capitalist labour process.'[2] But neither the fact nor the contours of 'self-valorisation' are demonstrated by post-*operaismo* while 'autonomous spaces' are merely theorised into existence as examples of a becoming, vanguard mode of organisation. As such, post-*operaismo* theories present a number of methodological problems that do not necessarily follow from its philosophical ones.

The post-*operaisti* begin with the awareness that there has been an important development in economic processes of production under capitalism but then proceed to fill in the political

[1] Atilio A. Boron. *Empire and imperialism: A critical reading of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri*. Tr. Jessica Casiro. (London: Zed Books, 2005). 58.
[2] Steffen Bohm, Ana C. Dinerstein and Andre Spicer. '(Im)possibilities of Autonomy: Social Movements in and beyond Capital, the State and Development', *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest* 9:1 (2010). 20.

gaps by jumping ahead to a set of philosophical assumptions. These philosophical assumptions are generated by readings of Marx's *Grundrisse*, the Fragment on Machines in particular, and Tronti's *Operaia e Capitale*. From these readings they commence directly to animating a picture of the labour process under so-called cognitive capitalism. The post-*operaisti* starting point is well established in critical theory; their theories on the politics of contemporary capitalism begin with changes in production that have been taking place since around 1970, as argued by a number of political economists, post-structuralists and post-modernists. For the post-*operaisti*, these changes indicate to them a tendency toward the worker 'standing to the side' of industrial production processes as in the 'Fragment on Machines' from *Grundrisse*. As a result of an alteration in the landscape of labour, the worker, they argue, exercises cognitive control over their own labour processes and generates productive cooperation autonomously from capital. As such, capital acts as a *rentier* because capital's intervention in labour processes impedes value production; a fundamental aspect of what Negri calls the crisis in the law of value.[1] In the next chapter I will demonstrate that this concept of capital is untenable.

My immanent critique suggests that the post-*operaisti* create the world from a theoretical standpoint. Jason Read argues that Negri's philosophy of praxis is 'developed through a continual encounter with its constitutive dimensions and limitations, with the materiality of the world.'[2] On the contrary, I argue that Negri's philosophy of praxis in affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production replaces the materiality of the world with a transposing of Marx's revolutionary general intellect from Marx's predicted historical system onto our actual one, supplemented by the transcendent formulation of Tronti's labour/capital antagonism. The post-*operaisti* marry Marx's theory of the emancipatory character of "free time" in the phase of general intellect, which they do not demonstrate, with Tronti's inversion of Marx's labour/capital antagonism, which appears merely as an idea about things rather than as a concrete form of the capital relation, in order to propose a 'becoming time of the multitude' in which autonomous subjects engaged in processes of self-valorisation, as opposed to capital's valorisation, will perform an 'exodus' from capital.[3] Ben Trott argues that 'many of the criticisms made of Hardt and Negri's work have been based, to a large extent, upon a failure to comprehend the tendential nature of their argument.'[4] I argue that the problem with Hardt

[1] Negri *Marx Beyond Marx* 40
[2] Jason Read. 'The Potentia of Living Labour: Negri and the Practice of Philosophy' in Timothy S. Murphy and Abdul-Karim Mustapha. *The Philosophy of Antonio Negri: Revolution in Theory*. (London: Pluto Press, 2007). 29.
[3] Hardt and Negri *Commonwealth* 167
[4] Ben Trott. 'Immaterial Labour and World Order: An Evaluation of a Thesis', *Ephemera* 7:1 (2007). 207.

and Negri's theories is not their reliance on projecting history forward on the basis of the tendencies that they identify, but rather that these so-called tendencies are actually subject to a broad array of counter-tendencies that they do not account for. Furthermore, these tendencies themselves are prefigured by untenable reconfigurations of Marx's concepts, namely, the functions of free-time and alienated labour in the general intellect. It is the creation of the world from an untenable theoretical standpoint that appears to be inchoate with the concrete organisation of the labour process of emergent forms of labour. This creation of the world from a theoretical standpoint stands opposed to the notion of creating a theory from the standpoint of the world. As Alberto Toscano argues, Lazzarato contends that the intellectualisation of the working class under the auspices of the development of general intellect means that society today is 'be it virtually, communist.'[1] For Negri, a rentier capital can simply be cut loose. Virno asserts that 'every light we will ever find is already here in the so-called darkness.'[2] Bifo argues that a mere change in perceptions, a conscious realignment of subject position, is required in order to resolve the social, economic, cultural and existential problems of the contemporary order, a change which will come from 'the creation of an economy based on the sharing of common things and services and on the liberation of time for culture, pleasure and affection.'[3] All of these formulations are precisely Hegelian.

Marx's theory of alienation is an attempt to understand the effects of labour under capitalism upon the worker and upon life, but does not take into account the reconstitution and reorganisation of labour, nor does it account for new methods of producing economic-value or changes in the power relations of work and the technical division of labour. We would hope that a post-*operaismo* theory of alienation, given its position at the *avant-garde* of the study of work, would address this. However, because of their epistemological approach to changes in production, the post-*operaisti* are unable to think of the alienation of the worker from an aspect of their selves as a consequence of the organisation of the production of economic-value. As a result, their conception of alienation becomes an attempt to outline the revolutionary potential of our contemporary society. Having read Marx, the post-*operaismo* conceptions of alienation do not do what I, or what I imagine others who have read Marx, would expect them to do.

[1] Alberto Toscano. 'Vital Strategies: Maurizio Lazzarato and the metaphysics of contemporary capitalism'. *Theory, Culture & Society* 24:6 (2007). 74.
[2] Virno 'The Ambivalence of Disenchantment' 26
[3] Berardi *Soul at Work* 219

In the following chapter I will draw together these conclusions on post-*operaismo* together with an analysis of the labour processes of concrete forms of labour that have been addressed by conceptions of aesthetic labour, emotional labour, and immaterial/affective/biopolitical labour.

Chapter Four: Labour Processes and Indeterminate Bodies

> *"[Human labour] is a fluidity, a potential, which in any society has to be socially 'fixed' or objectified in the production of particular goods by particular people in particular ways."*
>
> Diane Elson[1]

4.1. The Labour Process in Concepts of Emergent Forms of Labour

The aim of this chapter is to build upon this critique of cognitive capitalism theories in light of the present absence of an analysis of the labour process. This approach also implies an investigation of the premises of emotional and aesthetic labour, albeit one that is more tangential to my specific aims here. Emma Dowling, Rodrigo Nunes and Ben Trott argue that 'the concepts of immaterial and affective labour…succeed, to a certain extent, in describing real and existing tendencies.'[2] In this chapter I examine the labour processes of emergent forms of labour to appraise this evaluation and argue to the contrary that the extent to which these concepts succeed is fundamentally limited and problematic because there is a lack of connection between them and the real and existing tendencies and concrete conditions that they seek to explain. In this chapter I examine the qualities of living labour that might be understood as being indicative of the practice of general intellectuality but find that they are bound within the strictures of the division of labour and subject to a siege by the technical and bureaucratic modes of control that the post-*operaisti* argue have dissolved. This failure of analysis in the cognitive capitalism tradition leads to untenable theory of the labour process of emergent forms of labour, as noted by Paul Thompson.[3] I argue further and find that it is an untenable theory of the production of the political subject in emergent forms of labour. This leads in turn to a series of untenable assertions regarding praxis in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism, which I explore more deeply towards the closing of my thesis. By means of my analyses in this chapter I explore the idea that a key problem with post-*operaisti* theories on contemporary capitalism is that they overemphasise what has changed about capitalist production and obscure what has remained the same; I argue that their errors of inclusion and omission result in an overwhelming imbalance in their characterisation of a

[1] Elson 'The Value Theory of Labour' 128
[2] Emma Dowling, Rodrigo Nunes and Ben Trott. 'Immaterial and Affective Labour: Explored', *Ephemera* 7:1 (2007). 2.
[3] Paul Thompson. 'Foundation and Empire: A critique of Hardt and Negri', *Capital & Class* 29:2 (2005). 73-98.

purported emancipatory character to work under this phase of capitalism. This critique connects to the analysis of Dowling, Nunes, and Trott in that it is another aspect of the vanguardism of the post-*operaisti*. Unfortunately, the Strathclyde Group also pay slight attention to the labour process in their extension of Hochschild's thesis through the concept of aesthetic labour. This omission is attendant to an ahistorical approach to the capitalist labour market that paradoxically reduces the worker's body to an incorporeal exchange-value to be traded for a wage or made fit to be traded for a wage. As such, the concept of aesthetic labour brings with it a concomitant depoliticisation of the field of emergent forms of labour. One of the key strengths of Hochschild's concept of emotional labour is its origin in an examination of the labour process.

Although subject to the charge of lacking sufficient precision to be able to avoid internal contradictions that result from a theory of emotion that is unsympathetic to the complexity of the relationship between 'public' and 'private life', the key points of Hochschild's analysis can be seen to emerge directly from an analysis of the labour process. Her key contribution, I argue, is the linking of the instrumentalisation of emotion to the notion of an existential cost to the self. Hochschild's examination, from the perspective of alienation, rests on a principal concern for the worker's subjective experience of him/herself and their experience of the work of emotional labour. Despite her setting out of the objective organisation of the emotional labour process in *The Managed Heart*, I argue that her theory concludes on a politics of emotional labour that is reduced to subjective feeling. There is a fundamental contradiction in Hochschild's theory; she argues that workers can maintain "authenticity" by altering the bearing of their subject position towards the experience of work and understanding that '"we're just illusion makers."'[1] Hochschild recognises the contradiction between this subjective strategy and the tension it creates between the worker's connection to their "real" and "working" selves, but cannot resolve it. I argue that Hochschild cannot resolve the contradiction because she limits the politics of work to the forms of the organisation of emotional labour that bear upon work-rate and staffing, and so on, and occludes the possibility for organised labour to resist, subvert and reconstitute the management of emotion. I argue along with Brook that this contradiction results from Hochschild's failure to integrate the labour process aspects of alienation within a comprehensive theory.[2] As such, Hochschild's analysis of alienated emotional labour ends in the realm of subjective feeling. Hochschild limits the politics of alienation to moments of micro-resistance in which it is usually individualised workers who resist the alienation of

[1] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 187
[2] Brook 'The Alienated Heart'

their smiles and foregoes the consideration of collective strategies of resistance to the reification and valorisation of feelings. This contradiction must be revisited if an adequate account of the politics of emergent forms of labour is to be produced. With this in mind, although I seek to frame my analysis over the next few chapters in such a way as to capture subjective experience I contend that awareness of subjective experience in and by itself can at best produce a one-dimensional understanding of the politics of the labour process. In this chapter I draw broadly on Harry Braverman and Michael Burawoy's analyses, critique, and extensions of the work of Karl Marx in order to elucidate some key characteristics of the labour process under capitalism and to capture the relation between the subjective and objective elements of work.

I foreground this discussion of the labour process under capitalism with a thesis: the capitalist labour process is a political apparatus. The labour process under capitalism is not merely a unitary process in which activity is joined with material in order to produce a use-value; it is also a mechanism for the wielding of power and the subordination of people. In light of the centrality of the interactive relationship (Industry) between humanity (Man) and nature (Nature) as discussed in chapter one, I prioritise an analysis of the labour process because, as Alfred Schmidt argues, 'this relationship between man and nature is the precondition for the relationship between man and man; the dialectic of the labour-process as a natural process broadens out to become the dialectic of human history in general.'[1] The political organisation of these interactions are fundamental to history. The political function of the capitalist labour process stands in contrast to labour processes in feudalist and slavery-based modes of production. The social relations of feudalism and slavery required extra-economic mechanisms in order to maintain this political function.[2] I have argued that the political function of capitalism – the modes by which power is wielded and people are subordinated, some groups are privileged while others are deprived – is an inherent part of its economic functions. The idea of labour under capitalism seems inconceivable without an attendant politics in which the worker is subject to external control. I contend that oftentimes the idea that the labour process is a political apparatus is "black-boxed" and that its political character is either taken as a given and oftentimes obscured in the same movement or it is ignored. I have indicated some of the conceptual literature that falls prey to this uni-dimensionality and in this chapter I will indicate some of the empirical literature that does the same. Either way, discussion of the politics of work is often reduced to what I argue are peripheral matters that address (poorly) the symptoms of the capitalist disease but ignore the causes. Discussion is

[1] Alfred Schmidt. *The Concept of Nature in Marx*. (London: Verso, 2014). 28.
[2] Burawoy *Manufacturing Consent* 24-25

often limited to the idea of 'employees' bargaining with 'employers' thereby moving the field of politics to the safe waters of consociation, in which interests are represented as being shared ones, and only questions of distribution are at stake. This is a tendency of the Strathclyde Group's conception of the politics of aesthetic labour. Or, this discussion sometimes tackles questions of domination more head-on but nonetheless the political argument retreats to questions of worker negotiation for greater control but nonetheless within the capitalist labour process, as Hochschild's does. Post-*operaismo* theories, however, are not peripheral and they also immediately represent a challenge to my core assumptions here: with their concepts of immaterial/affective labour}biopolitical production they argue that labour under capitalism is conceivable as an activity in which workers can, and must, be free from external control and thus exercise their autonomy. A key aim in this chapter is to critically assess this claim through an empirically-informed theoretical examination of emergent forms of labour.

I aim to open up this black box and examine the political processes of the labour process, specifically in emergent forms of labour. It will proceed as follows. First, I examine Marx's initial investigation of the labour process 'independently of the particular form it assumes under given social conditions.'[1] Second, I examine the basic characteristics of the capitalist labour process and define its key features. Third, I proceed to examine the character of the labour process in the contemporary historical conjunction of capitalism by deploying an analysis of the labour process in two kinds of work: front-line call centre work and the work of advertising creatives.

I have chosen to do this wide-ranging analysis of variety of qualitative research into these forms of labour because it offers a far greater magnitude and range of data in comparison with conducting my own fieldwork. Furthermore, it also gives me further insight into the way that the concepts of aesthetic labour, emotional labour, and affective/immaterial labour} biopolitical production are operationalised by researchers in the field. My analyses of these two concrete forms of labour serve as illustrations of the emergent forms of labour that have been described by the concepts of aesthetic labour, emotional labour and affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production. I have chosen these two concrete forms of labour for three reasons. First, they each exhibit various qualities that are explored in the conceptual field. Advertising creative work is particularly co-ordinate to the post-*operaisti* concept of affective labour and displays elements of Hochschild's emotional labour in that it requires the formative shaping of consumers' emotional selves. The full suite of this conceptual field has

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 173

been deployed to understand call-centre work. Contributions to call centre research have emerged from aesthetic labour studies, emotional labour, and the post-*operaisti* formulations.[1] Second, therefore these forms of labour are sites for a theoretical-empirical examination of the contributions and lacunae presented by the conceptual field, as discussed in chapters two and three. Third, these forms of labour are sites for the examination of theories of the labour process under capitalism in light of the post-*operaisti* arguments that these kinds of labour process produce anticapitalist praxis as an immanent condition of its organisation. As such, these illustrative examples offer a laboratory for the examination of the contending theories of the labour process in both capitalism and in its contemporary conjunction.

I analyse theories of the labour process in combination and my examination of these concrete forms of labour by means of a dialectical materialist analysis of the labour process, an immanent critique of research on concrete forms of emergent labour, and deploy a conceptual-analytical development of Hochschild's identification of the instrumentalisation of feeling. My findings challenge the revolutionary character of the politics asserted by the post-*operaisti* and the Strathclyde Group's failure to consider the politics that emerge from capitalist control over the labour process

4.2. The Labour Process

In the first section of chapter VII of Capital volume I, *The Labour Process* or *The Production of Use-Values*, Marx states that all labour processes are constituted by three elementary factors; first, 'the personal activity of man,' second, 'the subject of that work,' i.e., the object of the labour process, and third, 'its instruments.' [2] To recall the dialectical method of abstraction, when we think of work at level five of historical generality – that which is common to humans – the labour process in general is constituted and set into motion by the activity of the person who has conceived of and is executing the work. This elementary character of activity within the labour process is intimately connected to Marx's ontological theory; these elements constitute the mediation of the relation between humanity and nature. Its character as mediating activity is therefore intimately connected to how Marx 'presupposes

[1] Vandana Nath. 'Aesthetic and emotional labour through stigma: national identity management and racial abuse in offshored Indian call centres', *Work, Employment and Society* 25:4 (2011). 709-725.; Sarah Jenkins, Rick Delbridge and Ashley Roberts. 'Emotional Management in a Mass Customised Call Centre: Examining Skill and Knowledgability in Interactive Service Work', *Work, Employment and Society* 24:3 (2010). 546-564.; Enda Brophy. 'The subterranean stream: Communicative capitalism and call centre labour', *Ephemera* 10:3-4 (2010). 470-483.

[2] Marx *Capital vol. I* 174

labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human.'[1] The labour activity of humans is similar to that of animals, of course. A human is an animal, distinctions being both a product of evolution and a product of the character of the interactions that humans instigate when they work. Notwithstanding, a human is an animal and we see that all animals interact with the objective world in order to provide for needs. But, as Braverman points out, it is not the similar characteristics of human and non-human activity that are important; it is the differences between human and non-human activity that illuminate the important characteristics of work. 'Human work,' Braverman states, 'is conscious and purposive… In human work...the directing mechanism is the *power of conceptual thought.*'[2] The distinctively human character of the labour process reveals itself in that 'at the end of every labour process we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer.'[3] It is important to note here in this description of the elementary factors of the labour process that the consciousness which precedes activity is an intrinsic part of the activity itself. Therefore, when considered at this level of historical abstraction, all work is the activity of imagination and all work is constituted by these three elementary factors: the object of work, the instrument of work, and work activity.

Work must be work upon *something*, that is, on an object. According to Marx, human work is the interaction between humans and nature 'in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants.'[4] Thus the object of the labour process is, in the most general terms, a production of nature. The object of a labour process may also be the product of a previous labour process itself and thereby becomes what Marx calls 'raw material' when it is subject to labour activity, i.e., when it becomes an object of the labour process.[5]

Instruments of labour are most commonly regarded as objects of previous labour processes that have been produced for the purpose of formatively shaping other objects. More generally, as Marx states, 'an instrument of labour is a thing, or a complex of things, which the labourer interposes between himself and the subject of his labour.'[6] Thus, an instrument can be an object that is simply separated from nature in order to produce a use-value, for example a piece of flint separated from its rock and deployed together with dried bracken, separated from the soil to serve as an object, to produce a flame. Or, an instrument can be the subject of labour from a previous labour process. If, for example, a flint is honed to produce a sharp

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 174
[2] Harry Braverman. *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century.* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998). 32. Emphasis in original.
[3] Marx *Capital vol. I* 174
[4] Marx *Capital vol. I* 174
[5] Marx *Capital vol. I* 174
[6] Marx *Capital vol. I* 174

edge with the aim of being deployed as a cutting tool it serves first as the object of the labour process and subsequently, when used to cut, serves as the instrument of the labour process. Furthermore, and importantly for my discussions in later chapters, Marx's conceptualisation of the instrument of the labour process contains within it the possibility that the body of the worker can be the instruments of labour, albeit in a limited way such as when 'a man's own limbs serve as the instruments of his labour.'[1]

Thus, in its most general form, considered independently of particular historical conditions, the labour process is activity that interposes instruments of labour between itself and its object, separating the object from its 'immediate connexion' with its environment by effecting an alteration upon it.[2] Before I move on to discussion of the labour process under capitalism it is worth quoting Marx at length here in order to indicate the importance of the mediation of the relationship between humanity and nature through work:

> '*The labour process, resolved as above into its simple elementary factors, is human action with a view to the production of use-values; it is the necessary condition for effecting exchange of matter between man and nature; it is the everlasting Nature-imposed condition of human existence and therefore is independent of every social phase of that existence, or rather, is common to every such phase.*'[3]

These elementary factors of the labour process are the basic elements of every labour process that has ever been or will ever be enacted. As such, as well as explaining what work is, Marx's theory of the elementary factors of work also defines what work is. It is through the co-operation of these elements, through work, that humans are able to interact with the objective world in a sensuous, practical way.

4.3. The Labour Process under Capitalism

To approach an introduction to the capitalist labour process, I undertake a series of conceptual investigations. The capitalist mode of production did not emerge as a fixed, discrete arrangement of processes – nor does it have this fixed and discrete character – but rather the history of capitalism is one of a continual process of development that is determinant of and

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 175
[2] Marx *Capital vol. I* 174
[3] Marx *Capital vol. I* 179

determined by political, social, economic, and ideological forces. This character of flux and multi-dimensionality notwithstanding, there are key, fundamental, definitive features of the organisation of production during the last five hundred years or so that clearly demarcate this period as "capitalism". I make this rather banal point for three reasons. First, these fundamental features must be examined if an adequate account of the production of politics in the capitalist labour process is to be given. Second, I go on to argue from this rather banal point that post-*operaisti* claims about the organisation of work today are not simply an assessment that we are living in the times of exodus from capital but that their claims amount to an argument that this is no longer capitalism. Finally, following from the identification of these key features of capitalism I will use them as a yardstick for the empirical examination of advertising creative work and front-line call centre work, of course with these post-*operaisti* claims in mind.

Marx foregrounds his investigation of the production of surplus-value under capitalism with the description of 'two characteristic phenomena' of the capitalist labour process. First, the capitalist controls the three elementary factors of the labour process. Labour activity is set by and disciplined by the capitalist, the capitalist takes care that instruments of labour and raw materials are 'used with intelligence', and the object of labour is produced according to the intended aim of the capitalist.[1] Thus, there is a separation between the conception and execution functions of the labour process and an alteration in the character of work; production is constituted by a class who control the conception function of work and a class who execute the work.[2] Of course, the history of capitalism is also a history in which the dominant class has appropriated the technical knowledge of producers; that is, the ability to conceive of the form of production of a particular use-value is a product of the capitalist appropriation of knowledges. As such, the conception/execution separation in the capitalist division of labour is not simply a question of the fragmentation of production and attendant deskilling but is also the product of the reification of workers' knowledge in machines and in production processes. Second, the product of the labour process is the property of the capitalist.[3] It is important to acknowledge the translation of these two characteristic phenomena from the organisation of production in general 'class-society' to the character of the organisation of production in capitalism. As Ollman argues, the division of labour and private property are both conditions of class-society.[4] Feudalist and slave-based modes of production do not preclude the separation of the conception and execution functions of work

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 180
[2] Braverman *Labor and Monopoly Capital* 35
[3] Marx *Capital vol. I* 180
[4] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 89

or the propriety of the object of work by someone other than the worker. However, these relations under capitalism, as opposed to general class-society, bear three important and distinctive features. The worker is separated from the means of subsistence, labour-power is freed from legal constraints on its availability for sale and purchase, and the purpose of labour is transformed from being concerned with the production of use-values to being concerned with the production of exchange-values and the exploitation of surplus-value.[1] Thus the capitalist controls the elementary factors of the labour process and the political functions that reproduce this mode of the organisation of the production of value are contained within this organisation itself. It is fundamental to the project of understanding the politics of the labour process under capitalism to investigate further the consequences of these conditions. That is, how exactly do they help define the labour process under capitalism and, more importantly, how does the persistence of these conditions bear upon post-*operaisti* and other cognitive capitalism theories on the autonomy of labour from capital?

To begin this examination, it is important first to sketch out the meaning of the concept of 'labour-power'. Although Marx and Engels make a distinction between *work* and *labour* – work being concrete activity toward the production of use-values and labour being abstract activity toward the production of exchange-value – no such distinction is made in terms of the concept of labour-power. Labour-power is considered to be the same when regarded independently of particular social forms. Marx states that labour-power is simply 'the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises when he produces a use-value of any description.'[2] As such, labour-power is a key concept in understanding Marx's ontological theory and, ultimately, in understanding why labour under capitalism constitutes a process of alienation.[3] The fundamental characteristics of labour under capitalism – the separation of the worker from the means of subsistence; the lifting of legal constraints on the sale and purchase of labour-power; the transformation of the purpose of labour from having a concern with the production of use-values to being concerned with the production of exchange-values; capitalist control of the elementary factors of the labour process; and the attendant alienation of the worker from the object of labour – are not enacted by some agency, nor are they a product of a linear connection of cause and effect (this, then this, then this). Each condition produces the conditions for the other – these conditions ontologically entail one another – and each condition is possible and is facilitated

[1] Braverman *Labor and Monopoly Capital* 35-6
[2] Marx *Capital vol. I* 164
[3] Marx *Capital vol. I* 179

because of the capacity of labour-power to produce more than it needs for its own reproduction.

Capital is expanded by the accumulation of surplus-value. As Marx demonstrates in his labour theory of value, the potential inherent in labour-power is simultaneously the possibility of surplus-value. The condition of this possibility is what Gayatri Spivak calls the 'irreducible structural super-adequation' of the subject.[1] Labour-power has a peculiar use-value: it is the potential to create use-values. More importantly for my present concern with the connections between the fundamental characteristics of labour under capitalism, labour-power has the capacity to create a greater magnitude of use-values than it itself requires for its own reproduction. Thus this connection between the irreducible structural super-adequation of the subject and the integration of political relations of subordination and domination within the labour process itself is intimately connected with Marx's theory on the transformation of *quantity* into *quality*.[2] Marx states that 'the accumulation of capital pre-supposes surplus-value.'[3] The pre-supposition of surplus-value implies that these three characteristics of capitalism are latent in the condition of the accumulation of surplus that persists in previous class-based epochs; the exploitation of surplus-value is contingent on these three fundamental characteristics of labour under capitalism and the reciprocal relationality that ties them together. Marx calls this pre-capitalist accumulation of surplus 'primitive accumulation,' the detailed processes of which I do not wish to discuss at length.[4] Suffice to say; the increase of values possessed by owners of means of production creates the conditions for the transformation of this surplus into the universal medium of exchange, money, which thereby generates the means so that subsistence is achieved by the purchase of the labour-power of 'free labourers' and the attendant exploitation of the surplus-value they produce.[5] Thus the characteristic features, or rather *qualities*, of labour under capitalism are already in place prior to capitalism, but not as a great magnitude, or rather not as a *quantity*. It is with these features in place that the 'historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production' emerges.[6] Capital accumulation begins with the incomplete separation of the producing class from the means of production alongside which partial legal and extra-legal conditions for the

[1] Gayatri Spivak, 'Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value' in *In Other Worlds.* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006). 216
[2] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 96-7
[3] Marx *Capital vol. I* 667
[4] See Marx *Capital vol. I* 667-725 and also Silvia Federici. *Caliban and the Witch*. (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2004) for analyses on the transition to capitalism from the perspective of women, bodies and reproduction and David McNally. *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism*. (Leiden: Brill, 2011) for discussions on this transition from the perspective of the body.
[5] Marx *Capital vol. I* 668
[6] Marx *Capital vol. I* 668

employment of wage-labour pertain and from which conditions the purpose of labour becomes concerned with the production of exchange-values. The greater the degree to which producers are separated from the means of subsistence, the greater the degree to which the barriers that prevent the purchase and sale of labour-power must be lifted, for the sale of labour-power has *become* the means of subsistence and labour-power has become variable capital. Quantity is transformed into quality; conditions latent in the feudalist organisation of production emerge in such *quantities* as to indicate a transformation of *quality*, i.e., a transformation of the mode of production.

Thus, labour-power under capitalism becomes something different yet remains the same. Labour-power still refers to the ability to produce use-values, but in its social form under capitalism it is bought and sold as a commodity for the purpose of producing value. Not only this, but labour-power *must* be bought and sold, for the worker has been separated from the means of subsistence. I shall treat this as the first political element of the labour process under capitalism because it is the condition in which the worker finds themselves as they enter the labour process: the worker is a wage-labourer by virtue of the condition that they do not own means of production. As such, workers are compelled to sell their labour-power and enter into the capitalist organisation of production. Thus the politics of work precedes any discussion of the division of labour or managerial control or the worker's autonomy over work tasks, etc.; it begins at the point at which the social form of capitalism is organised such that the worker's subsistence is contingent upon the sale and purchase of labour-power. To reiterate, as Marx states in *The Paris Manuscripts*, 'labour is...not voluntary, but coerced; it is *forced labour*.'[1]

Labour is forced because the worker is compelled to sell their labour-power. That is, the worker under capitalism must exchange the rights over the use-value of their labour-power for a wage. The liberal critique of this assessment is recourse to notions of, as Marx puts it, 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham.'[2] The elements of Adam Smith's political economy have been taken up by relatively contemporary social theorists such as Daniel Bell and Richard Florida, who emphasise a purported aspect of liberation to the development of capitalism and the concomitant appearance of the knowledge worker and the so-called 'creative class.'[3] These kinds of theories proceed from the drastically misplaced assumption that there is a principle of justice inherent in the market for labour-power based on a belief that both buyer and seller of labour-power enter into the market as equals, each having a right

[1] Marx *1844* 74. Emphasis in original.
[2] Marx *Capital vol. I* 172
[3] Bell *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*; Richard Florida. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*. (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

to their own property and have freely struck a bargain for the exchange of their property. The rejoinder to this one-dimensional understanding, derived as it is from abstract and transcendent norms, has hitherto been presented. As demonstrated by the analysis of the five key features of labour under capitalism – the separation of the worker from the means of production; the production of the legal, cultural and political environment for sale and purchase of labour-power; and the transformation of the purpose of labour from the production of use-values to the production of exchange-values; capitalist control of the elementary factors of the labour process; and the alienation of the worker from the object of labour – there is no freedom or choice exercised in the process of exchange. A semblance of freedom appears to be situated in the hands of the capitalist. However, the capitalist must purchase labour-power or else they would be reduced to the status of the worker; the capitalist has the freedom to sit on their capital unused but only for as long as their capital will last to provide for their subsistence. The capital relation is, in one aspect, money; under capitalism money is the sole means for the necessaries of life. The worker must sell their only property, their labour-power, as they have no means of production of their own and this sale is the only legitimate means by which they can acquire money; subsistence, biological life itself, comes to depend on the sale of their labour-power. As such, there is no equality. As Marx comments on the capitalist and the worker as they commence to begin the process of production: 'one [strides in front] with an air of importance, smirking, intent on business; the other timid and holding back, like one who is bringing his hide to market and has nothing to expect but – a hiding.'[1] The capitalist striding forward, because the worker has been employed so as to expand their capital; they have done a good deal... The worker timid, for they have sold the rights to the use of their body to someone else.[2]

The character of the organisation of the labour process is central to the processes of reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Understanding this forced character of the wage-exchange is critical to the project of understanding the politics of the labour process under capitalism. Burawoy demonstrates this through his deployment of an expansive 'relational notion' of the labour process. According to the relational notion, the labour process is not simply a technical apparatus for the production of value but is the most fundamental aspect of the organisation of 'the social relations into which men and women enter in order to produce useful things.'[3] Burawoy argues that the labour process under capitalism is illustrative of a greater political character to the organisation of productive activity when

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 172
[2] Braverman *Labor and Monopoly Capital* 36
[3] Michael Burawoy. *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes under Capitalism and Socialism.* (London: Verso, 1985). 14, 13.

compared to previous economic epochs. Of fundamental importance here, this apparatus of productive relations pertains within the structure or specific organisation of relations that reproduces itself. In capitalism, the labour process is central to this process of reproduction.[1] The capitalist mode of production, unlike the feudalist mode of production, reproduces itself by virtue of the character of the organisation of the elements of production. Burawoy calls these elements the 'relations-in-production.'[2] The term describes the form of the relations that pertain between producers and nature when producers work, i.e., when people interact with the objective world, nature, in order to produce a use-value, and thus describes the general character or form of productive activity, i.e., the labour process. The category of 'relations-in-production' pertains independently of any particular form of social organisation; all modes of production are constituted, in part, by relations-in-production. In contrast to feudalism, Burawoy argues, in which surplus and compulsion is obtained and secured through political and ideological means, under capitalism the mechanisms for securing surplus-value and for compelling the worker to submit to the wage are contained within the economic organisation of production. Burawoy states that unlike in prior modes of production, in capitalism there is no separation in time and space between necessary labour and surplus labour. Furthermore, workers cannot set the means of production into motion autonomously under capitalism; property relations always intervene against this. As a result of the relations between these features, which compose the means by which surplus-value is 'obscured and secured,' compulsion, and therefore the reproduction of the organisation of production, is exerted by economic mechanisms – the worker either submits to the discipline of the wage or starves.[3]

These fundamental features of the capitalist labour process and the processes of the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production are the conditions in which the worker finds him and herself as they enter and re-enter the labour process under capitalism. They contrast starkly with the images of wage-labourers engaged in processes of 'self-valorisation' depicted by post-*operaismo* and cognitive capitalism theories.[4] Post-*operaismo* analyses therefore indicate that a drastic alteration in the mechanisms for exploiting surplus-value, i.e., in the labour process, must indeed have taken place over the last four decades or so. As such, I argue that the post-*operaismo* characterisation of the labour process significantly redraws the five key characteristics of the capitalist labour process, particularly the separation of the worker

[1] Burawoy *The Politics of Production* 30-2
[2] Burawoy *Politics of Production* 29
[3] Burawoy *Politics of Production* 31. On this point, I note that non-wage based means of subsistence such as theft and begging are entered into but also note that these non-wage based means are prohibited by legal structures, cultural and community standards, etc.
[4] Toni Negri. 'Domination and Sabotage' in Sylvere Lotringer and Christian Marazzi (eds) *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics.* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1980). 62-71.

from the means of production; the transformation of the purpose of labour from the production of use-values to the production of exchange-values; capitalist control of the elementary factors of the labour process; and the worker's alienation of the object of labour. Thus transformations in the form of labour, they maintain, mean that this is no longer capitalism but is a hybrid form of capitalism and 'elementary communism.'[1]

As noted in the previous chapter, Maurizio Lazzarato and Antonio Negri propose that 'work [today] is immediately something free and constructive' and that this growing tendency toward autonomy in work produces a radical, anticapitalist politics.[2] A common position across post-*operaismo* is that this third phase of capitalism is the phase from which the mode of production will be transformed into communism. To recall from chapter two, immaterial labour is the labour of knowledge, communication, and the production and manipulation of symbols and affects.[3] What is immaterial about immaterial labour, they caution, is not the labour itself but rather what it produces, and that is primarily cooperation. The increasingly communicational character of economic-value production, they argue, means that technical mechanisms of control have become fetters that obstruct cooperation and therefore obstruct the production of economic-value and the exploitation of surplus-value. That is, the autonomous organisation of cooperation by direct producers has become the means by which the optimum magnitude of economic value is produced and the maximum amount of surplus-value is exploited. As a result, the post-*operaisti* argue, 'labour tends to be increasingly autonomous from capitalist command.'[4] Therefore, they assert, this tendency for the auto-production of cooperation represents the reappropriation of the locus of cognitive control over the labour process by the worker. That is, the worker has the autonomy to control his or her own cognitive processes as they work, making their own decisions regarding the most appropriate way to conduct their labour in cooperation with their fellow workers. Thus, post-*operaismo* theories are a series of arguments which propose that the purpose of labour has shifted from a concern with the production of exchange-value to a concern with the autonomous production of cooperation.

These elements of post-*operaismo* theories pose the worker, not the capitalist, as in control of the elementary factors of the labour process. They argue that the production of economic value is increasingly contingent upon the production of affective relationships.[5] Value production is impeded by capital's attempt to control labour activity and there exists,

[1] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 294
[2] Cf. Gorz *Reclaiming Work* 40
[3] Hardt and Negri *Empire* 29; Lazzarato 'Immaterial Labor' 137
[4] Hardt and Negri *Commonwealth.* 173
[5] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 115

therefore, a structural imperative that results in a politics of work in which capital must foster a discretionary character to workers' exercise of their linguistic, cognitive, emotional and affective capacities in work. The post-*operaisti* call this exercise of capacities "autonomy". Negri argues that 'only the creativity of labour...is commensurate with the dimension of value' and therefore the workers are means of production in themselves.[1] Thus they reframe the idea that the worker is *separated* from the means of production as central to the politics of work proposed by the post-*operaisti*. With their emphasis on the worker as a means of production in his or herself, I argue that post-*operaismo* is at best unconcerned with capitalist control of fixed capital and at worst theorises the existence of capitalist control away. In so doing they propose that the revolutionary class is no longer the proletariat but is the 'Multitude' that links and decouples immaterial labourers, New Social Movements and anti-state/anti-capitalist praxis.

Consequently, they argue that the potential for revolutionary praxis is attendant to changes in labour processes and thus they centre the revolutionary potential of the Multitude within the (changing) processes of production. But the labour/capital antagonism is presented as a struggle over activity in which the worker, as a means of production engaged in a labour process over which he and she has control over its elementary factors, is capable of an exodus from capital.[2] The unity of these themes in post-*operaismo* – the impossibility of capitalist control of labour, the transformation of the meaning of labour and the creativity of labour as a making of labour-power as a means of production in itself – is thereby not considered as being an 'instrumentalisation' of the body by capital, but is rather the autonomous exercise of the body's capacities in labour activity under capitalism. The worker's appropriation of cognitive control over their own labour process, the post-*operaisti* argue, means that labour under capitalism is more and more becoming a means for – and they use Marx's words – 'the free development of individualities.'[3] This, they say, is the time of the general intellect and the *kairos* of the Multitude.[4] They argue that this tendency toward the autonomy of labour and the production of cooperation is immanent in the organisation of contemporary capitalism; autonomy is a direct product of the labour process and therefore, as noted by Alberto Toscano, they claim that society has become 'a common field of cooperation – a field which is, be it virtually, communist.'[5] As such, the post-*operaisti* characterisation of work in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism represents a direct challenge to the key features of

[1] Negri. 'Twenty Theses on Marx' 152.
[2] Paolo Virno. 'Virtuosity and Revolution: The Political Theory of Exodus' in Paulo Virno and Michael Hardt (eds.) *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*. (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1996).
[3] Marx *Grundrisse* 699 and 706.
[4] Hardt and Negri deploy the Greek *καιρός*, meaning "weather/season/days". *Commonwealth* 165
[5] Toscano 'Vital Strategies' 74

labour under capitalism. With this in mind, I examine the labour processes of two concrete forms of work: advertising 'creative' work and call centre work.

4.4. The labour process in concrete emergent forms of labour

I select these two forms of emergent labour not with a notion of the possibility for the generalisation of the conclusions but as illustrative examples of labour processes which bear many of the qualities of the concepts of labour discussed in chapter two. These concepts are broadly recognised as bearing something distinctively post-industrial and as being indicative of a transition from industrial or monopoly capitalism. As such, my examination of these forms of labour proceeds as a fundamental part of my conceptual investigations of chapter two in the sense that it provides an empirical focal point to my theoretical analyses above. I also select these concrete forms of labour because they appear to satisfy key characteristics of post-*operaismo* theories on the purported transformations of labour under capitalism. Work in the advertising industry has the potential to demonstrate this new character because the creativity of advertising labour is central to the production of value in this branch of industry. The organisation of cooperation is a key focus in my discussion of advertising creative work. As such, these empirical investigations address the methodological lack in post-*operaisti* thought and offer a landscape in which to examine their theories. I argue against post-*operaismo* and find that by following the worker and the capitalist into the hidden abode of so-called immaterial production, we see that the organisation of autonomy in work does not have such an emancipatory character. There is little discrete work on call centres that has come from approaches that could be grouped together in terms of their focus on 'cognitive capitalism.' The work of Enda Brophy is an exception. He argues that call centre work is accounted for in the post-*operaismo* concepts immaterial/affective labour}biopolitical production.[1] It is nonetheless important to recognise that call centre work is placed in the dark side of Bifo Berardi's dualism – to take this dualism uncritically for the moment – as discussed in chapter three: call centres workers are not "brain workers", who perform 'properly cognitive labour', they are "chain workers", who do cognitive labour of a 'purely applicative kind.'[2] Nonetheless, although call centre workers are not at the forefront of Bifo's vanguard 'cognitariat', they are emblematic of the purportedly immanent tendency towards affective production; as Brophy argues, 'call centre work [is] a classic example of what Virno

[1] Enda Brophy. 'Language put to Work: Cognitive capitalism, Call Center Labor, and Worker Inquiry', *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (2011). 410-415.
[2] Berardi *The Soul at Work* 87

has called "the production of communication by means of communication" that marks capital's new phase.'[1]

The discussion of these two concrete forms of work will proceed in part as an interrogation of these purported features of the contemporary conjunction of capitalism, in part as an interrogation of the fundamental characteristics of the labour process under capitalism as argued by Braverman, Burawoy and Marx, and in part as an examination of the post-*operaisti* reconfiguration of these characteristics. They also provide an empirical jumping-off point for my positive critique of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism that proceeds in the final chapters. I analyse the labour processes of advertising creative work and call centre work with reference to their elementary factors, as discussed earlier in this chapter. In doing so, the analysis seeks to address the underlying or obscure structure of these labour processes in such a way as to reveal the politics and the power relations that pertain within them.

4.4.1. Advertising 'creatives'

In this discussion I delve into the politics that organise and are reproduced by the labour processes of workers in the field of advertising production. I undertake this examination for three reasons. First, it is in part a mode of critique of the post-*operaismo* assertions on the politics of a changing landscape of labour with reference to ethnographic and interview data on the labour processes and power relations in the production of advertising. I demonstrate that the politics proposed by many of the post-*operaismo* school are both empirically and theoretically naive. I identify the politics that is attendant to the division of productive tasks in the production of advertising specifically from the perspective of creative workers. Second, I engage in this examination in part to situate the landscape of labour that I have examined so far only conceptually and theoretically in an empirical context. Third, my analysis here forms part of the empirical background for the conceptual and theoretical work that is to follow. Why follow the advertising creative worker and the capitalist into the hidden abode of production? Surely, as the Frankfurt School point out, the political content of advertising production is most pernicious as it stalks the sphere of exchange in its commodity-form.[2] That is, the politics of advertising is most clear when we see advertising as objects that articulate capitalistic prescriptions for modes of life. In this discussion, however, I argue that the advertising artefact, the commodity that emblazons billboards, sidebars, bus stops and

[1] Brophy 'Language put to Work 412; Virno *A Grammar of the Multitude* 56
[2] Particularly Theodor W. Adorno. *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture.* (Routledge: London, 2001).

television sets, is actually the product of the work that creative workers' do on their own bodies and is a medium through which the bodies of consumers are transformed.

The majority of advertising creative labour takes place in small-medium enterprises and the general organisation of the labour process in this form of the industry will be the focus of my examination. In the process of production in an advertising agency there are three key divisions in the allocation of labour tasks: creatives, account management, and the third, becoming more common in the 1970s and now ubiquitous, planning. In examining these labour processes of advertising production, I focus on the creative workers, but do so in the context of an examination of how account management and planning facilitate or impede the potential for creative autonomy that is so central post-*operaismo* theories. Creatives always work in teams comprising at least one copywriter and an art director, and I restrict my analysis here to two-person creative teams, in part because the narrowing of labour tasks to two workers makes the analysis simpler but also because the vast majority of the research on advertising creatives does the same.

Creatives are central to vernacular understandings of advertising production and there is a historical justification for this. In the early days of the advertising industry one person would be responsible for all facets of production and their skills would tend to the creative aspect.[1] Creative advertising work begins within the bounds of the client 'brief', which is a summary of the client's aims and requirements for the advertising product. The client and the account manager define the brief, which in turn sets boundaries for the creative product. The brief may also be laden with a set of political and moral values. For example, many advertisers are keen to include only certain models of the family or the worker or the consumer in their advertising. Furthermore, the extent of sophistication of the brief varies from agency to agency, with one copywriter explaining that the labour process as described by the brief is 'all fairly well sorted, exactly what they want before we even see it: at least it should be... they're good like that here,' while another describes their activity as a continual search for 'some element of originality.'[2]

The usual process from which the finished advertising product emerges follows a generic model that looks something like this: (i.) The client and the account manager negotiate the brief. (ii.) An initial product is produced by the creative team in accordance with the aims

[1] Sean Brierley. *The Advertising Handbook, 2nd Edition.* (London: Routledge, 2002). 61-62.
[2] Copywriter in Chris Hackley. 'Silent Running: Tacit, Discursive and Psychological Aspects of Management in a Top UK Advertising Agency.' *British Journal of Advertising.* 11: (2000). 249; Copywriter in Aiden Kelly, Katrina Lawlor and Stephanie O'Donohoe. 'Encoding Advertisements': The Creative Perspective.' *Journal of Marketing Management* 21: (2005). 515.

defined in the brief. (iii.) The creatives, account manager and the planner discuss the creative product with reference to the brief, the product advertised, and the client. (iv.) The account manager presents the product to the client (this step may itself involve several negotiations moving up the client's own internal company hierarchy). (v.) The creatives revise the product in accordance with issues arising from step (iv.). (vi.) Consumer research is conducted and analysed by the planner. (vii.) This research is presented to client by the account manager and the planner. (viii.) The product is revised by the creatives. (ix.) The product is released.[1] At any point in this sequence of productive tasks a "back to the drawing board" moment may be instigated, usually by the client, and the process begins again. All of these stages of production have been described by creatives as a "battle" and a "struggle" because 'other people have other priorities.'[2] The creatives describe their own priorities as the production of 'the best advertising [which] touches people [...and...] is based on the truth', and as trying in their work 'to get that insight, that reason to believe.'[3] Contrarily, the account manager's key concern is to keep production to deadline and cost and to keep the client happy, while the planner's key concern is the production and maintenance of sufficiently accurate systems of consumer research with which to placate and reassure the client, to manage their expectations and retain their long-term business.

The activity of the labour process for creative advertising workers is the activity of imagination and the communication of the products of this imagination using words, hands, pens and pencils, etc. As such, these mechanisms for the transferring of activity to the object – hands, pens, pencils, etc. – appear as the instruments of labour. This process is undertaken within a matrix of cultural referents, such as film, TV, music and art, which the creative worker has brought together within their own imagination. Sasser and Koslow argue that the worker's process of producing advertising proceeds from this broad-range of cultural referents through a two-step 'filtering' process. The first stage is the development of a novel idea; the second is the subsequent integration and elaboration of that idea within a problem-solving framework.[4] This process almost always results in a tension between the idea and the criteria that make up the problem-solving framework, thus the two-step process is repeated and discussed until the creatives are themselves satisfied with the product. The problem-solving

[1] Elizabeth C. Hirschmann. 'Role-Based Models of Advertising Creation and Production.' *Journal of Advertising* 18:4 (1989). 44-47.; John Josling. 'The Advertising Agency' in Norman A. Hart (ed.) *The Practice of Advertising*. (Oxford: Heinemann, 1990). 42-44.
[2] Copywriter in Kelly, Lawler, and O'Donohoe 'Encoding Advertisements' 515
[3] Copywriter in Chris Hackley and Arthur J. Kover. 'The trouble with creatives: negotiating creative identity in advertising agencies.' *International Journal of Advertising* 26:1 (2007). 69.
[4] Sheila L. Sasser and Scott Koslow. 'Desperately Seeking Advertising Creativity: Engaging an Imaginative "3Ps" research agenda.' *Journal of Advertising* 37:4 (2008). 13.

framework that forms the criteria of value for the product is implied by the client brief, although this framework is formulated by the workers themselves. Therefore, although there is a semblance of autonomy to this labour activity it is impossible to open the discussion about the work of creatives without also coming face-to-face with an apparent fetter on autonomy – clients, who 'are the ones in control...; they're the ones who say yes or no.'[1] Notwithstanding, creatives describe their work as one in which they try to cover the 'mandatories' of the client brief but 'still try to do it [their] way,' indicating a process of active subversion of this fetter that is undertaken with some success.[2] However, a further problem emerges from the analysis of the creative labour process in terms of autonomy, even when we consider the creative labour process in isolation.

Cooperation between creatives is a requirement that accords to a technical division of labour that is set by capital. Copywriter and art director teams are not an immanent production of their labour processes; they do not arise from an autonomous character of the production of cooperation but are brought together at the site of production by the purchaser of their labour-power. However, capital's initial organisation of cooperation in this case does not preclude the possibility that cooperation is maintained and reproduced as an immanent product of the labour process, or that cooperative networks in this industry have not arisen autonomously from the strictures of the model of the technical division of labour of advertising production. Therefore we must delve deeper into the hidden abode of this site of apparently immaterial production and observe the relation between the workers and the object of their labour.

The object of the labour process is not merely billboard posters, magazine pages and TV clips. The object of creative advertising work is the minds of others. Work is activity with the intended aim of the production of use-values; the use-value of advertising is that it is a medium by which other commodities can come to be exchanged for money which is then transformed into capital. Of course, the object produced may have a use-value as an aesthetic artefact for example, but as advertising it is a commodity; it has both a use-value and an exchange-value. In its commodity form, its use-value is its ability to realise exchange-values; this is the use-value to be produced by the labour-power for which capital makes the wage-labour exchange.[3] Importantly for this discussion, there are two relevant "moments" in the production of advertising. The first moment is an exchange which occurs between the agency and the client. The client exchanges money for the object thereby realising the exchange-

[1] Copywriter in Kelly, Lawler, and O'Donohoe. 'Encoding Advertisements' 520
[2] Copywriter cf. Hirschmann. 'Role-Based Models of Advertising Creation and Production' 46
[3] Jim Kincaid. 'Production v. Realisation: A Critique of Fine and Saad-Filho on Value Theory' *Historical Materialism* 15: (2007). 137-165.

value of the *advertising* product, i.e., the labour time of the advertising workers. The second moment of advertising occurs when a desire for an object, i.e., the object presented in the advertising, is created. Desire produces the subject and is itself produced as a consequence of the act of consuming the advertising. Thus, the conditions for the realisation of the exchange-value of the *advertised* product, i.e., the labour time of the workers who produce the commodity that is being advertised, are created. The first moment, the exchange between client and agency, is predicated on the potential for the object to create the second moment: the production of desire. It immediately becomes apparent then that the object of advertising work is the consumer, or rather the potential consumer who will, upon consuming the advertisement, go to market and exchange money for the commodity showcased.

The imagination of creative workers is the instrument of labour and this imagination is formatively shaped – its qualitative character, its content, the way it operates and the form and function of the ideas it produced – within the technical division of labour between creatives, planners and account managers, within the continuous elements of capitalist power relations of production and through the repeated interaction between the subject and the object; the subject being the worker him or herself and their instrumentalisation of their imaginative capacities and the object being both the media that is produced and the consumers of that media. The distinction between labour activity as imagination and instruments as inorganic objects – that material used to communicate the products of imagination as words and images – derives from a one-dimensional understanding of the surface appearance of the labour process of advertising creatives. Desire is the object of advertising creative work, and the imaginations of creative workers are deployed as an instrument for the formative shaping of these desires. Several factors other than the desire to create something 'entertaining...thrilling [and] compelling' inform how creatives put together an appropriate problem-solving framework within which to deploy their imaginations as an instrument.[1] These other factors emerge from the power relations under which creative work is subsumed, thus my analysis returns to the question of cooperation.

To return from this point to the character of the relationship between creatives, account managers and planners, rather than being constituted by a network of self-produced autonomous cooperation, advertising production is actually a site in which creatives also make their colleagues, and the client, the object of work. Rather than being a hive of cooperation, the advertising agency is an arena of conflict between people who draw on different criteria for assessing the use-value of the creative product. A further conflict

[1] Copywriter in Hirschmann 'Role-Based Models of Advertising Creation and Production.' 46

emerges from creatives' stated desire to not have to produce 'middle of the road stuff to keep everybody happy.'[1] These power relations are, from the perspective of the creatives, embodied by the account managers and planners and this embodiment of power contributes to the character of the problem-solving framework that creatives produce, and through which creatives come to alienate the products of their imagination as something tangible. Importantly, the key workers in the production of advertising, the creatives, the account executives, and the planners, all describe themselves as having a degree of control over the product, not always in accord with one another.

Contrary to post-*operaisti* arguments that workers produce cooperation autonomously from capital, this examination demonstrates that a form of cooperative conflict is built-in to the technical division of labour in this specific branch of industry. The work tasks and aims of creatives, planners and account management are not organised within autonomous nodes of productive cooperation but are structured by capital, i.e., by management, in such a way as to demand cooperation, but the forum of cooperation is arranged so as to set different and competing priorities against one another. The power relations of advertising work are arranged in such a way as to impede too great an element of autonomy for any of the workers in each of these three technical divisions of labour, but to also facilitate limited amounts of autonomy and to create a competitive arena in which a product that meets a broad-range of value-producing criteria can be produced. The labour process of advertising does not demonstrate worker autonomy nor does it illustrate forms of cooperation that might be immanent to the labour process itself. On the contrary, the possibilities for 'self-valorisation' that Negri argues are fundamental to framing the politics of work in so-called cognitive capitalism are mere moments in the stricture of a technical division of labour, under constant siege by the requirements of the securing of surplus-value. This technical division of labour bears little difference to the organisation of work in a factory but for the requirement that the worker actively shapes their imagination in accordance with the capitalistic character of the use-value being produced, as opposed to the labour of the factory that *merely* ruins the mind by boring it into submission. The labour processes of workers in the advertising agency, that is, the organisation of the activity, instruments and subjects of work, is predesigned within a technical division of labour, which has a common form across the industry, and which imposes strict limits on the autonomy of any one worker or type of worker.

To capture some of the subjective element of work, this condition would also indicate that the labour-process undertaken by creatives is informed by their awareness of the priorities of

[1] Art director in Kelly, Lawler, and O'Donohoe 'Encoding Advertisements' 517

other workers, and of the client. The research on advertising agencies reports that creatives are keenly aware that planners, account managers, clients and more senior agency staff 'have the power to decide what counts as work.'[1] The activity of creative work is an internal negotiation of the creatives' priorities for the product *alongside* their perception of the priorities of those they work with and those of the client. This could be the setting of aesthetic, instrumental, moral, etc., priorities against commercial priorities. It is not for nothing that in many agencies the creatives divide themselves from "the suits" but there is also evidence of a self-internalisation of the suits' requirements.[2] In this way, creatives make their colleagues and the client the subject of work because it is colleagues and clients who decide whether the creative product has value or not.

To investigate the impact of these power relations upon any notion that the labour-process of the advertising creative is undertaken autonomously from capital, to any significant extent, the character of the formation of the problem-solving framework that creatives reportedly use to filter their ideas offers further insight. The activity of creatives is not a simple process of the integration of an idea into a problem-solving framework defined by the brief. It is important to recognise that the creatives' formulation of the problem-solving framework itself is a product of the politics of work. The politics of work has a bearing not only upon how we might consider cooperation in work but also on how we might think of the worker's subjectivity itself as subsumed under and distorted in accord with the requirements of the production of economic-value because advertising creative work is predicated on the instrumentalisation of imagination. It appears that the problem-solving framework through which the creatives filter their novel ideas and cultural referents is not merely informed by the brief but also by the creatives' own experience of the power relations of their workplace and their knowledge of what their colleagues might 'count as work'. This is a self-internalisation of the power relations created by the specific technical division of labour in each agency.

Sasser argues that the most effective utilisation of the two-step process of creative idea development is dependent upon two factors: 'disciplined training' and 'consistent practice.'[3] The notion of the instrumentalisation of imagination reveals a political character to the modes of thought that result from training and practice in the production of advertising products under capitalism and within these power-laden forms of the technical division of labour. As mentioned, the fabrication of creative advertising ideas requires the worker to draw together cultural referents within a problem-solving framework, that problem being "how do we sell

[1] Hackley 'The trouble with creatives' 73
[2] Creative in Hackley 'Silent Runnings' 249
[3] Sasser 'Desperately Seeking' 12

more cat-food/etc.?" In this way, despite protestations from some creatives that advertising is "bullshit", the content of creative thought is formed and continually practiced according to capitalist norms of consumption and with the aim – the intended aim of the labour process as designed by the capitalist – of expanding the system of needs.[1] Rather than presupposing an inherent value in the act of creativity, creativity must be examined in terms of its content and the power relations that surround its practice. The mere act of thinking in work should not be concretised as an example of autonomy but rather indicates that the relation between the power relations of work and the formative shaping of subjectivities must be interrogated. A pattern of conflictual cooperation amidst the instrumentalisation of imagination is at the centre of all of the examples of the technical division of labour that I have examined. This cooperation is a management construction, not one that is immanently produced as a result of the labour process, and the instrumentalisation of imagination is attendant to the relation between the forced character of labour and the vicissitudes of the labour market.

This analysis of the labour activity, the character of the instruments and the object of advertising creative work and the technical division of labour in the advertising industry demonstrates that post-*operaisti* notions of an autonomous labour process are unfounded, even in this industry that so values the creativity of living labour that Hardt, Negri, Lazzarato, *et al.*, eulogise. This notion of the instrumentalisation of imagination and the necessary formative shaping of this capacity in service of the production of value and surplus belies the post-*operaisti* theses on the immanent becoming of the autonomous labour process and on the immanent production of anticapitalist subjectivities.

4.4.2. Call centre work[2]

Call centres are important. They are important to the operation of the global economy because they perform essential functions in the national economies of global North-West and the BRIC countries by shaping labour markets and by connecting those economies to global capital.[3] More pertinently to my problematic, as Taylor *et al.* have discovered, call centres have historically been a site of production in which both Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and various management strategies and techniques have been deployed and

[1] Copywriter in Hackley and Kover. 'The trouble with creatives' 68
[2] This discussion builds on the analysis of Paul McFadden. 'The Production of Politics in the Call Centre: "Body Work" in the Labour Process of the Front-Line Call Centre Worker' *Global Society* 29:1 (2015). 89-106.
[3] Miriam A. Glucksmann. 'Call Configurations: Varieties of Call Centre and Divisions of Labour', *Work, Employment and Society* 18:4 (2004). 795-811.

subsequently taken on by different branches of industry.[1] Finally, call centres are central to the so-called 'knowledge economy.'[2] As such, as a site of research into the politics of work call centres are a rich and fertile ground for the examination of the concrete practice of affective, immaterial, emotional and aesthetic labour. As with the examination of advertising creative work, I connect my examination of call centre work to theories of the capitalist labour process by deploying Marx's elementary factors of the labour process as a jumping-off point. The analysis begins with an investigation of the character of each of the three elementary factors that will highlight how processes of the production of politics in call centre work link and decouple processes of the production of political subjectivity. I demonstrate that the opening up of these processes of the production of political subjects hinges on the character of the objects and the instruments of call centre work. Furthermore, I will argue that this analysis bears upon service-work more generally.

Before examining the elementary factors of the labour process of front-line service work (FLSW) in the call centre, it is important to first frame this discussion with reference to an important caveat that is rightly imposed upon the analysis of call centres. There are differences in the extent and intensity of management methods of control over the labour process. The standards by which work activity is regulated vary, as do the specific characteristics of the technological systems that are employed in this task. This variation in organisation often accords to companies' 'market segmentation strategies.'[3] Although most call centres are set-up to receive inbound calls, some call centres make outbound calls with the aim of soliciting new customers. Of the inbound type, there are three modes of the organisation of call centre work: 'mass-production, professional services, and hybrid mass-customisation.'[4] My analysis here is based on an examination of inbound call centres across these three modes of organisation. Despite these variations, there is a general form of labour process for the front-line call centre worker that is composed of the elementary factors that Marx sets out in *Capital vol. I.* I will proceed to isolate these factors of the call centre labour process by drawing on a broad range of interview-based and ethnographic research on call centre work.

[1] Phil Taylor, *et al*. 'Work Organization, Control and the Experience of Work in Call Centres', *Work Employment Society* 16:1 (2002). 133-150.
[2] Paul Thompson, Chris Warhurst and George Callaghan. 'Ignorant Theory and Knowledgeable Workers: Interrogating the connections between knowledge, skills and services', *Journal of Management Studies* 38:7 (2001). 923-942.
[3] Phil Taylor and Peter Bain. '"India Calling to the Far Away Towns": the Call Centre Labour Process and Globalization', *Work Employment and Society* 2: (2005). 263.
[4] Taylor and Bain 'India Calling to the Far Away Towns' 263

Approaches to call centre work often present the object, instrument and activity of the labour process as conflated; most often, these factors of the labour process are not disaggregated. As Marx states, the labour process is 'the moving unity' of its elementary factors therefore it is not surprising that research which does not set out to understand the elementary factors fails to do this.[1] Labour activity in the call centre appears at first sight, that is, as a surface phenomenon, as listening and talking.[2] This is constituted by interaction with instruments of labour, i.e., ICT.[3] These instruments are deployed with the aim of relaying and manipulating information, which is the object of labour.[4] Beginning from this configuration, Warhurst *et al* are able to claim that the labour process of the call centre is labour activity that interposes ICT between itself and the customer in order to produce a product, i.e. 'a good or a service.'[5] In order to penetrate the visible structure of the call centre labour process, I will now focus on these elementary factors of the labour process in turn.

It is not simply information that is the object of labour in the call centre. Of course, information is *an* object; a key part of the labour process of call centre work is to 'use...customer records and make any changes to the client's file.'[6] As Jenkins *et al* note, 'work involves receiving and processing information.'[7] Thus information is an object that is altered by the labour process. However, the principle object of the labour process is the body of the customer. Jenkins *et al* go on to find that workers maintain 'a social display which requires them to adapt their emotions depending on the client', highlighting the worker's role in the production of a customer's experience of service, and Deery *et al* observe that call centre work involves 'the continuous need to...shape the expectations of service recipients.'[8] This managing of expectations is only one aspect of the formative shaping of the customer. Call centre work involves 'working both *for* and *on* the customer.' The formative shaping of the customer's body may be as simple as a communication of fact, 'billing and product

[1] On the labour process as a moving unity see Marx *Grundrisse* 691
[2] Peter Bain, *et al.* 'Taylorism, Targets and the Pursuit of Quantity and Quality by Call Centre Management', *New Technology, Work and Employment* 17:3 (2002). 174.
[3] Phil Taylor and Peter Bain. 'Reflections on the Call Centre – a Reply to Glucksmann', *Work, Employment and Society*, 21:2 (2007). 354.
[4] Glucksmann. 'Call Configurations' 801
[5] Chris Warhurst, Paul Thompson and Dennis Nickson. 'Labor Process Theory: Putting the Materialism Back into the Meaning of Service Work', in Marek Korczynski and Cameron Lynne Macdonald (eds) *Service Work: Critical Perspectives*. (New York: Routledge, 2009). 98.
[6] Bob Russell. 'The Talk Shop and Shop Talk: Employment and Work in a Call Centre', *The Journal of Industrial Relations* 44:4 (2002). 476.
[7] Sarah Jenkins, Rick Delbridge and Ashley Roberts. 'Emotional Management in a Mass Customised Call Centre: Examining Skill and Knowledgability in Interactive Service Work', *Work, Employment and Society* 24:3 (2010). 553.
[8] Jenkins, Delbridge and Roberts. 'Emotional Management in a Mass Customised Call Centre' 553; Stephen J. Deery, Roderick D. Iverson and Janet T. Walsh. 'Coping Strategies in Call Centres: Work Intensity and the Role of Co-workers and Supervisors', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, (2010) 48:1 (2010): 182.

information' for example or the making of a transaction such as 'booking a train or concert ticket.'[1] The alteration also extends to the shaping of the customer in accordance with ideologies that reproduce the capitalist mode of production. Call centres 'provide the opportunity to reinforce brand messages on a one-to-one basis'.[2] As Gabriel suggests, 'branding, framing, packaging, hyping...depend vitally on...work, whether it be called imagination, emotional labour, aesthetic labour or merely messing around with ideas.'[3] The call centre is the key site for business to customer contact for many commodities, from Cable TV to the electricity companies that facilitate its watching. The call centre, as Brophy argues, has 'become an essential apparatus for mediating the relationship between the institutions and the subjects of cognitive capitalism, gauging public opinion, offering us assistance through technological mishaps, and registering our numerous complaints.'[4] Notwithstanding differences in the extent of the formative shaping of the customer, the customer is nonetheless the object of the labour process.

The instrument of the call centre labour process is the worker. Of course, if we look at the surface appearance of the call centre labour process ICT appears to be the instrument. ICT transfers labour activity to the object, the customer, with the aim of effecting an alteration upon that object. ICT also performs two further functions. First, ICT forms systems by which labour activity is evaluated in terms of management-set criteria which measure the quality of labour activity. Second, it is a means by which the intensity of work can be controlled. It is through these two functions of ICT that the 'capitalist [takes] good care that the work is done in the proper manner.'[5] Thus the main function of ICT in the labour process of the call centre worker is not as instruments of labour but rather as a system for the regulation of labour activity. Furthermore, when we keep in mind the general form of service work which occurs both remotely and face-to-face, we see that ICT also performs a spatial function in the labour process, connecting the worker to the object over distance. However, the instrument of the labour process is not *interposed* between the worker and the object, but rather the worker instrumentalises aspects of their being in order to shape the object of labour, i.e., the customer. Taylor and Bain's observations of management 'techniques aimed at eliciting

[1] Rosemary Batt. 'Work Organisation, Technology, and Performance in Customer Service and Sales', *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 52:4 (1999). 545; Phil Taylor and Peter Bain. '"An Assembly Line in the Head": work and employee relations in the call centre', *Industrial Relations Journal* 30:2 (1999). 107.
[2] Nick Kinnie, Sue Hutchinson and John Purcell. '"Fun and surveillance": the Paradox of High Commitment Management in Call Centres', *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 11:5 (2000). 969.
[3] Yiannis Gabriel. 'Conclusion – Latte Capitalism and Late Capitalism: Reflections on Fantasy and Care as Part of the Service Triangle', in Marek Korczynski and Cameron Lynne Macdonald. (eds), *Service Work: Critical Perspectives.* (New York: Routledge, 2009). 176.
[4] Enda Brophy. 'Language put to Work: Cognitive Capitalism, Call Center Labor, and Worker Enquiry' *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 2011 35: (2011). 412.
[5] Marx *Capital vol. I* 180

employee commitment and involvement' are widespread.[1] Brannan records that 'Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) [are] encouraged to develop "relationships" with the clients they work with on a daily basis.'[2] The worker is required to use their capacity to build relationships as an instrument in a labour process because 'economic value,' apparently, 'is found more in the intangibles, such as...relationships.'[3] The production of the customer in call centre work proceeds from the instrumentalisation of workers' bodies.

Despite the differences in the organisation of work in different call centres, taking both quantitative measures regarding the intensity of work and qualitative measures regarding the compulsion of a certain character of interactions, I argue that call centre work is organised in such a way so that *the impalpable properties of bodies are instrumentalised and transformed in accordance with the requirements of the labour process*. The two levels of intensity at which these properties are mobilised, the quantity and quality of interactions, differ extremely. At one end of the qualitative spectrum, the effects of work upon the subject is akin to factory labour on a moving assembly line – the worker, waits alert for the beep in the headset that signifies "action" and is required to repeat routine and mundane interactions. Routine and mundane as they may be, they remain interactions rather than operations. Quantitatively, the rate across the working day may be low or high. A low intensity of labour requires the worker disengage from 'work', yet remain vigilant. A high intensity requires the constant mobilisation of attention. At the other end of the qualitative spectrum, labour activity is complex, requiring the active engagement of emotional self-management and a focused attention on the production of an affective relation; that is, the instrumentalisation of the suite of embodied capacities. When this complexity is coupled with a high-rate of intensity across the working day, work constitutes a constant mobilisation of these instrumentalised and transformed embodied capacities. Despite the qualitative and quantitative differences in labour processes, those labour processes are mandated according to an ideal labour process that is codified in targets, required behaviours, and other bureaucratic, managerial and normative compulsions on the shop floor. Therefore, work like this constitutes an assemblage of power relations that demand one becomes a certain kind of subject. As found by a group of researchers in Argentina, 'a specific subjectivity is produced.'[4]

[1] Taylor and Bain 'An Assembly Line in the Head' 106-7
[2] Matthew J. Brannan. 'Once More With Feeling: Ethnographic Reflections on the Mediation of Tension in a Small Team of Call Centre Workers', *Gender, Work and Organization* 12:5 (2005). 430.
[3] Scottish Enterprise cf. Thompson *et al.* 'Ignorant Theory and Knowledgeable Workers' 924
[4] Experimental Chair on the Production of Subjectivity. 'Call Center: The Art of Virtual Control', Tr. Nate Holdren. *Ephemera* 7:1 (2007). 137.

4.4. Indeterminacy and the Potential for Praxis

The political economic problem of emergent forms of labour is that the properties by which bodies are political and capable of praxis are becoming central to the production of the object, i.e., the commodity.[1] It is worth quoting Carpenter, Ritchie and Mojab at length here to isolate the element of praxis that I argue is important to the exploitation of the potential for praxis:

> '*In the third chapter of the first volume of Capital, Marx demonstrates for us how, theoretically, capital has no limits… Marx, however, quickly moves on and by chapter nine has imposed on capital a colossal, but timid, limit: the power of humanity; the power to work and to learn and to change.*'[2]

The potential for praxis is in this colossal, but timid, limit. The worker's capacity to work, learn and change has been the object of capital since the phase of the formal subsumption of labour under capital when workers produced at home in exchange for a wage.[3] The exploitation of more and more capacities of workers' bodies is capital pushing upon the timidity of this colossal limit, colonising this limit by occupying the body. Emergent forms of labour demonstrate new dimensions to the subsumption of bodies under capital by revealing that bodies' capacity to change, oneself, to change others, and to change the social world, i.e. to be political, is made into an instrument of the labour process and work is organised so that this capacity is transformed in accordance with the economic, political, cultural and ideological requirements of capital's reproduction. The obscure structure – as opposed to the surface structure – of the labour process, i.e., the character of the elementary factors of the labour process and particularly the utilisation of the body of the worker as the instrument of labour, reveals that advertising creative work and call centre work puts into motion those impalpable aspects of self by which we form political relationships with one another and thereby shape our world.[4]

The instrumentalisation of the advertising creatives' and front-line call centre workers' affective, aesthetic, emotional and communicative capacities bears negatively upon the

[1] On praxis, see Karl Marx. 'Theses on Feuerbach', in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968).; Gajo Petrovic. 'The Philosophical Concept of Revolution', in Mihailo Markovic and Gajo Petrovic. (eds) *Praxis: Yugoslav Essays in the Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences.* Translated by J. Coddington, *et al.* (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel Publishing, 1979).
[2] Sara Carpenter, Genevieve Ritchie and Shahzad Mojab. 'The Dialectics of Praxis' *Socialist Studies* (2013) 9:1 (2013). 3.
[3] Carlo Vercellone. 'From Formal Subsumption to General Intellect: Elements for a Marxist Reading of the Thesis of Cognitive Capitalism', *Historical Materialism* 15: (2007). 13-36.
[4] Marx 'Theses on Feuerbach'

workers' *potential* to engage in praxis because these are the capacities that constitute the possibility to create and to change. Furthermore, any number of concrete types of emergent forms of labour would indicate the same conclusions regarding the instrumentalisation of bodies' political capacities. Hochschild makes this point in the introduction to *The Managed Heart*, pointing out that 'we are all partly flight attendants.'[1] Carol Wolkowitz further highlights the instrumentalisation of the embodied capacities of workers in industries as diverse from one another as funeral directing and yoga instruction.[2] Thus, these tendencies persist in particular in the sales, marketing and service sectors of economy.

These two concrete forms of emergent labour do not demonstrate an autonomous worker nor do they demonstrate that the possibility for modes of self-valorisation is coded into the organisation of the labour process. Rather, my analysis of the labour process of advertising creative work and front-line call centre work reveals an economic organisation of value production that shapes the embodied capacities of workers and consumers in the figure of value. Those capacities of bodies by which political subjects are capable of praxis are utilised as a value-producing quality of labour-power. As a result of this shaping of bodies the antagonistic potential of the indeterminacy of labour-power is forestalled. Emergent forms of labour are organised such that value production proceeds alongside the production of capitalistic subjects, not anticapitalist politics; bodies' potential to engage in a politics against the capitalist organisation of production – to create and to change themselves, others and the world – are made an instrument of the labour process and, as such, are twisted and distorted so as to be productive of value. The worker's body is shaped *according* to, not necessarily *in the image of*, value. Domination, resistance, coercion and consent, nonetheless link and decouple these apparatuses that formatively shape bodies, but it is those capacities by which workers can dominate, resist, coerce and consent that are themselves the subject of formative shaping that pertains from the repeated practice of these labour processes.

Nonetheless, there are important distinctions to be made regarding the specific operation of this formative shaping of the workers' body in both of these emergent forms of labour. In the call centre, there is a blurring of the distinction between what is work, what is the worker, and what is the product. Thompson *et al* argues that call centre 'employees, and the way they look, sound and act, *is itself* part of the product'.[3] But it is not just these aesthetic properties that blur this distinction. Call centre work mandates particular modes of communication, affective and emotional management and engagement, at a particular pace set within

[1] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 11
[2] Carol Wolkowitz. *Bodies at Work* (London: Sage, 2006). 147.
[3] Thompson *et al* 'Ignorant Theory and Knowledgeable Workers' 930

bureaucratic, normative and technical methods of discipline and control. These are definitions of a worker devoid of technical skill, or for whom technical skills are irrelevant; the worker is merely a possessor of embodied capacities who is *made* a product as a result of work. There is this same blurring of the distinction between what work is, what the worker is, and what the product is in advertising creative work, but it operates in a different way. Advertising creative work mandates particular modes of engagement with the cultural and political world and particular modes of the reconstitution of these referents that are coded in the technical division of labour. How the workers' exercise their knowledge and imagination *are themselves* part of the product; the work of the advertising creative is to present the world to the consumer in such a way as to create needs and desires. This equally applies to call centre work. In advertising creative work, this reconstitution of the world as a means for the production and realisation of value results from the repetition of the interplay between the creative process and the client brief, in call centre work through targets, and in both forms through discipline and control. In light of Lefebvre's definition of a product as that which 'can be reproduced exactly, and is in fact the result of repetitive acts and gestures', this is a reification of the worker which indicates that work in emergent forms of labour is not simply constituted by labour-power proceeding through a set of productive tasks that are designed to produce a product: it is constituted by labour-power proceeding through a set of tasks designed such that labour-power itself becomes a standardised product.[1] But labour-power is too broad a definition for the processes at work here. The use-value of labour-power required by capital for service work and cultural production is the ability of bodies to be political, to make social relationships, to create and shape the normative values of political subjects, and ultimately to create desire. In wage-labour these abilities are confined to the reproduction of capital. Thus, firstly there is an ideological dimension to the production and reproduction of these qualities as labour-power that is concomitant of norms of capital accumulation. Secondly, because the use-value of labour-power rests in the body's capacity to change in accordance with the requirements of the labour process, bureaucratic, organisational and ideological techniques aimed at exploiting the use-value of labour-power undermine the potential for a potent indeterminacy of labour-power and therewith undermine the essential antagonism between labour and capital.

The production of the customer in both call centre work and advertising creative work proceeds from the instrumentalisation of workers' bodies. The key distinction being that the call centre workers' production of the object, i.e., the consumer, proceeds immediately

[1] Henri Lefebvre cf. Matt Davies. 'Works, Products, and the Division of Labour', in Jacqueline Best and Mathew Peterson (eds). *Cultural Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 2010). 57.

whereas the advertising creatives' production of the consumer is mediated by the signs and language that are first objectified as *media*. Notwithstanding, both forms of work demand an instrumentalisation of Being that persists in the conflict between capitalist control of the labour process and the indeterminacy of labour-power. I argue that in speaking of the labour activity of the call centre worker and advertising creative, the political character of the processes of the exploitation of labour-power illustrates the difficulty in discerning labour activity from the instrument of labour by revealing properties of the body that have been previously ignored. Advertising creative and call centre work are organised in such a way so as to produce desire; what follows is that the properties of bodies by which they are political are instrumentalised and separated from the worker.

The ability of bodies to manage their own aesthetic qualities, to manage their emotions and the emotions of others, and to communicate with one another and produce affective relationships, are mobilised as instruments in a labour process that produces commodities. The production of the object in the sales, service and marketing industries accords to Lazzarato's conception of the commodity of immaterial labour. This commodity, he states, is 'not destroyed in the act of consumption, but rather...enlarges, transforms and creates the "ideological" and cultural environment of the consumer.'[1] This consumption does not merely create an 'environment', but rather creates the subjects that inhabit this environment. The political character of the utilisation of the embodied capacities of workers demonstrates that capitalist norms of accumulation act as the reference point for the reproduction of the processes by which these same capacities are exploited in the production of economic value.

The corporeal content of advertising creative work and call centre work is oftentimes brought under a reconfigured category of 'skill'. The Strathclyde Group point to the prioritisation of so-called aesthetic and social skills above technical skills.[2] They and others highlight 'the trend to re-label as skill what would in the past have been considered personal attributes, dispositions or behaviours.'[3] We can see this operating in terms of how creatives negotiate the tripartite technical division of labour in the advertising agency but also, and more importantly, when we examine Sasser's "two-step" process. We can track the development of skill *qua* disposition from the call centre recruitment process through to its labour process. The recruitment process is driven by person specifications which emphasise the interpersonal

[1] Lazzarato 'Immaterial Labor' 138
[2] Warhurst *et al* 'Labor Process Theory'; Dennis Nickson *et al.* 'Bringing in the Excluded'; Thompson *et al* 'Ignorant Theory and Knowledgeable Workers'
[3] Caroline Lloyd and Jonathan Payne, "'Full of Sound and Fury, Signifying Nothing': Interrogating New Skill Concepts in Service Work—the View from Two UK Call Centres", *Work, Employment and Society* 23:4 (2009). 618.

qualities required in potential workers. 'Management seek workers with personal characteristics likely to make them interact spontaneously.'[1] As Vicki, a call centre manager, states, 'if somebody comes in and they've got the right attitude, I will take them on.'[2] Call centre training is designed so as to continue to form and shape these 'intangible qualities.'[3] Thus, through the concept of skill, we can understand how both call centre work and advertising creative work prioritise a certain set of embodied qualities, centred on the production of desire.

However, 'skill' does not fully capture the processes of the production of the worker as an alterity, that is, as being different to what they were before the wage-labour exchange. 'Skill' is a discourse which naturalises and thereby depoliticises the processes of the formative shaping of workers' bodies. The skill discourse assumes that 'the right attitude' and the 'right imagination' is simply a pre-existing quality of bodies, thereby forgoing cultural political economic questions regarding how attitudes and dispositions are produced. As Terry Johnson states, 'skill is not a given individual capacity; [it] is a product of social power.'[4] 'Having the right attitude' is something which results from the worker working upon their own body and is not simply a pre-existing phenomenon. This recognition opens up the possibility to explore potentially deleterious consequences to emergent forms of labour. Requirements for workers 'to be first of all, very, very enthusiastic' and who can 'think about what they need to do to change themselves in order to build rapport' are not a precursor to simply an internalisation of 'managerial service norms' nor do they represent a consociational approach to the technical division of labour.[5] These specifications indicate that the key requirement of the job is the ability to work on one's own body, change one's ideas, and alter one's values. A cursory reading of this century's Human Resources Management literature reveals that work is designed to shape bodies. The goal is to 'change not how we *act* so much as how we *think*...it is not about *changing what we do* so much as it is about *changing who we are*.'[6] Production in both the call centre and the advertising agency is not simply skill-based, nor is it designed to facilitate worker autonomy but is intended to harness the capacity to be autonomous and transform the subject in that same process. This not only demonstrates Caffentzis' argument that 'there is no direct formula connecting capitalism, knowledge-production and political

[1] Warhurst and Nickson *Looking Good, Sounding Right* 3
[2] cf. Jenkins, Delbridge and Roberts. 'Emotional Management in a Mass Customised Call Centre' 551
[3] Warhurst *et al.* 'Labor Process Theory' 3
[4] Terry Johnson. 'Work and Power', in Geoff Esland and Graeme Salaman (eds). *The Politics of Work and Occupations* (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1980). 345
[5] Managers 3 and 7 cf. George Callaghan and Paul Thompson. '"We Recruit Attitude: The Selection and Shaping of Routine Call Centre Labour' *Journal of Management Studies* 39:2 (2002). 240 and 242.
[6] Lesley Yerkes. *Fun Works: Creating Places Where People Love to Work, 2nd edition* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2007). 180.

liberation' but implicates the opposite conclusion; production in emergent forms of labour demonstrates the pressures which are brought to bear on the potential for political liberation.[1] Creative work in the advertising agency is constituted by the worker's putting into motion of their embodied capacities for the aesthetic, linguistic, communicative, emotional and effective with the aim of producing economic value. The self-directing practice of the capacities of the body within the labour process is not coordinate to autonomy but is a practice in which the potential for autonomy comes under siege. As Toscano elaborates, 'the political problem lies precisely with the *premise* of autonomy.'[2] Cognitive capitalism theorists are correct in identifying that there *has* been a change in the organisation of labour and there is a concomitant production of politics. This insight should be brought to bear on our understanding of the processes of the production of subjectivity in terms of an alteration in the 'reproduction of the capital-labour relation.' But it is an entirely different matter to interpret this variation 'solely or primarily through the lens of the affirmation of an autonomy of living labour.'[3]

In the call centre the 'skill' discourse commingles with the 'authenticity' discourse that has come to be prominent in these types of organisation and, as Fleming argues, should be seen as a 'continuation of the classic corporate objective to exact domination.'[4] Therefore, as well as repudiating the 'hypostatisation of the mechanisms of the reproduction of subjectivity' that follows from the prefiguration of the autonomy of living labour, we must turn the conclusions of LPT approaches on the tendency towards Taylorisation in the call centre to also reflect the limitations of the hierarchical power structure in the production of bodies.[5] A hierarchical power structure cannot coercively produce subjects in a direct sense but can only do so by conditioning us socially, psychologically and existentially to 'accept or choose precisely what can no longer be imposed.'[6]

This analysis demonstrates that the capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – are subject to capitalist command during labour time. Nonetheless, this entire analysis notwithstanding, post-*operaismo* theorising of a revolutionary politics cannot eliminate the

[1] Caffentzis 'A Critique of Cognitive Capitalism' 96
[2] Alberto Toscano. 'The Limits of Autonomy: Cognitive Capitalism and University Struggles', in Michael A. Peters and Ergin Bulut (eds) *Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011). 263.
[3] Toscano 'The Limits of Autonomy' 263
[4] Peter Fleming. *Authenticity and the Cultural Politics of Work: New Forms of Informal Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). 28.
[5] Zanini 'On the "Philosophical Foundations" of Italian Workerism' 41
[6] Gorz *Reclaiming Work* 42

concrete condition of the first political moment of the labour process, nor can the Strathclyde Group's naturalising of the labour market obviate it, nor can Hochschild's subjective approach to the domination of work ameliorate it; labour-power must be bought and sold. Thinking that the world is a place in which labour is not forced does not make it so; class struggle, whether that be in the form of anti-capitalism or social democracy, must proceed by understanding the nature of the coercive dimensions of work, by understanding how those dimensions produce a certain formulation of politics and by producing a positive critique of the politics of work in emergent forms of labour which can inform the politics of resistance. This examination of the labour process indicates the centrality of the body to the production of politics in emergent forms of labour. More importantly, it raises the urgent problem of the siege upon bodies' capacities for praxis.

Chapter Five: A Dialectical Concept of Body Work[1]

"...it is crystal clear to me that the body is an accumulation strategy in the deepest sense."

Donna Haraway[2]

5.1. Framing the Politics of Emergent Forms of Labour

As discussed in chapter two, four concepts of labour and one universalising category have been developed to address changes in the capitalist organisation of production: immaterial labour, affective labour, emotional labour and aesthetic labour, and the unification of immaterial labour and affective labour under the auspices of the category biopolitical labour. The understandings produced by means of these concepts have been brought to bear, to various extents, upon the political problematics that are attendant to these changes in the capitalist organisation of production. Immaterial labour has been deployed in such a way as to justify the arguments made by the post-*operaisti* that there is an immanent tendency in capitalism for the production of anticapitalist political subjectivities because labour is purported to be autonomous from capitalist control. The key proponents of immaterial labour, Hardt and Negri, have undertaken a project to subsume a further concept of labour, affective labour, within this paradigm. Affective labour is the 'labour of human contact and interaction.'[3] Affective labour is, the post-*operaisti* argue, indicative of this same tendency for the formation of anticapitalist political subjectivities that results from the valorisation of qualities or aspects of labour activity that are produced 'independent[ly] of production.'[4] By bringing it into the immaterial labour paradigm, thereby producing a unitary concept of biopolitical labour, Hardt and Negri assign the same role to autonomy in the practice of affective labour as in immaterial labour. In doing so, they attempt to make a case for the production of anticapitalist subjects as something which is concomitant to the valorisation of affect, and its production and articulation, in labour under capitalism. In short, for the post-*operaisti* these concepts and this category implicate a purportedly immanent becoming of freedom from capitalist power and, ultimately, from the capitalist mode of production itself. Emotional labour is the work of managing one's own feelings to the end of producing a

[1] This chapter substantially reworks ideas first introduced in McFadden 'The Production of Politics in the Call Centre'
[2] 'Nature, politics, and possibilities: a debate and discussion with David Harvey and Donna Haraway', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13. (1995). 512.
[3] Hardt 'Affective Labor' 95
[4] Virno 'The Ambivalence of Disenchantment' 14

desired state in the mind/body of another. A key aspect of the politics of emotional labour is that workers' emotional capacities 'come to belong more to the organisation and less to the self.'[1] As such, the concept of emotional labour offers a less optimistic characterisation of the political problem of freedom than post-*operaisti* theories. Hochschild's analysis of the politics of emotional labour ends on the subjective character of the contradiction between capitalist control over the worker's personality and the worker's search for "authenticity". Hochschild is rightly cautious about offering an arithmetical calculus that may interpret changes in the organisation of labour in the form of a totalising doctrine or as a predestination of the historical character of class struggle. Finally, aesthetic labour is work which relies 'to a large extent upon the physical appearance or, more specifically, the embodied capacities and attributes' of the worker.[2] Aesthetic labour offers a depoliticised thesis because it treats the labour market and the exchanges that constitute it as a natural condition; they do not consider aesthetic labour in an historical sense as a form of wage-labour under capitalism but rather treat it simply as purposive activity toward the production of use-values. As such, although 'the concept of aesthetic labour builds on, and significantly extends, the seminal work of Hochschild on emotional labour' it simultaneously discards Hochschild's political critique.[3] The concept does not frame political problems such as autonomy, control, freedom and "self", and in fact reduces the political aspect of its problematic to questions regarding how workers may access the aesthetic labour market, uncritically proposing that access to this market is a "good" for the worker concerned. I challenge these characterisations in this chapter by considering the reproduction of labour-power.

Despite these fundamental political problems, as well as the empirical and theoretical problems outlined in the previous chapters, these concepts do make a contribution toward indicating the dimensions of a conceptual frame within which new tendencies in processes of capital accumulation can be captured and the production of a politics that is attendant to these changes can be examined. Nonetheless, I argue that although they indicate some important features of the politics of work that such a frame should consider, they do not in themselves provide this framework. These concepts also present a number of philosophical and conceptual challenges to the project of understanding the politics of emergent forms of labour. First, their very disparateness highlights the complexity of the landscape of emergent forms of labour; each of these concepts emphasises a particular aspect or characteristic of a specific kind of emergent labour process and thereby they illuminate different aspects of the field of

[1] Hochschild *The Managed Heart* 198
[2] Warhurst, *et al*. 'Aesthetic Labour in Interactive Service Work' 2
[3] Anne Witz, *et al*. 'The Labour of Aesthetics and the Aesthetics of Organization', *Organization* 10:1 (2003). 50.

enquiry. But little work has been done to integrate these concepts, which are in many ways very similar. So similar that I argue in this chapter that these concepts are actually just different vantage points onto the same process of the production of bodies. Second, as important as the contributions of the concepts of aesthetic, emotional, affective, immaterial and biopolitical labour are to the project of understanding the relationship between the organisation of work and the production of politics, they each bring a matrix of methodological and philosophical assumptions that demonstrate shortcomings when applied to the problematic of the production of politics in work. That is, the project of integration is made more difficult as a result of a number of contradictory philosophical assumptions (both between the concepts and within them). Thus, this project cannot be achieved through a simplistic integration of the coherent ideas that emerge from the concepts; a more fundamental re-thinking of ontological assumptions, theoretical positions, and political descriptions and prescriptions as they relate to work in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism is required.

A key observation to emerge from my examination is that the embedding of the concepts of immaterial and affective labour within an array of assertions regarding the historical tendencies of capitalism makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to use these concepts without reproducing the post-*operaismo* paradigm; even if just in the mind of the reader. Part of what Hardt and Negri are trying to do in their synthesis of immaterial and affective labour into biopolitical production is to address the conceptual problem of how we conceive of emergent forms of labour in such a way as to propose a political economy of work in the current of the capitalist mode of production. They are proposing a *mode* of labour that is *emblematic* of our post-industrial capitalism. Viewed from this perspective, my thesis is a critique of these assertions regarding the production of anticapitalist subjectivities. Hardt and Negri's thesis on the politics of work does not demonstrate the immanence of a purported revolutionary anticapitalist subject; the theoretical manoeuvre by which the post-*operaisti* replace an empirical analysis with a prefigured autonomous and antagonistic worker renders their thesis as an abstract teleology whose end point is contingent upon social conditions that have not been demonstrated. I have noted that Hochschild's distinction between a public sphere and a private sphere, and the conclusions that follow this separation, is problematic. Hochschild's separation results in her thesis on the possibility and oftentimes desirability of a separated self that performs emotional labour; that is, I argue that her idea that the emotional labourer's self-estrangement can be a good and coherent subject position to adopt in the face of the vicissitudes of capitalistic emotional production – from the perspective of the worker –

is both contradictory and simultaneously limits the boundaries of what we might regard as political activity in and against labour. Hochschild limits the politics of work to organised trade union activity and/or moments of micro-conflictuality.

This chapter will both critique and attempt to resolve the one-sided character of each of these concepts of labour. Fortunately, their one-sidedness is not the same; in short, the post-*operaisti* link changes in the organisation of work to attendant changes in politics – the direction of their arguments notwithstanding – Hochschild highlights the pernicious ontological consequences of changes in the organisation of work, and the Strathclyde Group focus on the body as a bearer of aesthetics that can be transformed into economic-value. From the perspective of politics then, their one-sidedness contributes to my aim to produce a more holistic view of the contemporary politics of work. This chapter will explore the one-sidedness of these representations by examining the politics that link and decouple the so-called public and private sphere, the production of the "dispositions" that are so central to the concept of aesthetic labour, and by further interrogating the possibility of "autonomy".

My examination of emotional and biopolitical labour in chapter two revealed a significant common theme. These forms of labour are presented as mechanisms that affect the production of subjectivities and the production of bodies. These forms of labour are conceived as being productive of the subject during, before and after labour time, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the theorist. They portray emergent forms of labour as a nexus for the production of the subject, which appears to operate in relation to commodity production and consumption, and ultimately, therefore, the character of this production of subjectivity carries something of the character of the commodity. It is clear that the post-*operaisti* give much greater volume to these claims and Hochschild somewhat. Furthermore, Hardt and Negri offer an optimistic assessment of the character of these processes of subject formation by deploying a worker who is prefigured as both autonomous and as an antagonistic and anticapitalist force. I argue that Hochschild's theory of the politics of subject formation is relatively ambivalent, giving weight to the pernicious consequences of emotional labour but also to the possibility for their transcendence by means of a conscious reorientation of subject position. Importantly, my critique notwithstanding, Hochschild's public/private distinction also introduces the importance of the processes by which labour-power is reproduced both at and outside the point of production. Subject formation appears to be something that happens outside the Strathclyde Group's conception of aesthetic labour; subjects simply *are* – in this case *are* bearers of aesthetics that can be formatively shaped and valorised – and their exploitation is attendant to their Being.

I argue that the body and its capacities must be brought back to the centre of the analysis of the political economy of work. My examination of the labour processes of call centre work and advertising creative work indicates the centrality of the body to questions regarding the relation between labour, production and the formation of political subjects. My analysis of the conceptual landscape of labour also indicates the corporeal character of emergent forms of labour. Of course this is not to say that bodies have not always been central to political economy; I argue that emergent forms of labour valorise properties, capacities and potentialities of bodies that are distinctive from the form of the valorisation of the body as labour-power in other kinds of labour. I argue that these properties, capacities and potentialities of bodies are fundamental to value production in branches of industry that configure service, communication, and knowledge as commodities. In this chapter I examine what these properties are and how their mobilisation as labour-power produces a political environment in which there is a reciprocal relationality between what bodies are, what they produce, and how bodies are produced in certain political forms. The politics of work in emergent forms of labour are not so much 'a way for organisations to extend their control over workers from their bodies to their hearts and minds' but rather I argue that to understand this problematic it is necessary to reconsider these heuristic understandings of hearts and minds in such a way that they are central to what it is to be a body.[1] I argue that only by doing so can the relationships between the production of economic value and the production of politics be uncovered; both value and politics have the body as their central and shared category. This approach to understanding the body allows me to interrogate the relation between the commodities produced by emergent forms of labour, the reproduction of labour-power, and the politics that link and decouple these two apparently separate spheres.

The analysis of the labour processes of emergent forms of labour in the previous chapter demonstrates that forms of labour which utilise the subjective, aesthetic, linguistic and cognitive capacities of labour-power result in the instrumentalisation of bodies' capacities to be political. The body is central to concrete forms of work that have been described by the concepts of aesthetic, emotional, affective and immaterial labour, criticisms regarding the disembodiment of labour and the conceptual retiring of corporeality in the concepts themselves notwithstanding. Moreover, these concepts illuminate the value-producing function of aspects of the body that have been ignored by other theories of labour. In light of

[1] Ashley Mears. 'Not Just a Paper Doll: How Models Manage Bodily Capital and Why They Perform Emotional Labor', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 34: (2005). 319.

this prominence of the mobilisation of the suite of embodied capacities in value production in these forms of wage-labour it is apposite to interrogate the concept of body work.

To address the insights, lacunae, and contradictions that emerge from these theories of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism I propose a conception of body work that results from a process of immanent critique and dialectical abstraction. This dialectical concept of body work has three factors: the work that we do on our own bodies, the work that we do on the bodies of others, and the marks made on the body by work. These three factors are vantage points to examine the making of bodies in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism; they are three sides of the same process of making bodies. My analysis will deploy these vantage points according to their development in class societies and generally under capitalism, but will focus mainly upon the present phase of capitalism. These three vantage points onto the making of bodies bring my original object of analysis into view, that is, emergent forms of labour. I find that concepts of emergent forms of labour should be regarded as vantage points onto this same relation between bodies and value but ones that are more particular and specific than these three factors of body work. That is, these concepts focus on things like aesthetic and emotion but I argue that aesthetic and emotion are properties and capacities of bodies. As such, the dialectical concept of body work understands things like emotion, affect, aesthetic, cognitive and linguistic capacities as conceptual extensions that all pertain to the body; the conceptual analysis of different kinds of concrete forms of work requires that some of these properties of the body are brought more closely into view, while occluding others, but they are all nonetheless part of the same process of mobilisation of more and more capacities of the body in value production. In framing this dialectical understanding of body work I deploy an inner connected sequence of abstractions of vantage point, extensions and historical generality. This focus on inner connections brings into view three relevant categories that pertain between the making of bodies and labour under capitalism: labour-power, value, and commodity. From these three categories, I propose a concept of body work that demonstrates the reciprocal relationality between the mobilisation of the aesthetic, emotional, affective, communicative and political capacities and potentialities of bodies in value production, thereby charting the key relations by which body work comes to bear on the problematic.

I argue that this reciprocal relationality is mediated through processes of the reproduction of labour-power and go on to argue that the making of bodies is a political process. My analysis of emergent forms of labour demonstrates that bodies are made within the labour process and outside it and that these apparently separate sites are in fact intrinsically linked to one another

within the logic of capital accumulation. Value production and the reproduction of labour-power are two intrinsically connected processes but are also contradictory ones; the logic of value production is not a totalising force that dominates the body. I follow Burawoy and Federici and argue that while capitalist control is never total in either of these spaces, it does extend from one to the other. Therefore, I argue that a politics within and against capitalist power emerges from what Federici calls the 'dual character and the contradiction inherent in reproductive labour.'[1] Despite the siege upon the indeterminacy of labour-power that is characteristic of emergent forms of labour, to obscure the possibilities of resistance would be to commit the same idealist prefiguration of the subject as in post-*operaismo* – but while they prefigure the autonomy of living labour, this formulation would prefigure interminable domination. There is a constant tension between the reproduction of labour-power as a production of the human and the coercive character of the standards imposed on reproduction by the logic of the labour market and value production.

Therefore, my conception of body work is a provocation towards a critical standpoint on the politics that are attendant to the conceptualisations of aesthetic, emotional, and affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production. As such, it is not so much a call for the abandonment of these concepts but for a recognition of the relations between them, the contradictions within them, and the figure that they all have in common – the figure of the body. Most importantly, my conception of body work offers a recharacterisation of the politics that are attendant to emergent forms of labour.

5.2. The Heuristic Relationality of the Concept of Body Work

The concept of body work first emerged as a tool to understand the social character of the work that people do on their own bodies.[2] It has subsequently been developed to include the sociological bearing of doing work on the bodies of others.[3] It has also been used as a critical tool to investigate the processes of embodiment that take place in forms of emotional labour.[4] Finally, it has been used to conceptualise ways in which labour inscribes itself on the body.[5] The field of research on the concept of body work separates it into four factors: work done on

[1] Silvia Federici. 'The Reproduction of Labor Power in the Global Economy and the Unfinished Feminist Revolution' 99
[2] Chris Shilling. *The Body and Social Theory* (London: Sage, 1993). 103-34.
[3] Carol Wolkowitz. 'The Social Relations of Body Work', *Work, Employment and Society*. 16:3 (2002). 497-510.
[4] Sarah Dyer, Linda McDowell and Adina Batnitzky. 'Emotional Labour/Body Work: The Caring Labours of Migrants in the UK's National Health Service', *Geoforum* 39:6 (2008). 2030-2038.
[5] Carol Wolkowitz. *Bodies at Work* (London: Sage, 2006).

one's own body, work done on the bodies of others, the embodied character of the work of managing emotion, and body work as a conceptual frame to examine the processes by which work marks the body. This four-pronged representation of the concept of body work is common across the literature and is presented as a taxonomy, although there is little sustained research on how these factors of the concept connect with one another. This is not to say that the corpus of research on body work does not bring with it a set of ontological and epistemological assumptions that are able to comprehend relations between these factors. However, I argue that the methods attendant to these assumptions present the factors of body work as constitutive of a 'type' of work/labour and therefore treats these factors as though they primarily relate to one another in terms of the similarities of their surface appearance. To iterate, the concept of body work gathers together phenomena within a tetra-factored matrix because they appear to be similar in practice; that is, they involve actions that shape bodies.

Although body work is often deployed in an ahistorical way, there are some contemporary formulations that make an important contribution to understanding the relationship between changes in the organisation of work and the attendant consequences upon the body and upon the production of politics. Nonetheless, current understandings of the concept of body work are oftentimes composed of a gathering together of empirical examples of surface phenomena that can be understood as indicating a growing centrality of the body within social and economic processes. Of course, this gathering takes place within a philosophy of the body; however, I argue that body work is oftentimes treated as an artefact of social science which is to be studied only as it manifests itself in and through the body of the subject within a phenomenological approach.[1] What *matters* in many of the existing understandings of body work is our subjective relationship to our own bodies; an understanding which is mediated through variations on social constructivist epistemologies. This is not to say that this relationship is unimportant. The subjective relationship that people have with their own bodies and the bodies of others is an important consideration in the production of politics; this relation is immediate to our experience of the world and to how we might understand and initiate our capacity for praxis. But to adopt subjective experience as a sole concern will necessarily produce a one-dimensional analysis because a subjective approach is unable to comprehend the relations between people, production, and society other than as a series of micro-relations between autonomous subjects. Or, rather, a solely subjective approach is

[1] I draw heavily from Harry Braverman's critique of social science here. *Labor and Monopoly Capital* 19. Carol Wolkowitz's work is an exception here.

unable to comprehend the relations between "man", "industry", and "nature."[1] This is also not to say that a phenomenological approach in and of itself produces one-dimensional understandings. Wolkowitz deploys a phenomenological approach that uses some Marxist concepts within an overarching regard for the function of discourse in reproducing power relations and, in doing so, sketches out some of the fundamental relations of body work in contemporary capitalism that other theories of the body and of work miss entirely. Notwithstanding, I argue that the body work literature foregoes a thoroughgoing political economic analysis of the interrelations between these factors, and does so in favour of a collection of subjective experiences that support often ahistorical and/or transcendental epistemological assumptions. In opposition, I argue that processes of capital accumulation and the making of bodies entail one another in an ontological sense.

I will now examine each of these 'factors' of the concept of body work further, to strengthen this critique by beginning to draw out the methodological blind-spots that are attendant to the framing of the problematic and to the pertaining ontological and epistemological assumptions.

5.2.1 Work on One's Own Body

The idea that people do work on their own bodies and that this work has a social character was the first explication of body work.[2] That this conceptual development in social theory came so recently is quite surprising. 'All societies,' Debra Gimlin states, 'require that their members do work on their bodies.'[3] In this sense, I understand the 'work' of body work in terms of the distinction between work and labour as outlined in chapter two. The work that one does on one's own body is not limited by the prescripts of the category 'labour', nor does it have to be subject to the disciplining of the wage. The work that one does on one's own body is usually considered as work that people undertake in what Hochschild terms the 'private sphere'. Thus, body work includes the mundane bathing of the body, brushing teeth, applying make-up, removing hair, clipping toenails, etc., that most of us carry out on a regular basis, apparently far from the gaze of the wage-labour relation. Mundane is not a synonym for unimportant; as Chris Shilling states, '"body work" reveals not only how society shapes our

[1] I think it is fair to regard "people", "production", and "society" as synonymous with the three basic categories of Marx's theory.
[2] Shilling *The Body and Social Theory* 88
[3] Debra Gimlin. 'What is "Body Work"? A Review of the Literature' *Sociology Compass* 1:1 (2007). 355.

bodies, but also how corporeality is itself consequential of social and technical relations.'[1] That is, this aspect of body work can be seen to demonstrate that the *forms* that body work takes are embedded within history. Thus we might see spectres of Marx, but only apparitions, within Shilling's theory. Shilling's invocation of a relation between corporeality and social and technical relations support arguments that western social mores on cleanliness are inextricably linked to the perpetuation of office work and the proliferation of the electric shower and that the everyday character of "tribal" tattoos in Western societies today follows from the invention of the electromagnet.[2]

According to Shilling, '*body work*...[is] a key means through which first, the emergent capacities of embodied subjects are exercised within society, and second, these capacities are themselves structured partially by social and technical relations.'[3] In this sense, the human body is 'unfinished.'[4] The body changes and develops as it grows in physiological terms, but also as it is enmeshed within a social structure that provides a variety of external influences which bear upon the forms that the work we do on our body takes, and therefore upon the forms that bodies themselves take. For Shilling, it is this *variety* of external influences that is important; his work is not concerned with identifying a structure which creates bodies in certain forms but rather focuses on 'how our bodily experiences and performances *form a causally consequential basis* for the reproduction or transformation of society.'[5] Thus, Shilling's key ontological assumption is that it is our subjective experience of our own body, although in some way a multitudinous and collective one, which determines the character of society. Shilling thus reifies structure in the subjective experiences of bodies; for him, bodies create social and technical structures, not the other way around.

In *Bodies at Work* Wolkowitz brings these ideas about how people work on their own bodies into what Marx calls the 'hidden abode of production', that is, the place where labour happens, and shows how some kinds of labour require that workers work on their own bodies.[6] Wolkowitz focuses this concern specifically upon the processes by which workers make their own bodies by investigating the extent to which 'organisations attempt to "redefine

[1] Chris Shilling. *The Body and Social Theory 3rd edition* (London: SAGE, 2012). 123.
[2] Electromagnets enable the oscillation of modern tattoo-guns which render the receiving of tattoos relatively painless in comparison to, for example, the bone and tortoiseshell hammering methods of the Maori. John A. Rush. *Spiritual Tattoo: A cultural history of tattooing, piercing, scarification, branding, and implants.* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2005). 93.
[3] Shilling *The Body and Social Theory, 3rd ed.* 104. Emphasis in original.
[4] Shilling *The Body and Social Theory, 3rd ed.* 138
[5] Shilling *The Body and Social Theory, 3rd ed.* 104. Emphasis in original.
[6] Marx *Capital, vol. I* 172

and manipulate the body's time, space and movements."'[1] From these points, I argue that Wolkowitz's consideration of the inter-relations between body work practices is more comprehensive than those of other body work theorists and that she explicitly ties together the work that one does on one's own body to the marks made on the body by work, to emotion work, and to the work that people do on their own bodies. Wolkowitz goes further, following Hochschild's prioritisation of the ontological consequences of work upon the worker, and asks to what extent we see a commodification of embodied capacities. To do this, she builds upon Linda McDowell's claim that in service work 'the labour-power and embodied performance of workers is part of the product', while also acknowledging that McDowell underplays the more general historical character of the processes by which embodied labour-power is transferred to the object of labour at the heart of this claim.[2] Wolkowitz further states that 'this scarcely does justice to Marx's understanding of the incorporation of workers' living labour in commodities'[3] and, in doing so, she argues within the longstanding tradition of the sociology of work that begins with C. Wright Mills, and identifies these forms of service work as proceeding from 'the instrumentalisation of "private capacities."'[4] As such, she argues that service work proceeds from workers' capacity to do work on their own bodies. Wolkowitz thereby suggests the argument that workers must work on their own bodies in such a way as to make their bodies ready for wage-labour. The mode by which Wolkowitz is able to draw this conclusion is to make a distinction between labour in industrial production and labour in service work. The deployment of embodied capacities in work is illuminated as a phenomenon that is attendant to changes in production; the practice of service work presents the deployment of embodied capacities more visibly and extensively than industrial labour does because of the personal interaction that is at the centre of this form of production. I argue, however, that there is a strong implication in Wolkowitz's work that the commodification of embodied capacities is considered merely as a phenomenon in the first instance and not in a way that integrates the consideration of labour-power itself as a commodity.[5] There is no analysis of "labour-power" itself as a commodification of the body therefore this idea pertains within the subjective experiences that accompany the customer-worker-boss triad of service work, as opposed to a more grounded notion of the body as commodity in accordance with the relations that proceed from the wage-labour exchange. As discussed in the previous chapter, the history of capital is a history of the burgeoning

[1] Hancock and Tyler cf. Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 74
[2] Cf. Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 70
[3] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 70
[4] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 76
[5] Chapter VI of Marx's *Capital, vol. I* is devoted to making this definition of labour-power as a commodity.

domination of the body by means of its commodification as labour-power. As a result of the primacy of the phenomenon over the embeddedness of these phenomena within historical tendencies of capitalist production, I argue that Wolkowitz foregoes an examination of body work in terms of its relation to the continuous elements of the political economic apparatuses of capital.

5.2.2 Work on the Bodies of Others

The concept of body work has been used to describe the work that people do on the bodies of others. As with the first factor of the concept, this can be work or it can be labour although it has primarily been considered in its form as wage-labour. As broad as Wolkowitz's contribution to the conceptualisation of body work is, it is her research on labour that 'takes the body as its immediate site' which is most fundamental.[1] Again, just as working on one's own body is not something peculiar to the current variation of the capitalist mode of production, so working on the bodies of others is something that has occurred throughout human history too. In demonstrating the prevalence of body work today, Wolkowitz lists types of body workers including: hairdressers and barbers; doctors; masseurs and other spa workers; sex workers; tattooists and body piercers; beauticians; care assistants; coaches and fitness instructors; occupational and speech therapists; undertakers; and yoga instructors, as kinds of workers who work on the bodies of others.[2] These are concrete forms of work that are not peculiar to capitalism. Of course, they are not 'jobs' by virtue of this history; the 'job' is specific to capitalism. Therefore I read the concept of body work as examinations into the effect of contemporary forms of work on bodies and by making an historical reading I understand that they are historically conditioned by the political, socio-economic and cultural conditions (i.e. the mode of production) in which they are practiced.[3] Thus, when I say that these forms of work are not peculiar to capitalism, I also recognise that, in capitalism, they are very different.

As capitalism emerges from feudalism, the concrete forms that work takes alter along with the social and technical relations of production and their attendant politics; when I examine any of these types of work and compare their practice now and their practice 500 years ago, everything about them is different. In the previous chapter it was noted that under capitalism

[1] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 147
[2] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 147
[3] See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *The German Ideology* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998). 37.

the point of production moves from homes to commercial premises, the instruments alter, the character of the technical division of labour is transformed by Taylorist techniques, as is the prescript 'socially-necessary labour time' and, most importantly, there is an alteration in the character of the power relations that follow from the wage-labour relation and shape the relation between body-worker and the person who is worked upon. It should be noted that in the past much of this work would be done within community and kinship relations and should be regarded as reproductive work. These are concrete forms of work that have a particular form in the contemporary configuration of the capitalist mode of production; they are concrete forms of work produced by an expanding system of needs and by the commercialisation of needs, such that the production of many of these use-values shifts from the sphere of reproduction to the sphere of production.

Therefore, although at first glance it may seem that the intended aim of the labour process of body work as work on the bodies of others is the same across history, whether under capitalism or not, this is not the case. I argue that the prevalence by which concepts of emotional, affective, and aesthetic labour – all concepts of labour that are purportedly unique to the present historical conjunction of capitalism – have been applied to these concrete forms of labour demonstrates that these forms of labour are very different from universal ideas about them that may follow from their consideration solely in terms of the use-value that appears to be produced by the work. The analysis of these concrete forms of work in terms of these concepts of labour has demonstrated that even the use-values produced by, say, hairdressing have altered. Hairdressing does not simply produce a coiffure but also produces emotional states, affective responses and, ultimately, formatively shapes the object of labour both aesthetically and in terms of their subjectivity. Furthermore, these concrete forms of labour demonstrate the confluence between these concepts and, more importantly, demonstrate the centrality of the body in these concepts, whether this is explicitly recognised or not.

5.2.3 Emotion/Body Work

Gimlin identifies a third discrete factor of body work: that of working on one's own body in order to 'display and/or experience emotions deemed...appropriate.'[1] The demarcating of this factor of body work can be seen as an approach to the criticism that the body is 'empirically

[1] Gimlin 'What is Body Work?' 360

and conceptually retired' in the research on emotional labour that follows Hochschild.[1] As such, both Wolkowitz and Gimlin point out that the two opposing interpretations of the impact of emotional labour on the body bear upon reading body work politically. On the one hand, Sharon Bolton's reconfiguration of emotional labour as something which workers often perform in 'philanthropic' ways in their interactions with colleagues, management and customers, along with Cas Wouters' argument that workers successfully manage 'multiple selves', indicates a positive understanding of the social and political significance of the phenomena of body work.[2] According to Gimlin, workers often do look to their work as a means to fulfil emotional needs and desires. Wolkowitz calls this the 'empowering' approach to emotional labour, in which the worker's deployment of their emotional capacities is regarded as a positive feature of labour.[3] These interpretations often present work as a virtuous circle of sociability amidst worker-consumer interactions, albeit one that still contains elements of the 'real social differences between [workers] and their customers.'[4]

As it stands, I argue that there is something of a lacuna in the notion of embodied emotion work. The notion begins from the idea that we "feel" emotions in our body; emotions go along with embodied states of Being. When I am angry I "feel" angry: I do not "think" my anger but it bristles across every muscle of my body and through my guts; I even "see" my anger as eponymous red mist that occludes my peripheral vision. When I feel content the opposite happens, in every way. I argue, although I only have my own subjective feeling and some indications from different pieces of research, that this is a common and perhaps even universal process.[5] In this sense, I argue that the emotion/body work literature simply reproduces the problems of the emotional labour literature in that it oftentimes, with the exception of the Labour Process Analysis tradition, proceeds on the basis of a scattered gathering of the subjective experiences of emotional labourers and therefore continues to produce research that concludes on one of two points – work is fulfilling/work is harmful. These conclusions often proceed on the basis of survey and interview respondents' subjective feelings of either fulfilment or damage and theoreticisms thereof. If we remain within this paradigm there is no resolution to, or embracing of, this paradox in sight.

[1] Nickson and Warhurst 'Opening Pandora's Box' 158
[2] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 77
[3] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 76
[4] Debra Gimlin. 'Pamela's Place: Power and Negotiation in the Hair Salon' *Gender and Society* 10:5 (1996). 507.
[5] E.g. Paula M. Niedenthal *et al.* 'Embodiment in Attitudes, Social Perception, and Emotion', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 9:3 (2005). 184-211.; Gerhard Stemmler *et al.* 'Constraints for emotion specificity in fear and anger: The context counts', *Psychophysiology* 38: (2001). 275–291.

5.2.4. The Marks that Work Makes on the Body

Finally, a fourth factor of the concept of body work has been identified. Work is '"written on" the body.'[1] Taking Hochschild's thesis of a potential "cost" to the worker's body as a consequence of the organisation and requirements of work in a different direction, in explicating this factor of body work Gimlin focuses on the relationship between the subjective experience of work, including stress, and scientifically verifiable phenomena such as high blood pressure and weakening of the immune system.[2] Analogously to Hochschild's examination of the child-worker in the wallpaper factory, demonstrating Marx's thesis that labour under capitalism 'mortifies the body', Gimlin also points out that uniform requirements, such as the diktat for female flight attendants to wear heeled shoes, accompanied by the need to stay standing for long periods of time, can result in circulatory problems. Wolkowitz goes beyond this physiological argument and contends that bodies can be transformed 'into an empty sign of corporate branding.'[3] In doing so, she indicates the political character of the marks left on the body by work; bodies are distorted in such a way that they function as articulators of the capitalist mode of production, signifying modes of consumption and of Being.

This fourth factor of body work, the idea that work is written on the body, is often but not always given special status in the literature. It is sometimes treated as different from other factors of the concept of body work; it is regarded as a special way of understanding body work in that it 'overlaps with the [other] three [factors].'[4] It is the factor by which those in the field understand the relations between all the factors of body work. In this sense, the other factors of body work, work on one's own body, work on the bodies of others and the work of managing emotions and display are integrated within an understanding of the processes by which work, or labour rather, marks the body. Furthermore, the idea of this factor of body work as a linking concept is deployed unevenly and in a relatively unsystematic way. This factor emerges *post-facto* from the other three and the indications of its capacity to link the other factors emerges from the similarities between the marks made by work and how they can look like work on one's own body, work on other bodies, and emotion/body work. From understanding of this fourth factor of body work as a way by which we can see how body work practices can relate to one another, and in light of the discrete treatment of the other

[1] Gimlin 'What is Body Work?' 363
[2] Gimlin 'What is Body Work?' 363-4
[3] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 83
[4] Gimlin 'What is Body Work?' 363

factors, it is fair to assume that writers on body work take the relationships between its factors as primarily incidental. That is, the literature on body work proceeds from the assumption that factors of body work relate to one another in terms of their similar characteristics and not because they, for example, each create the conditions for the practice of the other.

5.2.5. The "Inter" Relations of Body Work

I argue that the theorists of body work understand how different body work practices affect one another but they do not consider how these practices might be more fundamentally connected to one another as an assemblage of practices that reproduce one another and produce the social, political and economic environment. My argument on this superficial character of the purported connections between body work practices is not to say that there are not totalising philosophical assumptions which underpin these conceptualisations of body work. As stated above, the existing literature on body work emerges from broadly social constructivist ontological assumptions, and the key proponents of conceptualisations of body work, Shilling, Gimlin and Wolkowitz, each put forward a unique variation. Gimlin proposes an agency-biased social constructivist view of the body. For Gimlin, the body is shaped by two forces: 'individual experience...and the cultural meanings attached to embodiment.'[1] Gimlin prioritises human agency over an idea of any limitations that may emerge from social structures. 'Meanings,' she argues, 'are embedded in institutions,' but they are 'negotiated' at individual and group levels and these meanings are 'created within institutions devoted to altering [the body].'[2] The idea that there might be an institutional logic that is separate from the workers in an institution is entirely absent from Gimlin's epistemological considerations. '*Inevitably*,' Gimlin states – I emphasise and shall repeat for the sake of underlining the absence of any inevitability about this statement – 'Inevitably, meanings are shaped by the people who occupy those institutions.'[3] Thus, for Gimlin, *people* create the cultural meanings that emerge from institutions and those meanings shape how individuals mediate their individual experience – it is solely people, not institutions, solely within specific institutions themselves, not across institutions generally, who ultimately form the processes that shape bodies.

[1] Debra Gimlin. *Body Work: Beauty and Self-Image in American Culture.* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002). 7.
[2] Gimlin *Body Work* 8
[3] Gimlin *Body Work* 8. My emphasis.

Shilling proposes an 'emergentist view' of the body that is congruent with his theory of the body as "unfinished".[1] He developed this view primarily as a critique of the tendency of 'naturalistic' approaches to reduce the body to its biological capacities and of the tendencies of classic social constructivism to reduce the body to 'social forces.'[2] The emergentist view proceeds on the basis of three key principles. Firstly, at birth, the body is a product of evolution, and therefore is a product of both social and biological forces. Secondly, in its development toward maturation, ageing and death, social forces transform the body, but within limits. These limits are both biological and social in character; the individual is limited by their biological capacities but also mediates social forces through their own intentionality. Thirdly, the body affects and is affected by social relations. As David Harvey points out, this theory of the body has a broad and rich intellectual history, and is analogous in some respects to the theories of Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Pierre Bourdieu, Henri Lefebvre, Donna Haraway and Judith Butler.[3]

Wolkowitz's theory brings together a deployment of some Marxist categories within a phenomenological approach and prioritises a concern for the effect of discourse upon the shaping of bodies. In this way, her analysis is more concerned with the relations between body work practices than the analyses of Shilling and Gimlin. She argues that 'focusing on the body is an effective way of linking changes in employment relations, labour processes, and the experiences of individual workers'; in this sense her work has been much more of a guide, rather than a point of critique, to my own thinking through of the relation between the body and work.[4] This is not to say that there are not points that merit critique in Wolkowitz's theory of the body/work nexus. I agree with Wolkowitz that a study of workers' subjective experience of their embodiment illuminates the 'mutually determining interplay of embodied experiences' but also argue that there is analytical purchase to be had with a more thorough examination of the objective conditions under which bodies are commodified.[5] Wolkowitz indicates a potential starting point in this project. As noted above, Wolkowitz deploys a minimal conception of labour-power as being the capacity to work. I argue that a more expansive conception of labour-power, one that takes into account Marx's theory that labour-power is commodified at the moment of wage-labour exchange, illuminates the politics that link the making of bodies as political subjects – across all of the body work factors – and the

[1] Shilling. *The Body and Social Theory, 3rd ed.* 104
[2] Chris Shilling. *The Body and Social Theory, 2nd edition.* (London: SAGE, 2003). 172.
[3] Harvey 'The body as an accumulation strategy' 402
[4] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 175
[5] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 176

doing of work. Furthermore, an account of labour-power that is more expansive than Wolkowitz's also provides a theoretical frame that takes into account the relations between labour-power and its reproduction, thereby allowing me to chart the relations between the work we do on bodies and work itself. Although Wolkowitz situates body work in the contemporary historical conjunction of capitalism, I argue that a more keen focus on the objective conditions of work is needed to foster a more comprehensive understanding of labour under *capitalism*, across the three phases of capitalism, and thereby bring into view important continuous elements of capitalist power within these apparently contemporary phenomena. None of this is to suggest that Wolkowitz has not done important work in terms of illuminating the relations between body work practices – if I seem at times to underplay her contribution it is because her position in the body work canon is assured. I argue, however, that a more comprehensive understanding of the relations that Wolkowitz has introduced will illuminate further the function of the body within the political relations that link and decouple processes of the production of value.

I begin with a critique of these approaches to understanding the formation of bodies in the present historical conjuncture of capitalism. Specifically, against Gimlin's agency bias and against Shilling's inadequate conception of history and his focus on the sphere of circulation at the expense of the sphere of production. I will also examine the effect of Wolkowitz's incomplete use of Marx's concepts, explore her attempts to integrate these within a prior concern for the impact of discourse upon people's subjective experience of their own bodies, and consider the limits of a phenomenological approach. I will do so by deploying the Marxist method of abstraction upon the concept of body work and thereby illuminate important connections between body work, the reproduction of labour-power and ultimately, the exploitation of aesthetic, affect, emotion and the political capacities and potentialities of bodies.

5.3. A Dialectical Concept of Body Work: the "inner" connections of body work

As stated above, the existing field of inquiry into the concept of body work separates it into four factors: the work done on one's own body, work done on the bodies of others, the work of managing emotion, and the marks that work leaves on the body. The fundamental ontological assumption, common to all theorists of body work, is that each factor of the concept of body work is itself. That is, work on one's own body is simply work on one's own body; work on the bodies of others is simply work on the bodies of others; work on one's

embodiment of emotion is simply work on one's embodiment of emotion. They do propose a relation of body work phenomena which is marginally distinctive from the others; work marks the body and these marks can take on characteristics of the other three factors. These factors of body work, or phenomena rather, relate to one another because they are similar. I argue that in order to capture the politics of the exploitation of the body's capacities and potentialities we must explore the idea that the form or configuration of one type of body work phenomena forms and configures other types of body work phenomena. My own inquiry, therefore, begins not from a critique of the substantive content of these descriptions of embodied phenomena but through a critique of how body work theorists understand the relations between body work phenomena, how they deploy the abstractions they make, and how these abstractions simultaneously affect and are affected by *how* they think of the relations between body work phenomena. It also critically engages with how aestheticised modes of labour, as characterised by Lisa Adkins and Celia Lury, and all those embodied capacities that are attendant to this category, are translated into modes of Being.[1] Ultimately, I re-examine the connections between body work practices in order to interrogate how body work produces political subjects within dimensions of struggle and argue that a more specific and systematic understanding of these relations brings the process of the production of politics in work more clearly into view.

With this is mind, the process of abstraction that I am embarking upon begins from a process of immanent critique. The first step in this task is to follow Mihailo Marković's characterisation of critique; my exposition aims 'at the abolition of only those features of the criticised object which constitute its essential limitation, while preserving all those features (properties, elements, structures) which constitute a necessary condition for further development.'[2] That is, I reconfigure existing understandings of body work within a framework suited to exploring the relational character that pertains between each of its factors and only discard those features of body work that are inconsistent or inchoate with the project to understand the production of politics in emergent forms of labour. To do this, I examine existing understandings of body work in terms of the three modes by which abstractions can be seen to be 'faulty'. I examine the conceptualisations in terms of their narrowness and/or breadth, for evidence of the transposition of the theoretical results from the analysis of

[1] Lisa Adkins and Celia Lury. 'The labour of identity: performing identities, performing economies', *Economy & Society* 28:4 (1999). 598-614.
[2] Mihailo Marković. 'Introduction' in Mihailo Marković and Gajo Petrović. (eds), *Praxis: Yugoslav Essays in the Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences.* Tr. Joan Coddington, David Rouge and others. (London: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979). xxxiii.

phenomena between temporalities, and evaluate the range of vantage points that they deploy. Alongside this abolition of these limitations, the next steps of my inquiry proceed by also considering body work from the same bases as the immanent critique, although inversed. Alongside the negation of body work theorists' faulty abstractions of historical generality, vantage point, and conceptual extensions I will also reveal relevant abstractions that foster a deeper understanding of the politics that link and decouple processes of the production of bodies at this particular historical conjuncture.

5.3.1. The Emotional Body

It is important to engage in an element of immanent critique that pertains at a methodologically higher scale than the engagement with the various expositions of the different factors of body work as they are presented in the existing literature. The four-factored structure of the concept of body work has emerged historically, factor-by-factor, as noted in the introduction to this chapter. The concept of body work was not produced by one theorist but was produced by various theorists, each working on enquiries into the significance of the body in understanding society, work, and politics, each sketching out the ways in which understandings of the body bears upon understandings of the structuration, or lack thereof, of contemporary society. Nonetheless, the entire field of enquiry into body work is made up of theorists whose ontological starting-point is that there are things and there are relations; they maintain that things and relations are interdependent in character but things themselves are not constituted by their relations. Therefore, although it might appear that the tetra-headedness of the concept of body work is a feature that emerged organically from growing concerns in social theory regarding the relationship between bodies, work and society, it has also emerged from this shared ontological assumption that things are inter-connected but do not share a more fundamental "inner connection". The four-fold configuration and the notion of inner connection presents an important provocation: is the separation of emotion from the body itself – as implied by the analytically separate factor of emotion/body work – an appropriate basis on which to proceed in the analysis of the production of politics through the regulation of the body by work?

I argue that the introduction of the notion of emotion management into the body work schema is indicative of the importance of emotions in understanding the bearing of the embodied character of work and of the prominence of studies in emotional labour. A reading of the introduction of this factor into the body work conceptual matrix as a necessary component to

understanding the relation that pertains between the body and work is less convincing. The notion of managing emotions and producing emotions in others is contained in the concepts of work one does on one's own body, work performed on other bodies, and the inscriptions that work makes on the body. That is, our emotions and our capacity to manage them are not separate from having a body. Therefore, I ask what the purpose is for the making of emotions separate from the body in the method of analysis. Further, I ask whether it is justified to make the embodied character of emotion as something separate from the idea of work on one's own body, or work on the bodies of others, or the argument that work makes marks on the body, and to do so in a way that makes the separation of emotion analytically equal to these three processes.

In answer to the first question, the purpose of separating emotion is to highlight the specific relations of bodies' emotional capacities and work. The problem with the existing field of enquiry into body work is that it makes this separation analytically equal to the other factors of body work and therein it paradoxically obscures the embodied character of emotion and thereby obscures the relations between work, the body and emotions. How? When we manage our own emotions, whether we do so in order to produce a socially acceptable display or to attend to our inner feeling by mediating our expectations of the world, we are working on our own body. When we manage or tend to the emotions of others we are working on their body. When work or labour marks our emotions, shapes them or forms them, this mark is embodied. Thus, the idea of an emotional factor of body work highlights an important aspect of body work but this aspect cannot be integrated within a schema because the other factors of the concept already contain emotion. Therefore, a concept of body work with four aspects that include emotion implies a separation of emotion and emotional capacity from the body, implicating a Cartesian mind/body dualism in which emotion is regarded as something different from the body itself. As the process of abstraction progresses I will demonstrate that a dualist understanding of the body is incompatible with the inner connections of body work practices. These practices upset binaries such as mind/body as they cross notions like Hochschild's public self and private self; I argue that a reciprocal relationality pertains between different types of body work phenomena that links and decouples public and private, work and home. In order to begin to comprehend this inner relationality between body work practices I argue that the idea of an analytically separate factor of the concept of body work that is solely concerned with the management of emotion must be discarded. Notwithstanding, in framing the other three factors of body work I retain the qualitative content of the factor that I have discarded and thereby understand that body work represented by the remaining

three factors has emotional content.[1] Thus, the immanent critique of the concept of body work has led me to understand emotion not as a separate factor of the concept but as something that is immediately and always present in its other factors.

5.3.2. The Conceptual Structure of the Dialectical Concept of Body Work

The dialectical concept of body work has three factors or aspects: work on one's own body, work on the bodies of others and the marks made on the body by work. By discarding the idea of emotion management as a separate factor of the concept of body work and instead integrate emotion within my understanding of the body, as represented in the three remaining factors, I come to understand emotion as an abstraction of extension that can be made in relation to body work. By understanding emotion in this way I can demonstrate the inner connection between body work practices. However, before I demonstrate this inner connection, it is important to first set out the historical context of the problematic.

As discussed in chapter one, materialist dialectical abstractions 'focus on and incorporate both change and interaction' whilst also recognising continuity.[2] Social reality is in flux; social reality changes through its interaction with itself through history. Therefore, change is accompanied by continuity. Marx's understanding of levels of historical generality is, in part, his project to comprehend this. There is a tendency in some of the literature on body work to hypostatise a theory of human nature, examine it solely in terms of people's subjective experience of how they engage in body work and how they feel about it, and then transpose general theories regarding the relationship between how people interact as bodies within the social across a variety of temporalities, i.e., so as to apply them to class society, to capitalism and to the present historical conjunction of capitalism. That is, there is a tendency to take theories of an ahistorical and universal human nature informed by understandings that proceed from subjective feeling and pertain from the vantage point of a liberal characterisation of the essence of human nature. These theories are transposed onto theories of the body in class society. Thereby, power-laden relations are depoliticised and their consequences naturalised. Shilling and Gimlin transpose a universal human understanding of body work upon capitalism in exactly this way: they take the apparent "naturalness" of body

[1] This is what Martin Heidegger calls a movement of *conservere*, similar to Marković's characterisation of the dialectical approach to immanent critique, in which the obstacles to the development of understanding are eliminated but the contribution that the obstacle makes, in this case the importance of emotion, is retained. Martin Heidegger. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.* Tr. P. Emad & K. Maly. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). 28.

[2] Ollman *Dance of the Dialectic* 63

work as it proceeds outside of capitalist society and impose that conclusion upon their ideas about the politics of body work under capitalism. As such, they are unable to capture the processes of this structuration of the capacities of bodies because they prioritise a 'social' that persists more or less autonomously from capitalist production and therefore they do not consider body work from the vantage point of labour. Although labour is a key focal point in Gimlin's research, her failure to navigate the tension in the emotional labour literature between arguments regarding it as a pernicious commodification of embodied capacities and the idea that emotional labour can be of benefit to the worker's 'sense of themselves' is indicative of a general failure to consider labour as a place where there is an inequality of power.[1] Secondly, while Gimlin limits her vantage point to a liberal characterisation of institutionality, Shilling limits his vantage point to the sphere of circulation. As a result he incorrectly states that the key distinction between body work in capitalist societies and body work in 'pre-modern societies' is that, in the latter, body work is a phenomenon intended to realise a socialised, tribal identity whereas 'the body in modernity is more frequently treated as a phenomenon to be shaped, decorated and trained as an expression of an individual's identity.'[2] Finally, he operates the categories of corporeality and technical and social relations within a system, albeit one that is circular, of cause and effect. Within this system the embodied capacities of the subject are *a priori*: according to Shilling, social and technical relations emerge as a result of the 'unfinished' character of the body, which in turn contribute to corporeality's movement towards an unattainable completion, and so on. As such, he removes the body from labour and production – production in the broadest sense as both productive labour and reproductive work – and thereby reduces body work to 'lifestyle choices.'[3] His theory fails to consider how the logic of surplus-value production *qua* capital accumulation – that is, as this logic structures power relations that connect social and technical relations – might intervene within this mediation between the body and a "social", a social that is purported to be disconnected from production. Shilling rightly universalises the idea that what social and technical relations relate *to* are bodies, but foregoes the idea that social and technical relations also relate to themselves and each other and, as a result, cannot systematically situate these relations within history.

The aim of my conception of body work is to capture historical change and continuity in the relation between people, production, and society, and to produce a political understanding of

[1] Gimlin 'What is Body Work?' 362
[2] Shilling *The Body and Social Theory, 2nd ed.* 174
[3] Shilling *The Body and Social Theory, 2nd ed.* 174

these obscured relations. To capture historical change and continuity, I begin by stating that all work is performed by the body, but that body work is work that is performed on bodies, regardless as to whether they are the bodies of the person doing the work, or someone other than the worker. This is a universal condition of body work; we can say with some certainty that this is the condition of body work when we consider it as something that is common to humans.[1] Therefore, in order to abstract body works' fundamental characteristics as they proceed outside of power, it is useful to begin by understanding body work as it pertains outside of the conditions of a class-based society. This way I can consider body work solely in terms of use-value and sketch out the centrality of value within this problematic step-by-step, thereby capturing transformations that result from the historical development of forms of value production and their attendant politics. It has been discovered that body work has been practised in societies as early as the Stone Age. For example, as Marshall Sahlins notes, some stone-age peoples gave gifts of 'hair-string', while John W. Hedges records that the males of the Stromness stone-age settlement followed complex finger-nail maintenance practices.[2] It is important to note that the use-values produced in this universal character of body work are cultural rather than economic.[3] Unfortunately, among other unknowns, we are left to speculate as to the social relations and the relations-in-production that structure these tribes' use of hair-string and maintenance of finger-nails, as well as whether these body maintenance tasks were undertaken individually or as part of a kinship ritual. Similarly we do not know if, for example, the social practices of body work in Stromness involved a sexual division of labour – that it is just the males of Stromness who do this body work already indicates a sexual division – which would offer a different vantage point onto an apparently universal view of the timelessness and permanency of body work, belying any purported normative element. This kind of power-laden practice of body work would, of course, indicate a class-basis and thereby open out a plane of critique on universalist and relatively depoliticised understandings of body work. I think it is reasonable to conclude that the gender specific character of body work in Stromness indicates the possibility of political relations amongst tribes that include some and exclude others, so as to confer or indicate lack of status or power, and to mark those who are part of and a non-part of political society, in reference to Rancière's formulation.[4]

[1] This is not to say that animals do not undertake work on their bodies, nor is it to say that other classes of the homo genus did not, but is to say that the importance of the distinction between human and non-human activity as discussed in chapter two is recognised.
[2] Marshall Sahlins. *Stone Age Economics*. (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1972). 266.; John W. Hedges. *Death and Life in a Stone Age Tribe*. (New York: New Amsterdam Books/The Meredith Press, 1987). 141-2.
[3] My use of the category "culture" here does not exclude religious sentiments.
[4] Rancière 'Ten Theses on Politics'

In this speculation however, I am operating with a certain character of abstractions of extension and vantage points. I have begun, for example, considering body work solely in terms of the use-values it produces. As a result of this limited abstraction of extension, the vantage points that are brought into view are limited to the subject of work and person doing the work. However, by thinking in terms of historical development and continuity, I consider this universal aspect of body work as being indicative of continuity but also argue that it would be a grave error to transpose this apparently universal condition onto class society, onto capitalism generally, or onto the present conjunction of capitalism more specifically. I argue that it is necessary to begin with the conclusions that these practices may bring to the fore and avoid transposing those conclusions onto body work under capitalism because it is simply not enough to begin on the premise that 'all societies require that their members do work on their bodies,' as Gimlin argues, and to implicate a normative element to body work that proceeds on the basis of a purported "naturalness" or "universality".[1] Class society results in the intervention of politics and/or an economic logic against any social or cultural recourse to the naturalness of body work.

5.3.3. Body Work under Capitalism

Capitalism and the present historical conjunction of capitalism are, of course, at the centre of my problematic. By examining body work at these levels of historical generality, the relations that emerge from the forming of bodies, and how these relations have emerged from history can be more fully explicated. When the relations of body work under capitalism are considered, this work is labour when it creates value as abstract wage-labour. From the vantage point of production, body work appears first as factor two of the concept of body work; body work as wage-labour is work on the bodies of others. Body work is labour-power in motion, i.e., work itself, toward the intended aim of the labour process (i.e., the formative shaping of a body other than the worker). Labour-power is transformed into variable capital in its exchange for the wage. From the vantage point of capital therefore, the capacity of bodies to formatively shape the bodies of others no longer appears as labour-power but rather as variable capital. Variable capital is subsequently put into motion according to the capitalist organisation of work; that is, according to its characteristic bureaucratic, technical and normative methods of control that are designed to produce surplus-value.

[1] Debra Gimlin. 'What is Body Work' 355

What are the concrete, use-value producing capacities of labour-power that capitalism at its present historical conjunction reproduces, how does it do so, and how does an understanding of the body as central to capitalist accumulation help us to understand the political apparatuses that subsume the body? Of course, many of these processes of the reproduction of labour-power are no different today that they were in the nineteenth century: the exchange-value of labour-power and/or the ability to acquire and service debt is equal to the value of the commodities and the use-value of the work exploited from the sphere of reproduction that are required to reproduce labour-power.[1] 'Body work' is work in which the subjective, aesthetic, affective, corporeal, linguistic and cognitive capacities of the body are mobilised as an instrument for the formative shaping of those same capacities of bodies. As such, the features of concepts of aesthetic labour, affective labour, emotional labour and immaterial labour are opened up as analytical points that extend from body work. My critique of emergent forms of labour and of Lazzarato, Hochschild, Hardt and Negri, and the Strathclyde Group's concepts converge on one common point: the production of value in labour under capitalism bears upon bodies' potential and capacities to be political.

The use-value of labour-power is that it produces use-values. Each of the concepts of aesthetic, emotional, immaterial/affective/biopolitical labour uncover an aspect of the *embodied* character of the use-values created by labour-power. My reconfiguration of the concept of body work systematically demonstrates that the essence of these use-values is the capacities of bodies to produce one another. By situating it within an analysis of capitalist power relations it demonstrates that this production of bodies' capacities pertains amidst the dual contradictory character of the reproduction of labour-power and that therefore the changes in the organisation of work do not demonstrate either a becoming autonomy of living labour nor a process of ever more interminable domination of life by the logic of capital accumulation. To put this another way, I argue that these forms of labour demonstrate an alteration in the political economic character of the labour/capital antagonism in which the body itself becomes the site of conflict between labour and capital, and that this site extends throughout the spheres of production and consumption and produces a cultural and political context that is coordinate to Marx's theory of alienation. Returning to the descriptions of each of these forms of labour from chapter two, by conceiving of these features as abstractions of body work, as vantage points from different specific branches of production, we see that what is distinctive about the contemporary conjunction of capitalism is that it utilises more and more aspects of the body as labour-power. In particular, in the areas of symbolic and affective

[1] Silvia Federici. 'The Reproduction of Labour Power'. The latter point is what Marx missed.

production, the management of emotion, and the articulation and production of aesthetics, bodies' capacities to be political, i.e., the potential for praxis, are the properties by which labour is the 'form-giving fire'; the workers body, and those capacities themselves, are a central element of the matter that is given form.[1]

From the vantage point of capital, factor one of body work – work on one's own body – is a practice upon which the consumption of commodities is generated. In the first place consumption for body work is a phenomenon that situates itself within the expanding system of needs and body work is thereby produced as a site of potential commodity consumption. This one-dimensionality is reflected in the universalist tendencies of understandings of body work; body work involves the exchange of property and the consumption of use-values. I argue that these understandings of body work do not, however, fully consider work on one's own body from the vantage point of capital, with the exception of Wolkowitz. Labour-power is a commodity that is consumed by capital. With this in mind, from the vantage point of capital work on one's own body is also 'the reproduction of the worker as the carrier of the capacity to work.'[2] That is, body work is the work of the reproduction of labour-power and is therefore the production of the form of variable capital. Of course, these two aspects are intrinsically connected; the consumption of use-values is prerequisite to the production of the self and the production of the self, in an important sense, is the reproduction of labour-power. I argue that to understand body work within history, capitalism, and its present conjunction, it must be examined from the vantage point of labour-power. It is labour-power that is commodified in the wage-labour exchange, and it is labour-power that is subject to formative shaping both at and outside the point of production. In order to begin to understand the politics that link and decouple these spheres it is necessary to make labour-power re-emerge from its abstraction as variable capital.

The turn towards forms of so-called post-industrial production that exploit emergent forms of labour reiterates the question of the reproduction of labour-power under capitalism. As demonstrated in chapter four, the character of both the instrument and the object of the labour process indicate a tendency toward the body as an accumulation strategy. I argue that this tendency is a fundamental aspect of a transition from the phase of the real subsumption of labour under capital to a qualitatively distinctive phase of capitalism. In these emergent forms of labour the worker uses their body as the *instrument* of labour, often working on it

[1] Marx *Grundrisse* 361
[2] Wolkowitz *Bodies at Work* 29

beforehand, and the *object* is another body, i.e., the customer. In framing the problem of the reproduction of labour-power in the formal subsumption of labour under capital and real subsumption of labour under capital phases, Marx – and many Marxists since have followed this pattern – draws out the relation of labour-power to, first, the commodity form and, second, the technical division of labour. That is, their consideration of the biological reproduction of labour-power is limited to the relationship between the circulation of commodities and the exchange-value of labour-power, while the reproduction of the appropriate form of labour-power is interiorised within production, i.e., within the technical division of labour and bureaucratic and normative forms of control. Of course, the first aspect of this framing of the reproduction of labour-power has been unpeeled by Federici and revealed as a 'faulty' abstraction itself.[1] But to obviate this discussion for the moment, the concept of body work reveals a fundamental relation between the inside and the outside of capitalist production. A dialectical configuration of the concept of body work reveals that: the worker is formatively shaped in work; that the worker produces ideological and cultural commodities which formatively shape the subject through the sphere of consumption; such that the subject engages in body work in such a way as to reproduce their own labour-power and the labour-power of others in accordance with the requirements of capitalist production. This *accordance*, nonetheless, is subject to a constant tension as a result of the inability of capital to totalise its power over all spheres of life. This tension notwithstanding, as capital utilises more and more aspects of embodied labour-power, political apparatuses for the reproduction of socially necessary forms of labour-power extend beyond the site of production to the spheres of circulation and consumption.

From the vantage point of the commodity the consumer of commodities is also a producer of commodities and a bearer of labour-power – keeping in mind here that labour-power itself is a commodity. Therefore, when body work is examined from the vantage point of the commodity "labour-power", it becomes increasingly difficult to separate factors one and two. Body work is a form of wage-labour in which the subjective, aesthetic, affective, emotional, linguistic, cognitive and corporeal capacities of the body are mobilised as an instrument for the formative shaping of those same capacities of bodies under wage-labour. As such, it is impossible to separate wage-labour from the work that workers do on their own bodies and the bodies of others outside of labour time. These body work practices, which are undertaken in apparently separate spheres of life, actually entail one another in an ontological sense; the fundamental inner connection between the two is the process of the reproduction of labour-

[1] Federici 'The Reproduction of Labour Power'

power. As such, body work in these two apparently separate spheres is concomitant to the marks written on the body by wage-labour. Given the logic of value production under capitalism and the imperative of the deployment of 'socially necessary labour', labour as activity cannot be separated from labour-power nor from the modes of the reproduction of labour-power nor from the understanding that labour under capitalism is a site of coercion and consent, domination and subordination, and therefore is a place that marks the body of the worker. The work that we do on our own bodies, work we do on the bodies of others, and the marks made on the body by work are not discrete sets of practices but are really just three aspects of the same relation: this relation is an essentially political relation within which production and bodies connect and disconnect.

By examining emergent forms of labour in terms of their concrete labour process, that is, in terms of the concrete forms of the putting into motion of labour activity, instrument and object and with reference to the processes by which labour-power is given determinate form, a fundamental inner connection between these three factors of body work emerges. No one factor of body work is analytically prior to the other but rather body work proceeds as work on one's own body, work on the bodies of others, and as the marking of the body by work within a reciprocal relationship. I argue that emergent forms of labour under capitalism shape bodies aesthetically, they shape how bodies communicate with one another, and they shape bodies' very subjectivity because they constitute an important aspect of the power apparatus in which the subjects who produce the political and ideological environment are themselves shaped. Any political and ideological environment shapes subjects' capacities and forestalls and/or facilitates their potentialities because this environment constitutes the terrain in which bodies exercise their political character. In short, work on one's own body is attendant to emergent forms of labour. This work is constituent of what it is to be a worker in these branches of industry; the work of emergent forms of labour is constituted by a labour process that has as its intended aim the formative shaping of the body of the consumer of the commodity of emergent forms of labour – emergent forms of labour mark the body. The worker's body is marked because emergent forms of labour involve the formative shaping of the worker's embodied capacities as the instrument of labour. The consumer's body is marked in such a way as to embody the particular form of capacities that are valorised by the emergent labour market. As a heuristic to demonstrate this inner connection between body work phenomena – to demonstrate this reciprocal relationship – I will describe how this binding pertains to call centre work.

In the previous chapter I argued that front-line call centre work requires that workers work on their own bodies, that the aim of the labour process is to formatively shape the bodies of others, and as such call centre work constitutes an assemblage of processes by which the bodies of workers and consumers are marked by a specifically capitalist organisation of work. The worker must engage in work on their own body as a result of the politics that are attendant to the conditions of wage-labour labour under capitalism and because call centre work is contingent upon the instrumentalisation of the embodied capacities of workers. To restate these conditions of wage-labour: labour is not simply a process of use-value production but is a political apparatus in which labour-power is given determinate form; capital, in its manifestation as management, controls the form of the labour process and therewith prescribes the determinate form that labour *must* have in order to be considered as value, i.e., in order to be considered as *labour* (in the case of capitalist production this form is determined according to the exigencies of the securing of surplus-value). Call centre work is contingent upon the embodied capacities of workers: the production of value pertains from the mobilisation of the worker's embodied capacities for communication, emotion management and production, linguistic abilities and their ability to manipulate language registers, and ultimately the worker's ability to affect customers in such a way as to build or maintain a relationship between the customer and the business. The putting into motion of the worker's embodied capacities produces a chain of value, realising labour as value and producing the conditions for the exploitation of surplus-value from that labour. The body of the consumer is the object of the labour process of call centre work; the intended aim of the labour process of call centre work is to formatively shape the body upon which labour activity is exercised. This condition of emergent forms of labour is not simply a discrete, individual service encounter, or a set of service encounters through call centres, or a set of service encounters between workers and customers across different branches of service production more generally. Workers are customers and customers are workers; bodies are not distinctive "producing bodies" or "consuming bodies" – they are both. Embodied subjective capacities are not formatively shaped in series of discrete and unconnected activities, interactions, or moments of production and consumption. Rather, these apparent moments of subjectivity produce bodies as bearers of capacities within a connected historical process. The modes by which emergent forms of labour under capitalism are constituted within an environment in which politics links and decouples the making/marking of the body with the mode of production.

This nexus of capitalist control over the labour process, the embodied character of labour-power, and the variety of the aspects of labour under capitalism that render labour as *forced labour*, constitute an environment in which workers must formatively shape their own bodies such that their body is coordinate to the determination of labour-power – commodified, with a use-value and an exchange-value – that is common to these branches of industry. This is not to discount the struggle against the capitalist determination of labour-power but rather to restate that the field of struggle is constituted by the dependency of the working class on the sale of their labour, the separation of producers from the means of production and the transformation of the aim of labour from a concern with the production of use-values to a concern with the production of exchange-value. Call centre workers must shape their own bodies in accordance with the prescripts of the capitalist determination of labour-power in terms of the labour-power as a form that bears value, or they must at least appear to do so. The worker's body is part of the product; it is not simply the way that the call centre worker sounds that is subject to the capitalist control of the labour process, but rather the qualitative content or mode by which worker's communicate, manage and produce emotion and affective responses that forms the labour-power that is socially-fixed within the power apparatus of the labour process. This power apparatus extends beyond production by means of the struggle over the reproduction of labour-power. There is a dual connection between body work as work on one's own body and body work as work on the bodies of others. First, work on the bodies of others in the call centre is contingent upon work on one's own body, as the reproduction of labour-power. It is through the reproductive relation that work on one's own body, as a valorisation of labour-power, is ontologically connected to body work as work on the bodies of others. The reproduction of labour-power cannot be reduced to work on one's own body but is a process that occurs as a result of working on oneself and being worked upon by others within the social and technical relations of capitalist production.

Emergent forms of labour produce a political environment that is characterised by capitalistic inscriptions on the body, which are never total but nonetheless designate the body as a site for the exertion of force, compulsion, domination, coercion and consent. The inability of these capitalistic inscriptions of the body to constitute a totalising force indicate that the body is also the source of struggle, resistance, sabotage, and refusal.

3.4. The Politics of Body Work

I argue that this conception of body work is better focused to grasp the indeterminate character of the body than the concepts of aesthetic labour, emotional labour and affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production. The dialectical concept of body work is able to capture the struggle to give bodies determinate form that pervades throughout production and consumption in the branches of industry that utilise emergent forms of labour in value production. In emergent forms of labour, what is inseparable is made to appear separate. When we consider body work under capitalism and body work in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism, the analytic separation between the work that one does on one's own body, the work that one does on the bodies of others, and the marks made on the body by labour under capitalism, depoliticises the production of bodies. This relation, or rather its absence, is an *abstraction*: the separation of work from life produces an ideological environment in which body work undertaken in the so-called private sphere appears to emerge from what Shilling calls 'lifestyle choices' and thus appears to be autonomous from capital and driven by an irreducible intendedness of the subject towards their own body, albeit one that is shaped within society. Thus the Strathclyde Group argue that capital merely deploys already-existing forms of "naturally" occurring embodiment in value production and thereby situate their analysis within the politics of the wage-labour exchange of which Marx is so critical: that is, by naturalising forms of embodiment and separating them from capitalist control ideas of 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham' displace the processes by which the production of the body is the production of alterity.[1]

Under capitalism the relation between the factors of body work is organised according to the apparatuses of subordination and domination that capitalism entails, which extend far beyond regimes of control in wage-labour. In the transition from industrial capitalism to the contemporary phase the relation between these two factors is articulated by the commodity relation, both as a relation of consumption in terms of an expanding system of needs and as a relation of labour-power, remembering that labour-power under capitalism is a commodity. The work that one does on one's own body is intimately related to the reproduction of forms of labour-power that are requisite to wage-labour performed on the bodies of others. That is, it is intimately related to the marks that are written on the body by wage-labour. I stated above that call centre workers must shape their bodies in accordance with the prescripts of the capitalist determination of labour-power, in terms of labour-power as a form that bears value, or that they must at least appear to do so. This determination is constituted by workers'

[1] Marx *Capital, vol. I* 172

struggle against this determination of the character of their embodied labour-power. Workers can actively resist capital's attempts to engender the worker's formative shaping of their own body – of course, this risks the worker's loss of the buyer of their labour-power and their re-entry into the labour market. As such, struggle always risks the simple reproduction of the political problem of the capitalistic determination of the body as labour only with the name of a different capitalist on the top of the worker's timesheet at the end of the week. There is, in this struggle, the possibility of the worker's restatement of their control over their own body alongside the maintenance of the given wage-labour relationship. I would say here that de-collectivisation and the individualisation of political struggle in labour render this apparent victory for labour a difficult prospect to imagine. I also noted in the previous chapter that the determination of labour-power in the call centre engages the political capacities of bodies and, as such, limits and forestalls the possibilities for resistance because the very capacities from which resistance is to emerge are themselves subject to capitalistic determination by means of the processes by which labour-power is rendered a commodity on the labour market.

I have begun from the perspective of the existing literature and conceived of body work as having four factors: work on one's own body, work on the bodies of others, the work of managing emotion, and the marks that work makes on the body. In congruence with the concern of the dialectical method to understand the inner connections between social forces, I have discarded the idea that emotion is best treated as a separate category and integrated the emotional content of body work within the other factors. Thus, the dialectical concept of body work contains three factors – work on one's own body, work on the bodies of others, and the marks made by work – each the bearer of emotional content. Having examined body work within capitalism and the present historical conjunction of capitalism, from the vantage point of production, consumption and wage-labour, I have considered the processes of the reproduction of labour-power. In doing so, I argue that there are fundamental inner connections between the practice of working on one's own body and that of working on the bodies' of others. In wage-labour these inner connections are mediated according to the requirements for the reproduction of the necessary form(s) of labour-power, required by specific branches of industry, namely those engaged in the production of cultural symbols, the production and reproduction of the body as an aesthetic artefact, and the management, production and consumption of affects and emotions.

None of these conclusions arising from the dialectical reformulation of the concept of body work imply that there are not discourses laden with cultural meaning that are articulated from

institutions, or to say that people do not mediate these meanings upon what Hochschild calls a 'template of prior expectations', nor is it to say people who live today, in the present historical conjunction of capitalism, do not do work on their own bodies in order to quite literally carve out some sort of semblance of an individual identity. But I do say that, because the existing representations of body work omit the fundamental inner connections that pertain between its different forms, these theories often present us with not so much a one-dimensional account but rather they tend to ignore the most important apparatus in the making of bodies and the production of politics today – the logic of capital accumulation and of the production of economic value. The dialectical concept of body work demonstrates that by considering these relations from the perspective of production and doing so with a notion of the processes of the production of economic value and its concomitant circulation that previously hidden relations are revealed. These relations – the reproduction of labour-power, the technical, normative and bureaucratic strictures that prevail in work, and the commodity fetishism that propels the circulation and the character of cultural meaning – describe the politics, the articulation and the reception of power, which flow beneath and between the making of bodies.

The dialectical concept of body work demonstrates that the capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – are formatively shaped as objects of the labour process, as a consequence of the consumption of commodities and their cultural and ideological content, and as a result of reproductive work, within the forced character of the capitalist labour market. In the next chapter I analyse the politics that are attendant to the exploitation of these capacities of bodies by considering these capacities as vantage points upon the alienation of the body in labour under capitalism.

Chapter Six. The Emerging Politics of Alienation

"...we, as Marxists, must strive to grasp the terms of the problem of power in the productive organism."

Antonio Gramsci[1]

6.1. The (Re)Production of Alienated Bodies

6.1.1. The Alienated Unity of Emergent Forms of Labour

There is a relation between the forms that bodies take and the forms that the organisation of labour takes. In the contemporary conjunction of capitalism this relation is constituted by the rendering of the political capacities of the body as an object and an instrument for the labour process. This is a political relation in a double-sense. First, in emergent forms of labour the capacities by which bodies are political and capable of praxis – the capacities by which bodies are able to interact with the external world in a practical, critical way – are the object of the political economic processes in which labour-power is socially-fixed, those processes by which indeterminate labour-power is given determination. It is a political relation that has politics as its object; the ideal form of this determination, from the perspective of capital, is the end of politics. Second, it is political because this relation is not one of cause and effect – vis-à-vis a putative hegemon that shapes bodies according to its needs, desires and logic – but rather is a relation in which bodies are precarious figures that are at one and the same time objects of determination and subjects of indeterminacy. This relation is constitutive of political spaces in which subjects are formed. Bodies are formed not only at the site of production but rather there is an inner connection between different practices of body work that brings the logics and power relations of capitalist value production into collision with the formation of bodies and engages these logics with spheres of life that are beyond capital and antagonistic to it. Politics links and decouples these moments and tendencies. As such, this relation of determination is not an economic determinacy in which bodies are brought under the heel of the commodity and politics vanishes accordingly; the relation of determination is a political relation that is articulated and disarticulated in connection to the failure and forming of political subjectivity. The determination of bodies does not make political space vanish but rather the character of forms of embodiment that are attendant to emergent forms of labour demonstrates the urgency

[1] In *Ordine Nuovo* cf. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. 'Introduction' to Antonio Gramsci. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* Tr. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. (eds). (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971). xxxix.

of the political problem of wage-labour under capitalism. Bodies' political capacities and potentialities have become central to the capitalist mode of production. The political space in this problematic is in the contradictions between the limits and delimiting points to the processes by which political subjects fail and form, by which subjects demonstrate that we live in a world in which the site of production is a site of politics. This failure and forming of political subjectivity is posited by the alienation of the body; work is a political space to the extent that the ability of the capitalist organisation of labour to shape the body in the image of value is incomplete.

Therefore, the political problem of alienation has never been as urgent as it is today because it is the political capacities and potentialities of the worker that are the object of alienation. The organisation of labour appears as an apparatus that separates the worker from the embodied capacities by which the resistance, subversion and destruction of the organisation of labour is to emerge. Furthermore, the organisation of labour appears as an apparatus that distorts those capacities for resistance by transforming them into capacities for the production of value, i.e., codes the political capacities of bodies as labour-power. To illustrate the politics of this twin-mode of separation/distortion I examine how it operates across the spheres of production and reproduction. I argue that a backwards study of history reveals an immanent tendency of capital that is not merely a response to moments of class struggle as the post-*operaisti* argue, although these moments do occur and capitalist processes for the securing of surplus-value do metamorphose as a result, but rather that there is a tendency in capitalism for an alienated unity of the spheres of production and reproduction within a productive organism that is nonetheless constituted amidst contradiction. To iterate, it is important to avoid scraping away the significance of class struggle but it is also important to recognise that class struggle is a force of production that pertains in relation to other forces of production; class struggle is not an autonomous force through which praxis proceeds as a teleology but rather class struggle is constituted in a political relation to production. Against this monistic understanding of class struggle as the harbinger of capitalist development I argue that the tendency in capitalist production to unite the spheres of production and reproduction as a productive organism is predicated on alienation. As Guy Debord argues, it 'reunites the separate, but reunites it as *separate*.'[1] Body work is a complex of alienations that ontologically connect the spheres of

[1] Guy Debord. *Society of the Spectacle.* (Detroit: Red Notes, 1970). Para 29. Emphasis in original. The reader familiar with Debord will note that I have amputated Debord's "spectacle" in my invocation of his argument, and have done so because, as should be apparent, my analysis does not indicate that the commodity 'has attained the *total* occupation of social life' which for Debord is the moment of the spectacle. Para 42. Emphasis in original.

production and reproduction as an alienated unity, a unity that only persists because of the inner connection between their constituent processes.

Alienated labour connects production, consumption and reproduction by way of the general historical conditions of wage-labour under capitalism.[1] Production proceeds as alienated production, the sphere of consumption is constituted by commodities, and reproduction is concomitant of the labour-market. Alienated labour is the ontological connection between these apparently separate spheres. Alienation in emergent forms of labour has taken on a particularly political character in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism beyond the theory that the emancipation of the worker from alienation is the political form of the emancipation from private property and from servitude. Alienation appears as a foreclosing on the political project of dealienation because the capacities and potentialities of bodies by which the project is to proceed are formatively shaped in the figure of value. Alienation in emergent forms of labour pertains from the political character of the embodied capacities of labour-power that are alienated as a consequence of labour, that are embodied in the commodity, and that are concomitant to the requisites of a labour-market that requires labour-power to be reproduced in these specific forms. Emergent forms of labour constitute the spheres of production, consumption and reproduction as an alienated unity. Alienation is, therefore, an integral aspect of body work under capitalism; that is, it is impossible to consider body work under capitalism without considering it as a complex of separations; the separation from self, the separation from others and the separation from the world.

My examination of alienation in body work proceeds as a revision of Marx's theory of alienation in light of my empirical examinations of the politics of work and my theoretical investigation into concepts of work. Chapter one is many pages past therefore I will briefly summarise the conceptual structure of Marx's theory of alienation. I then highlight the significance of two principal vantage points in my project to understand the contemporary politics of alienation and set out the structure of this final part of my present investigation into production of politics in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism.

[1] The separation of the worker from the means of production and the forced character of labour that follows, as discussed in chapter four.

6.1.2. The Conceptual Structure of Marx's Theory of Alienation[1]

The conceptual structure of Marx's theory of alienated labour is constituted by Marx's identification of four aspects attendant to the labour process under capitalism. These aspects are the alienation from the object, the alienation from activity, the alienation from the life of the species, and the alienation from fellow human beings. Under capitalism the worker is alienated from the object of their labour. Capital appropriates the worker's objectification by mediating producers' relation to nature through private property, exchange and wage-labour. As such, 'the worker puts his life into the object...his life no longer belongs to him but to the object.'[2] The 'object' is not simply the particular congealed article of matter that is worked upon in a labour process – it is not simply a *thing* – but also constitutes the totality of nature; capitalist production is a tendency to designate all things, all of nature, as private property. The object is the property of another and the worker's shaping of the object within the reified mediations of private property produces the world, the means to work, the means to life, and life itself as capital. Thus, capital stands opposed to labour because it designates the world as alienated from labour and designates labour itself as an object, as reified labour-power, and appropriates that labour as capital. Labour activity is alienated from the worker. Activity is controlled by capital and as such is directed to the production of exchange-value, as opposed to the production of use-value. Capitalist control over the labour process forestalls workers' potential for the development of their capacities by separating them from their ontological connection to themselves and to the world. As a consequence of these two relations, the worker is alienated from their species-being. The worker is alienated from the capacity to develop that which is constituent of what it is to be human and from the potentialities that are inherent in humanness because work is organised such that it is impossible to interact with the world in accordance with human needs and powers. Within this complex, humans are alienated from fellow humans. Private property represents a separation of humanity, of "man". On the one side of this separation is the worker, or labour. On the other side is private property, or capital. Thus humanity constitutes itself according to this essentially political antagonism: as Marx states, 'only man himself can be this alien power over man', thus this class-bound power relation alienates human beings from one another.[3]

[1] See chapter one of this thesis for a more full account. 40-48.
[2] Marx *1844* 72
[3] Marx *1844* 78

6.1.3. Factors of Alienation

The emergent centrality of the body in these forms of labour reveals a reconfiguration of the political relations that pertain within and extend out from work. Of course, there are elements of these political relations that are attendant to the specifically capitalist organisation of the labour process, as discussed at length in chapter four. However, I argue that emergent forms of labour, specifically forms of body work as defined in chapter five, indicate political elements that are more closely related to changes in the forms that the reproduction of labour-power takes. Furthermore, I argue that these elements follow from the alienation of the body as an instrument of the labour process and the alienation of the body as the object of the labour process. As such, the key aim of this chapter is to examine alienated labour from these two vantage points: the alienation of the body as instrument and the alienation of the body as object. The centrality of the body in these labour process aspects of alienation brings the alienation of species being and the alienation from other humans, and their attendant relations, directly into the labour process. The instrumentalisation of the body is the making of instrument of the capacity and the potentiality of species being; the objectification of the body is both the twisting and distorting of the potential for species being and is a manifestation of the alienation of other humans. Emergent forms of labour entail the prominence of a new aspect of alienated labour and in this centrality of the alienated body the extra-labour process factors of Marx's theory are brought directly into the labour process. As a consequence of emergent forms of labour, the spheres of production and reproduction are tied together as an alienated unity and a new contradiction of capital accumulation emerges: the capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – is the social form of the domination of labour by capital but one which simultaneously brings the embodied potential for praxis into direct confrontation with the logic of value at the centre of production in the labour process and in the labour market.

The alienation of the body as instrument proceeds from the utilisation of the body in the labour process in ways that extend beyond the rendering of repetitive, machine-like activities upon the arms and legs and the thinking capacities of bodies during labour time. Therefore, although Marx's theory of alienation indicates a reading of the body as a site of power, I argue that they are elements to be read through the prism of the organisation of contemporary capitalism. The concrete character of industrial labour is simply different from body work: factory-work, building-work, farm-work, etc., do not mobilise the political capacities of bodies in production. Marx makes the case that these forms of labour mortify the body and ruin the mind throughout his works, with approaches to this problem, from various perspectives, in *The Paris*

Manuscripts, *Grundrisse*, and *Capital vol. I*.[1] Body work in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism does mobilise the political capacities of bodies and does something to bodies that does not immediately appear to be their mere mortification and ruining. The arguments of Peter Fleming and Franco "Bifo" Berardi, regarding the 'blurring [of] the symbolic distinction that traditionally separates home and paid work [under capital]' and 'a new affection for work', for example, indicate more complex contours to domination and resistance.[2] They indicate that the worker in emergent forms of labour is not, as in Marx's theory, 'depressed spiritually and physically to the condition of a machine and from being a man becomes abstract activity and a stomach.'[3] The modes by which emergent forms of labour valorise labour-power are not contingent on a process of reification that simply reflects a continuation of the dominance of the abstract, value-producing aspect of labour under capitalism. Rather, I argue that these forms of labour reflect continuities that emerge from capitalist control over the concrete, use-value producing aspect of labour, analogously to the historical shift from the production of absolute surplus-value to the production of relative surplus-value.[4] This shift in the form of surplus-value occurs when capital engages in the form of production rather than in the simple appropriation of product. I argue that the contemporary shift in the abstract/concrete modalities of value production is constituted by the reification of concrete labour activity in standardised forms and that politics is central to this transformation because the "matter" of the labour-power that is reified in this form is the very matter which indicates to Aristotle that 'man is by nature a political animal (πολιτικὸν ζῶον).'[5] To use Marx's language here, the workers' spirituality is not "depressed" but is designated as the instrument for the production of value in emergent forms of labour; the reproduction of labour-power cannot be reduced to the metamorphosis of the worker's stomach into a mere furnace but rather the modalities of the reproduction of labour-power are central to the possibility for producing surplus-value. By deploying alienation theory upon these forms of the instrumentalisation of bodies, in consideration of the concomitant extension of the modes by which capital valorises bodies, I

[1] For example, Marx *1844* 75 on the pernicious consequences of the labour process on the body; Marx *Grundrisse* 257-302 from the perspective of the body itself as a use-value consumed by capital; Marx *Capital vol. I* 173-287 again on the costs of the capitalist labour process on the worker's body.
[2] Fleming *Authenticity and the Cultural Politics of Work* 23; Berardi *The Soul at Work* 83
[3] Marx *1844* 23
[4] Put simply, absolute surplus-value is value that is produced by the extension of the working day beyond the point at which the inputs of production, i.e. all the elements of labour-power, have been reproduced. A point which is measured in units of exchange-value and after which surplus-value is produced. Relative surplus-value is value that is produced by the reduction of socially-necessary labour time and therefore the reduction of the value of labour-power. Marx *Capital vol. I* 299
[5] Aristotle. *The Politics*. Tr. J.A. Sinclair. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962). 28. Aristotle's invocation of an order of domination and oppression with its roots in an ahistorical transposing of the class-structure of the Polis into a set of transcendental norms that prefigure the "good" notwithstanding.

will demonstrate the processes by which the power relations of production extend out to life itself in forms that are particular to the contemporary conjunction of capitalism.

The alienation of the body as object proceeds because the fundamental element of production in body work is that its object is not a non-human object, as it is in Marx's theory. The object of emergent forms of labour is a human being. This human character of the object is also the fundamental element of reproductive work, as it always has been. The use-value of labour-power in body work, when considered in terms of its exchange as commodity and in its guise as 'work on the bodies of others', is its ability to formatively shape subjects' bodies directly in immediate service encounters and indirectly through the production of the social, ideological and cultural environment in which subject formation proceeds, and of which immediate service encounters are a part. I examine the qualitative character of this coordination of labour, production, and consumption but the aspect that I focus on most is the attendant character of the reproduction of labour-power in accordance to the "needs" of the labour market that is attendant to the capitalistic expansion of the system of needs. In this chapter I will demonstrate that the alienation of the object is not merely an extension of the alienation of humans from their fellow humans, as we might expect when we consider the object as a human being. It is also a fundamental aspect of the reproduction of these branches of capitalist production because the character of the labour process contributes to the political space in which the forms of labour-power that are required for production itself are shaped.

What the theory of alienation reveals here is that this relation is not simply an economic or social or institutional organisation of production; this relation proceeds on the basis of a complex of *separations* without which production could not take place. The worker is separated from the political capacities of their own body as these capacities are formatively shaped as instruments for the labour process. These capacities – as a consequence of the forced character of labour – must be traded in their commodified form on the labour market. They must bear the potential to produce value within the specific branch of industry in which they are to be deployed as labour-power. As such, the alienation of the body as instrument from the perspective of the labour market is not a simple *separation as commodity-form* but is simultaneously constituted as a twisting and distortion of these capacities; this is a distortion of the body in the figure of value that occurs in the relation between the reproduction of labour-power and the emergent labour market. In body work, the form of the labour process links and decouples with the form of the reproduction of labour-power within a set of political relations. Body work implicates a reciprocal effect that pertains from the instrumentalisation and objectification of bodies – which are really just two aspects of the same relation – in labour and

consumption. The effect of the labour process on the reproduction of the form of labour-power renders the body itself as the site of politics. Labour-power is reproduced in forms that foreclose on the potentialities of bodies and therein foreclose on the possibilities for political subjects to constitute themselves as distinct from the logics of value production: it is not simply the arms and legs that are coded as labour-power; hearts and minds are opened up to commodity logics, marked by work. As Alison Hearn argues, 'the branded self is a commodity sign; it is an entity that works and, at the same time, points to itself working, striving to embody the values of its working environment.'[1] Nonetheless, this foreclosing is never total. In this chapter I demonstrate that body work, and the emergent forms of labour from which this abstraction is drawn, indicate a qualitatively new character to the politics of production in terms of how capitalist production dominates bodies and, as such, in terms of how bodies resist and subvert these forms of domination.

As such I argue that the central characteristic of the labour/capital antagonism for critical theory today is not a purported autonomy of labour but rather that capitalist economy is predicated by a struggle for the annexation of the potential for autonomy that proceeds by way of the articulation of alienation throughout production, consumption and reproduction. As Nina Power argues, although I a wary of the finality of the verb that she deploys, 'there is no (or virtually no) subjective dimension [left] to be colonised.'[2] Emergent forms of labour constitute a relation between production, consumption, and reproduction that shapes the political capacities of bodies; in this relation the political subject is connected to economic power.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I examine the alienation of instrument in emergent forms of labour with reference to the three factors of the concept of body work as illustrated in the previous chapter. I argue that beginning from the vantage point of the instrument demonstrates an alienated unity of the production of bodies across the production/consumption binary; the production of alienated bodies proceeds at the site of production, during consumption and in reproductive work: it proceeds throughout "life" and produces the apparent work/life distinction as spheres that are inherently connected. Therefore, the alienated body as instrument ontologically entails the alienation of species-being and the body's potential for praxis because it is the potential for species-being and praxis that is twisted, distorted and formatively shaped into an instrument of labour; the instrumentalisation of these capacities of bodies, and their potentialities, is their alienation from the body itself. This alienation ontologically entails the transformation of bodies' potentialities into exchange-value. Bodies'

[1] Alison Hearn. '"Meat, Mask, Burden": Probing the contours of the branded "self"', *Journal of Consumer Culture* 8:2 (2008). 201.
[2] Nina Power. *One-Dimensional Woman*. (Ropley: O Books, 2009). 25.

capacities, including their capacity to change, are coded as exchange-value in two ways. First, these capacities are coded as commodified labour-power. Second, they are deployed in the production of commodities, thus they are reified as value; value being an aspect of labour time and a 'reality which is manifested through exchange-value.'[1]

Second, I will examine the key alteration that has occurred in the character of the 'object' in the development of emergent forms of labour; the object of the labour process is, usually directly but always ultimately, the body of a person other than the worker. The process of the production of an object of value immediately presents two vantage points; that of the person who is formatively shaping the object within a particular organisation of production and that of the object itself. Because the object of labour is a person, this formative shaping indicates political processes that go beyond, first, the politics of work from the perspective of the worker and, second, beyond the production of objects as commodity forms that assemble to produce a system of social relations with commodity fetishism as its basis. That is, the subjective content of the problematic is not limited to the figure of the worker; the object of labour is not simply an object *for* consumption and in its commodification organises the system of needs according to the politics that are attendant to the doctrine of value so that relations between people appear as relations between things; rather, the entire process of objectification is organised such that people are produced as things. As such, it is not simply the indeterminacy of labour-power that is subject to capitalist domination. I argue that the indeterminacy of humanness itself is given determinacy by means of its rendering as the congealed form of alienated labour and, concomitantly, the body is, in an important respect, a subjective object whose function in capitalist economy is to realise the value produced by abstract labour time as exchange-value.

Finally, I will draw these discussions of the alienation of instrument and the alienation of object together with an examination of the alienation of labour activity. As noted, the emergent character of the object and the instrument render the alienation of species-being and from other humans as an integral part of the labour process that extends out from production into life itself. Therefore I will discuss these relations of alienated labour in the emergent forms together. In doing so, I will address the politics that are attendant to the making of the human in emergent forms of labour by focusing on how these alienated and alienating relations bear upon the antagonism between labour and capital, not in terms of class composition but in terms of the intervention of surplus-value in the production of the human. I examine the implications of this highlighting of a further labour process factor and the change in the qualitative character of the object upon the labour process factors of the theory of alienation and draw these

[1] Elson 'The Value Theory of Labour' 134

implications together more directly toward the examination of the bearing of this analysis upon the 'ontological' factors of Marx's theory of alienation – the alienation from other humans and the alienation of species life. In doing so, this chapter aims to bring together the findings of the analysis of theories on the contemporary landscape of labour, the analysis of the labour process in emergent forms of labour, and the functions of the body in processes of capital accumulation.

6.2. The Alienation of the Instrument

The deployment of the political capacities of the body as instruments in the labour process was a central theme of my empirical analysis of emergent forms of labour. Emergent forms of labour ontologically entail the rendering of the political capacities and potentialities of bodies as the instrument of the labour process by means of the reciprocal relationality of; the character of commodity consumption; the prerogatives on the character of processes of the reproduction of labour-power; and the repeated practice of labour within the formation of the politics of work that is characteristic of emergent forms of labour, i.e. the politics of work that pertains from these reciprocal relations. This instrumentalisation is a process of the alienation of the body that produces a distinct politics of production. I have argued throughout that the failure of the post-*operaisti* and the proponents of the concept of aesthetic labour to consider workers' bodies from this perspective results in fundamental problems with their theories. Post-*operaismo* ignores it in favour of the prefiguration of an autonomous worker and an autonomous, and 'dangerous', class – the Multitude.[1] The Strathclyde Group naturalise this deployment of the political capacities of bodies as instruments for the production of value by failing to consider the processes of the production of so-called 'dispositions'. The deployment of the body as an instrument for labour is a central theme of Hochschild's theory of emotional labour and other labour studies that follow in the tradition of C. Wright Mills. My aim in this discussion is to examine the making of the worker as an instrument from the perspective of alienation. In this sense, Hochschild's work offers a useful but brief starting point. I will extend my analysis out from Hochschild's examination of the instrumentalisation of bodies' emotional capacities to what I described as the *impalpable properties of bodies* in chapter four. These properties are the aesthetic, emotional, affective, communicative, linguistic, creative, etc., capacities that constitute the body's potential to create and to change oneself, each other, and the world. These capacities constitute the potential for what Marx describes as the colossal but

[1] Hardt and Negri *Multitude* 103

timid limit to capital.[1] That is, this making of the body as instrument is the alienation – within the organisation of emergent forms of labour – of those very capacities from which the potential for resistance of capital is to emerge; it is the alienation of praxis. Furthermore, this holistic approach to the body at work, and its capacities and potentialities, demonstrates that the emergent politics of alienation do not pertain amidst a separation between the public and the private sphere but rather that their potency and their enduring character is contingent upon an alienated unity between work and life that is particular to this phase of capitalism. To reiterate, this unity is not a contemporary reflection of pre-capitalist or formal subsumption forms of production as Vercellone argues but is organised according to the capitalistic relations of the reproduction of labour-power that extend from and recourse between production, consumption and life itself.[2]

The body is made an instrument for the labour process by a series of acts of consumption. In this sense I argue that although body work emerges in a particularly post-modern organisation of capital it is an immanent tendency of two features of production in general described by Marx in his 1857 notes. First, 'production is simultaneously consumption as well' and this consumption has a subjective aspect: the individual 'develops his abilities while producing' thus the act of production is a process of producing the subjectivity itself as a result of the consumption of these abilities by the objects and instruments of labour and the motion of labour itself.[3] The subjective capacities of the worker are transformed in the process of the interaction with the objective world and 'our labourer comes out of the process of production other than he entered.'[4] Second, 'the object of [production] is...a particular object which must be consumed in a particular way. Consumption,' therefore, constitutes 'itself as a desire brought about by the object.'[5] As such, there is no one historical genesis to the process of the alienation of the body as instrument; it neither emerges specifically from the labour process, nor from the expansion of the array of commodities that constitute the sphere of consumption and the cultural and ideological apparatuses articulated therein, nor from the crises that accompany the demise of Fordism and the globalisation of capitalist monopoly production. The processes that constitute the alienation of the body as instrument in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism are located in these three fields, connected by a historically developing reciprocal relationality that pertains within an alienated unity between production and consumption; a unity forged in the inner connection between these fields and the

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 283-286
[2] Vercellone 'From Formal Subsumption to General Intellect'
[3] Karl Marx. 'Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy' in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Tr. S.W. Ryazanskaya. Ed. Maurice Dobb. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970). 195.
[4] Marx *Capital vol. I* 285
[5] Karl Marx 'Introduction to a Critique' 197

reproduction of labour-power, that inner connection pertaining from the separation of humanity into an antagonistic arrangement of labour and capital.

There are three principle modes by which the body's political capacities and potentialities are made an instrument for the labour process; first, it results from an ongoing series of acts of commodity consumption in accord with the social, cultural and ideological articulations that pertain within the mode of production; second, it emerges from a transformation in the forms of the reproduction of labour-power, engaging various forms of use-value consumption, commodified and otherwise; third, it is a consequence of the practice of labour amidst the power relations of emergent forms of labour. None of these modes are mutually exclusive of one another; they can be demarcated but not separated because they are merely different vantage points onto the same process of the making of bodies, i.e., the processes that I have configured as body work. What is at stake in these modes by which the political capacities of bodies are made an instrument for the capitalist labour process, when considered separately and when considered in terms of their fundamental inner connection, is that they constitute a siege on the possibilities for a political space that is outside capital.

As such, these modes are a material reconfiguration of political space. The instrumentalisation of the body is simultaneously a process of limiting and delimiting a terrain of political struggle that is in constant flux: on the one side, this struggle is constituted by the coding of workers as variable capital, the alienation of workers from their human capacities, and the attendant depoliticisation of production. On the other side is the coding of the workers as humans that cannot be reduced to capital, the resistance to alienation that is inherent to the reduction of bodies to capital, and the character attendant to the *production* of the emergent form of capitalist production as a site of politics. Nonetheless, it is naïve and reductive to characterise this struggle as a simple binary opposition: the political problem of emergent forms of labour is not simply the worker's cooperation, consent and collusion in their own alienation; it is that their own alienation is the alienation of the subjective capacity to do things like to choose, to consent, to act with reference to one's *own* need/desire because the logics of value, the labour market, and the penetration of these logics into the processes of the reproduction of one's own body tend towards the subsumption of these capacities within an eternal and immutable framing of capitalist production. As Samuel Knafo argues, 'the form through which people's needs and desires are expressed in capitalism is alienating.'[1] The alienation of the body as an instrument is attendant to a combination of the subjective and objective that requires practice,

[1] Samuel Knafo. 'Political Marxism and Value Theory: Bridging the Gap between Theory and History', *Historical Materialism* 15 (2007). 94.

performance, internalisation and arbitration of different forms of subjectivity that are nonetheless connected to the forced character of labour and the commodification of embodied capacities as labour-power.

This first mode – the making of the body as an instrument through commodity consumption – constitutes itself amidst the increase in outputs of industrial production in the Fordist phase of capitalism that follow from the extension of capital into modes of the reproduction of labour-power following crises in the late 19th century. This is attendant to the creation and transformation of branches of industry intended to foster the realisation of the exchange-value of this expanded circulation of commodities in the so-called western world. The development of these branches of industry render the subject an object – the subject being the consumer of both the ideological environment and the commodities to be realised – but I will forego this discussion for the moment in order to focus more clearly on this body work from the perspective of the making of the body as instrument. In short, work on one's own body is attendant to the expansion of articles of consumption that are designed to effect an alteration to the consumer's body and an attendant expansion of social, cultural, and ideological articulations for the expansion of desire. It is not simply the translation of *The Paris Manuscripts* that led to the prominence of Socialist Humanist strands of Marxism in the 1950s and '60s, including those apparent in some of the works that emerged from the Frankfurt School; Ernest Mandel, Theodor Adorno, *et al*., are responding to transformations in the ideological character of consumption under capitalism. Jean Baudrillard's early sociological works in particular have this as their focal point. The central character of the alienation of bodies from the perspective of consumption is the expansion of the system of needs toward the production of desires whose fulfilment is dependent on an ever-expanding array of commodities. A central aspect of these strands of Marxist enquiry is that a fundamental aspect of this desire is constituted in part by a desire to alter one's body in accordance with the commodities that circulate. Our interactions with the object, our consumption and production of it, shape life itself. As Baudrillard argues, 'commodity logic has become generalised and today governs not only labour processes and material products, but the whole of culture, sexuality, and human relations, including even fantasies and individual drives.'[1] I argue that this generalisation, although lacking consideration of the antagonistic and contradictory processes of subject formation, nonetheless is constitutive of the production of the body as an alterity.

[1] Jean Baudrillard. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures.* Tr. Chris Turner. (London: Sage, 1998). 191.

Consumption is consumption of the object. In capitalism, the object is a commodity.[1] As noted in chapter one, the purpose of the commodity is not to satisfy needs as a use-value; its purpose is to be realised as its exchange-value, thereby realising the surplus-value contained therein and thereby expanding capital in accordance with the general formula identified by Marx.[2] Consumption from the vantage point of capitalist production is the realisation of surplus-value. This argument, however, immediately accords a negative value to capital's engagement in life; I am arguing that the production of desire is constitutive of a more general process of the alienation of self. This cannot stand unless, as I argued in chapter four, we enter the labour process; that is, unless we synthesise understandings of consumption with the politics of the 'hidden abode of production.'[3] Or else, despite the protestations of Debord and Baudrillard, it merely looks like life and economy undertaken by autonomous subjects in-keeping with their subjective feelings, as Chris Shilling, Debra Gimlin and the Strathclyde Group tacitly argue. Or it looks like a natural and virtuous circle of utility; a satisfaction of desire which is accorded by the expansive character of capitalist production. In order to broach these one-dimensional understandings I have spent the previous five chapters examining the relations between processes such as the separation of the worker from the means of subsistence, the inequality inherent in the exchange of commodified labour-power, and the shaping of the objective and subjective qualities of labour-power in forms that are productive of surplus-value. Consumption is not separate from labour nor is labour separate from consumption; each is the fundamental basis for the other in every economic epoch. Consumption in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism, from the perspective of the labour-power of emergent forms of labour, is a process of objectifying oneself so as to make aspects of one's Being into instruments of the labour process.

Transformations in the forms of the reproduction of labour-power constitute the second principle mode by which bodies are rendered as instruments of the labour process of emergent forms of labour. Understanding the processes of the reproduction of labour-power is central to understanding the politics that are attendant to emergent forms of labour. It is through the processes of the reproduction of labour-power – of course in terms of its inner-connection to

[1] This is a grand statement and therefore is worthy of substantiation and exception beyond simply citing the opening sentence of *Capital vol. I*. The air of course is a use-value alone. Not to say that it is never commodified but most usually it isn't. I write this looking out at a forest which is part of a national park and requires no exchange to enjoy but if you want to gather some wood for the winter you must pay the state for the "privilege" (I write this in Greece in 2015 so there is a good chance that we'll be paying a corporation for our firewood next winter). But a diminishing acreage of common lands does exist. Most importantly, for this is the key contradiction of labour under capitalism, as sellers of our labour-power we are sellers of a commodity that is a fundamental part of ourselves.

[2] Marx *Capital vol. I* 145-153

[3] Marx *Capital vol. I* 174

the practice of labour and its effects on the worker – that working bodies are shaped in the figure of value. I understand reproduction then at the level of abstraction that is appropriate to this class-based problematic; I take what Weeks calls an 'expansive notion of reproduction' and understand reproduction not simply as housework but as 'the work of creating and sustaining social forms and relations of cooperation and sociality' and therefore understand reproduction as the complex of activities outside of labour-time that produce bodies.[1] I also understand reproduction – to bring this idea to a more tangible level of abstraction – as 'the complex of activities and relations by which our life and labour are daily reconstituted,' as Federici argues.[2] I am keenly aware of the gendered dimensions of the sphere of reproduction and I recognise that 'that the immense amount of paid and unpaid domestic work done by women in the home is what keeps the world moving' and its attendant political problems of inequality and subjugation.[3] I am also keenly aware of the corporeal dimensions of these political problems and of how it is oftentimes women's bodies, transsexual bodies and queer bodies that suffer the hyper-exploitation of labour, reproduction and consumption under capitalism. Gender matters to the politics of reproduction. My aim in this entire thesis is to dig down to the class character of the production of politics in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism, to sketch-out the contours of the contemporary character of the antagonism between labour and capital, and to outline the effect of the transformations in production upon the working-class political subject and upon the working-class body. My class-based problematic indicates a different perspective from which to view this keeping of the world in motion; the sphere of reproduction as a sphere for the making of bodies-fit-for-labour. I am concerned with the body that is being reproduced and I am concerned with the body that is doing the reproduction to the extent that the character of this work is socially-fixed in the context of the commodities, the labour market and the power relations of emergent forms of labour. There are aspects of reproduction that operate at the level of class oppression and I argue that it is this class oppression that produces the working class as collaborators within the systematic modes of gender oppression that pertain throughout this sphere of the mode of production. In this sense I follow Marx's argument that 'the whole of human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production and every relation of servitude is but a modification and consequence of this relation.'[4] As such, my examination of reproduction can be extended and expanded so as to encounter the gendered character of reproduction but it does not in itself do

[1] Weeks 'Life Within and Against Work' 235
[2] Silvia Federici. 'Introduction' in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle.* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012). 5.
[3] Silvia Federici. 'Preface' in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle.* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012). 2.
[4] Marx *1844* 82

this because my key concern is to understand how reproduction produces the working class and its working bodies as an aggregated mass bearing forms of labour-power that are socially-fixed amidst the cultural political economic relations of the contemporary conjunction of capitalism.

As noted at the end of the previous chapter, the qualitative characteristics of each of the concepts of labour that make up the existing field of enquiry into the contemporary organisation of work – the subjective, affective, aesthetic, corporeal, emotional, linguistic and intellectual capacities of workers – are reproduced as labour-power as a consequence of various acts of consumption. The reproduction of labour-power is constituted by, first, the consumption of commodities that are produced by labour, as noted above, second, the consumption of use-values that are produced by human activity that is not waged labour, and third the inter-subjective relations that occur outside of work time and place and apparently far from the gaze of the wage-labour relation. As such, consumption is not a separate sphere from reproduction but is an intrinsic part of it, there is a sphere of unwaged activity that the capitalist mode of production requires for the preparation of a broad range of commodities for consumption, and there is a sphere of unwaged activity that proceeds as a set of inter-subjective relations which formatively shape bodies. Reproduction is not simply commodity consumption; it is also the consumption of the use-values produced by reproductive work, and the consumption of the ideological and cultural aspects of these objects. Consumption alters the body of the person doing the consuming. Federici states that there is a dual contradiction to this relation because there is a dual-character to the objects and that activity that materially reproduces the labour-power of the worker. This contradictory relation is constituted by the antagonism between the production of the human as outside value and the production of the body as value.

On dthe one hand, the body under capitalism must be constructed as a vessel for the exchange-value of the commodity labour-power in order that it be realised on the labour market. This is a condition of all those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails because, as discussed at length in chapter four, the worker is separated from the means of production and, as discussed in chapter one, commodities are produced so as to realise value not so as to create a use-value. Therefore, as a general condition, the workers' means of subsistence is contingent on the wage-labour exchange and the objects of subsistence are not produced to satisfy need but are produced so as to realise value. But these continuous elements of the capitalist mode of production take on new meaning in emergent forms of labour. Emergent forms of labour are a continuation of the tendency of capitalism to utilise more and more aspects of the body and to appropriate more and more forms of knowledge and of Being within the mode of accumulation. This tendency necessitates that modes of the making of bodies are colonised by modes of

reproduction that make bodies as labour-power in those specific forms that can engage in the emergent labour market; a colonisation that proceeds not simply because of the forced character of the labour market but because use-values (commodities) are not produced to satisfy need but are produced so as to create and satisfy desire. The qualitative dimensions of what labour-power is are constituted as a consequence of the inner connection between production and consumption; the commodities that are produced in emergent forms of labour create the conditions for the reproduction of labour-power in the forms that can produce the commodities of emergent forms of labour. The intended aim of the emergent labour process is to produce a specific ideological and cultural environment, and the subjects that make it, which in turn reacts back onto the processes by which bodies are produced as the abstraction "labour-power" by means of the existential prerogatives that proceed from the separation of producers from the means of subsistence and the forced character of labour therein. In short, as a consequence of all those features of the wage-labour relation that render labour under capitalism forced labour and as a consequence of all those features of production that make value – not use-value – the aim of production, the production of the human must proceed in a fashion that meets the demands of the labour market. The spheres of production and reproduction are bonded as an alienated unity because of the forced character of the labour market and the forced character of consumption. As Weeks argues, 'the household [is] an economic unit with complex linkages to the waged-labor economy – a structural component of, rather than a haven from, the world of work… it disturbs the model of separate spheres, demanding that we map across the borders of the public and the private, between the realms of work and family.'[1] This alienated unity renders bodies as alienated instruments for the production of value in the emergent labour process.

On the other hand, the reproduction of labour-power is still the production of the human; there is a vast realm of reproductive work that pertains outside the logic of the production of labour-power. I do not simply refer to the basic reproduction of the biological life of the species, i.e. reproduction *qua* procreation, but rather to that realm of activity in which subjects engage in care and cooperation within family, friendship and community groupings.[2] The aim of reproductive work is not simply to produce bodies-fit-for-work but is a communion of bodies in which there are multitudinous aims; happiness, sex, camaraderie, the theft of time from capital

[1] Kathi Weeks. *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics and Postwork Imaginaries.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011). 130
[2] Isabella Bakker. 'Social Reproduction and the Constitution of a Gendered Political Economy', *New Political Economy* 12:4 (2007). 541.

Within this dual contradiction, Federici argues, the abstraction "labour-power" highlights 'the fact that reproductive work is not the free reproduction of ourselves or others according to our and their desires.'[1] I argue that this contradiction emerges as a field of struggle in which the ideological character of the consumption of commodities produced by waged body work and body work for the production of labour-power collides with those logics are not integrated within these particularly capitalistic modes of the reproduction of the human. That is, the ideological environment that is attendant to reproduction, from the perspective of commodity consumption, shapes desire itself; the idea of 'our desire' is a precarious and indeterminate figure formed within capitalist relations. It is within the relation between the contradictory field of desire and necessity of the reproduction of the human as the reproduction of labour-power that domination and resistance is forged; the worker's body is configured as having the potential to be an instrument and the worker's alienation of their body as the abstraction "labour-power" proceeds alongside the reproduction of the self and others as "human", that is, as an abstracted but indeterminate and specifically human labour-power.

The instrumentalisation of bodies' capacities for praxis – the modes by which these indeterminate and specifically human capacities are coded as labour-power and as the vessels of commodity consumption – is an alienation of the body from itself; it is the production of the body as value and is a production that is essentially political. This mode of the production of the body is not an economic determinacy but is a production of the body as the site of the struggle constituted by the capitalistic determination of an indeterminate subject. That is, determination is neither total nor irrevocable nor does the alienation of the worker preclude the worker's re-appropriation of themselves. Although the alienation of the body is a process of the amputation of the body's capacities as commodity-forms, it is a distortion of these capacities which nonetheless remain embodied and whose qualitative character pertains within this dual contradiction. The alienation of the body as instrument is a reification of these capacities as the form-giving fire that produces the commodity, and as such constitutes a separation that is produced and reproduced within this form of the relations-in-production. But there is always a tension throughout these processes of alienation that pertains from the dual contradiction of the reproduction of labour-power. This tension is the political space of production in emergent forms of labour.

This political space is ultimately a question of praxis. That is, this space is constituted by subjects capable of praxis whose capacity to engage in praxis is nonetheless formatively shaped within capitalist relations-in-production as an instrument for the emergent labour process. From

[1] Federici 'The Reproduction of Labour-power' 99

the perspective of the process of the instrumentalisation of the body, the transformations in the form of the reproduction of labour-power are the rendering of the body in a dual-form of value; first, as the commodity labour-power, thus as use-value that bears an exchange-value, and second, as a desiring being needful of the continued consumption of objects. As noted earlier, Hardt and Negri configure the relation between these capacities of living labour and the valorisation of labour-power as a dissolution of the boundaries between the inside and outside of capital and this is the same field to which Hochschild deploys her theory of 'transmutation.' From my examination of the emergent labour process in chapter four I argued that these "human" capacities constitute the body's potential for praxis; that is, the body's capacity to change their self, change others, and change the world itself is deployed as the instrument in a labour process that produces commodities. The political capacities of the worker's body are produced within the contradictory character of the reproduction of labour-power; labour-power is rendered as a saleable commodity on the labour market and worker resistance is coded within a field of desire that is constantly under siege by the forces of capital.[1] These forces constitute themselves as compulsions to engage in body work within the context of an increasing precariousness in the ability of workers to find a buyer for their labour-power and the precariousness that constitutes the conditions of this sale. As such, the relation between the inside and the outside of capital requires further examination.

I argue that the process that Hochschild designates as the transmutation of private capacities for their exchange in the realm of public life, described in chapter two, is better described as "transubstantiation". To recall, Hochschild argues that capacities for emotional management that have been developed outside of work come to be exchanged as labour-power and are transformed in the same movement. Therewith the worker no longer has autonomy over their feelings because capitalist control over the labour process intervenes in and prescribes how the worker feels and/or appears to feel at a given time. The human capacity to feel and to manage feeling becomes imbued with the inequalities of the wage-labour relation. In Catholicism and the Eastern and Western Orthodox Christian churches (the Lutheran churches have discarded this belief), the term transubstantiation is used to describe the moment during holy communion when the host and the wine are believed to, very literally, become the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ. This is in reference to Jesus' sharing of bread and wine at the Last Supper.[2] I argue that the character of commodities produced in capitalism and the modes by which they are consumed produces the body as a figure attendant to this commodity-character; the idea

[1] Berardi *The Soul at Work* 106-110
[2] Mathew ch.26: 26-28.*The Holy Bible: Conteyning the Old Testament and the New*. (London: Robert Barker, 1611). 1250.

that there is a simple replication of already existing modes of socialisation in a commodified form of labour-power does not go far enough. The processes of transmutation are not a simple replication of embodied capacities but rather the wage-labour exchange is preceded by the worker's embodiment of the commodified form of value, albeit one that pertains amidst the dual contradictory character of the reproduction of labour-power. Thus it is not a transmutation, a simple change (mutation) in the embodied capacity as it is (trans-)ferred from its use in private life to its exchange and use in public life. It is a transubstantiation of the dead labour of the commodity, alongside the living work of reproduction, in which the commodity is given corporeality again as labour-power. The body of the political subject emerges from the contradiction between the dead labour of the commodity and the living work of reproduction. Work on one's own body and work on the bodies of others, as the contradictory reproduction of embodied capacities that are simultaneously "outside" the logic of capital, are a reproduction of labour-power for the labour market and a repetitive activity undertaken amidst the rendering of the body itself as being subject to capitalist power. The body is a precarious figure between its reproduction as "human" and its production as a "product". The expansion of the system of needs, the attendant shaping of desire, and the concomitant formation of the qualities of the abstraction-as-commodity "labour-power" ontologically entail one another. The relation between need, desire, and labour-power is constitutive of this extension of capitalist power into life itself and its result is the rendering – albeit one shrouded in the possibilities of indeterminacy – of the body as an instrument for the production of surplus-value. It is these capacities, on the one hand produced by a capitalistic expansion of need and desire and on the other the specifically human potentialities that are reproduced as labour-power, which form the instrument of the labour process in emergent forms of labour. Therein the body is estranged from itself.

The body is formatively shaped and is distorted, made a reflection of value. In chapters four and five I argued that emergent forms of labour mobilise the political capacities of workers' bodies in the production and reproduction of the capitalist productive organism. By bringing the labour process more clearly into view, alongside this discussion of the intervention of surplus-value in processes of consumption, so capitalist power over the body is brought into relief and so this formative shaping of the body as an instrument in the production of value appears as a distortion of the body's capacities and their attendant separation as private property, as variable capital. As such, the alienation of the body as instrument is distinct from the modes by which the worker is alienated from his or her human capacities as a result of the features of the capitalist division of labour. In emergent forms of labour the labour process itself is a mode for the reproduction of labour-power in a particular form. The continuous

practice of these forms of labour within the capitalist technical division of labour and its attendant bureaucratic, technical, and normative forms of power, often in a context of precariousness in the wage-labour exchange, when considered both as a moment and as a condition, makes the worker's body an instrument. Labour is the putting into motion of labour-power in an interaction constituted by the elements of production – instrument, object and activity – and is itself the determination of indeterminate labour-power. In wage-labour, these three elements of production are private property, the bearer of private property being someone other than the worker. In the labour process of emergent forms of labour, the worker's embodied capacities are deployed as the instrument and are thereby configured as private property. As private property under capital – or rather, as capital – these embodied capacities are configured so as to produce commodities. It is this process, the rendering of embodied capacities as capital and the concomitant formative shaping of these capacities with reference to their exchange-value and the commodities they are able to produce, that constitutes the alienation of the body as an instrument from the perspective of the labour process.

Alienation in emergent forms of labour, considered from the perspective of the instrument of the labour process and in terms of the three modes of instrumentalisation of the body, proceeds both during and outside of labour time. These are the relations within which the body's capacities are transformed into instruments for the labour processes of body work and the character of alienation is two-fold. The labour process of advertising creative work and call centre work, the connection between the alienation of the bodies potential for praxis and the modes by which bodies are formative shaped in production and in reproduction, demonstrate that first, the possibilities for species-being are foreclosed upon in the transformation of "human" capacities into the capacity to produce commodities because this very process is constituted by the progressive annexation of the field of desire by the logic of capital accumulation and the worker's internalisation of the needs of the capitalist labour market as a consequence of the modes by which they reproduce their own bodies. Production in emergent forms of labour demonstrate that, second, in the process of the wage-labour exchange and in the reification of labour these capacities are objectified as labour and are thereby alienated as the private property of the purchaser of labour-power. This is not simply an alienation of activity but is a process of separation that can only proceed during labour time *because* the sphere of consumption has been constituted by an antagonism between the capitalistic shaping of desire and the reproduction of the human. In this antagonism bodies themselves are made the object of the labour process.

6.3. The Alienation of the Object

As demonstrated in chapters four and five, the human body is the object of the labour process in emergent forms of labour. In these forms of labour the body itself is the subject of the formative shaping that is the intended aim of the putting into motion of labour activity and instruments that constitutes labour itself. In body work it is human bodies – not non-human objects – that are valorised by labour. I stated in the introduction to this chapter that the instrumentalisation of the body and the rendering of the body as an object are two aspects of the same relation. Instrumentalisation of the body occurs when one works on one's own body through a variety of processes of consumption, as a result of reproductive work, and as a result of the power relations under which wage-labour in emergent forms proceeds, i.e., as a mark made on the body by work. In this sense, instrumentalisation is a process of being objectified; in consumption the subject makes him or herself an object and in wage-labour the consumer is made an object. As such I have discussed the question of value merely from the perspective of consumption in terms of the reproduction of labour-power and the realisation of the exchange-value of commodities with regard to how these processes constitute the production of the body as a bearer of instruments for the labour process of emergent forms of labour. In this discussion of the object of labour I extend the perspective on the production of bodies to further include the capitalist labour process. In doing so I examine significant political relations that are attendant to alterations in how workers engage in objectification, that are attendant to the subjective character of the objects of labour processes that are distinctive to production in these branches of industry, and to reconfigurations in the form of capital's appropriation of their objects of labour. In Marx's theory of alienation, the relations by which the body is made an instrument are subsumed in his discussion of the alienation of species-being and the alienation of labour activity. From the perspective of the object, however, Marx does specifically address the alienation of the object in his theory and I will deploy his key findings as starting points in my examination of the alienation of the object in emergent forms of labour.

Marx argues that the formative shaping of the object is a dual process of objectification and appropriation. The 'individual objectifies himself in the thing.' and 'production is always appropriation of nature.'[1] In wage-labour, however, the worker does not appropriate the object but rather labour is the process by which the worker's objectification is appropriated as capital by means of a complex of alienations. First, labour itself is made an object through the commodification and alienation (veräusserung) of labour-power, the quantification of labour as abstract units of variable capital, and the forms of capitalist control of activity that are attendant

[1] Marx *Grundrisse* 221; Marx 'Introduction to a Critique' 188

to this reification.[1] The worker's body in emergent forms of labour is forged as labour-power for the labour market and the capacities that constitute the potential for praxis, twisted as they are, put into motion in a process that alienates these capacities from the body that bears them. Second, or as such, the object of labour is figured as a unit of circulating capital, as matter that is united with objectified and alien (Fremdheit, relating to entfremdung) labour activity in order to that it may be formed as commodity, i.e. as an object with an exchange-value.[2] Advertising creative work and call-centre work only relates to the object of labour – to the bodies upon which work is done – in terms of the appearance of the object as repository for the exchange-value of labour-time and, as such, by coding the body as a one that is desiring and needful of the commodity form of value. Third, or as such, the worker's objectification 'is a social quality (relation) which is...external to him.'[3] It is a process of the worker's estrangement of the object and of him or herself within a productive-form of alienated objectification; i.e., it is a process of entäusserung and of selbstentäusserung (estrangement and self-estrangement) in which objectification is separated from appropriation.[4] The modes of objectification in emergent forms of labour produces and reproduces an entire system of alienated objectifications. Objectification is not the free objectification of the worker in the object but is the worker's objectification of the capitalist organisation of production, which he or she has embodied in their alienated activity. As such, the external character of the social relations of production proceeds from the production of both labour-power and the worker as a commodity. When viewed from the vantage point of the production of the object in body work I argue that there are elements of this examination that reflect the continuity of the politics of capitalist production and there are elements that require revision in light of changes in modes of value production.

First, to address these continuous elements, labour itself as a general category describing production under the conditions of the wage is no different today than it was in previous phases of capitalist production. There remains a social division of labour in which the two most general categories are that there are those who sell labour-power and those who buy it. As I argued in chapter four, wage-labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism remains forced labour because the means to work and the means to life have been designated as private property, as the capital of those who did not create them. Second, labour is made an object within a politics of work that is more or less typical of capitalism; the reification of labour-power pertains within a system of securing surplus-value that depends on the temporal

[1] Veräusserung: the alienation of property by sale.
[2] Entfremdung: the estrangement or loss of the object and the attendant loss of the self.
[3] Marx *Grundrisse* 226
[4] Entäusserung: the externalisation from self. Selbstentäusserung: the externalisation of self.

unification of necessary labour time and surplus labour time and on the production of precariousness for the worker. In addition, I argue that the perceived golden age of the Fordist worker's rights to security, and the attendant effect on the balance of the distribution that was enjoyed by this privileged class, was the aberration of capitalist development. Contemporary precariousness should be viewed as a return to the prevalent 18th, 19th and early 20th century wage-relations. Thirdly, as the bearer of labour-power the worker is a commodity; their labour-power, indeterminate as it is, is bought and sold as an object at market.

The organisation of work in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism, however, illuminates two important provocations to this analysis. First, Marx argues that the worker objectifies him or herself in the object of their work and under wage-labour capital appropriates this activity and the object as private property, as capital. Private property is not *property*; it is a distinct form of property, legally codified and recognised within a particular historical, social and cultural context, and is not an eternal or immutable form.[1] Therefore, if the objects of emergent forms of labour are the bodies of juridically and politically free human beings then it is not cogent to argue that capital appropriates bodies as *private* property because bodies are antithetical to private property; bodies are presupposed by the capitalist concept of private property as *non-property* because there are no legal or political frameworks within which bodies themselves can be alienated as private property because such a social relation is *slavery*. Second, to view this relation from the vantage point of the worker, if the object of labour under capitalism is not rendered as private property by wage-labour activity how might we examine 'the relation of the worker to the *product of labour*,' this human object, 'as an alien object exercising power over him'?[2] I propose that the human character of the object of labour emphasises a further and more pressing political relation than that of the object exercising power over the worker: the worker does not simply alienate themselves in producing the object, the worker alienates the object – humanity – from him and herself and produces the human in accordance with the dual contradiction identified by Federici; that is, as an alterity, as an alienated entity who is on the one hand a human being and on the other is the congealed form of alienated labour. I argue that the worker alienates themselves from human beings and, in doing so, alienates humanity not merely *from* its ontological connection with the world but alienates it *as* value.

In body work the worker objectifies their activity in the body of the person who is subject to the work, whether the self or another person. In wage-labour the intended aim of the labour

[1] Marx 'Introduction to a Critique' 192
[2] Marx *1844* 75. Emphasis in original.

process of body work is the formative shaping of the body so as to realise the value of that labour and this formative shaping thereby creates that subject as coordinate to a particularly capitalist ideological and cultural environment. Thus there are two sides to this relation. First, and as discussed earlier, from the perspective of its concrete aspect this labour is contingent upon the worker's instrumentalisation of their embodied capacities for praxis in a form that is coordinate to the prerogatives that follow from the compulsions attendant to the labour market. Notwithstanding this character of instrumentalisation, the reification of labour itself as an object of private property is at this level of abstraction no different for body work than it is for other forms of wage-labour. It is alienated labour activity. The second aspect of this relation emerges from the perspective of the object. The object is not an article of private property belonging to the capitalist, as it is in Marx's theory. Marcia Klotz finds that in the *Paris Manuscripts* 'private property, in essence, is defined as the congealed form of alienated labour.'[1] However, despite not being an article of private property, through the labour process of body work the object nonetheless becomes 'the congealed form of alienated labour.' Thus the body as the object of body work *is not* private property but *is* the product of alienated labour. I argue that the fact of being made an object but not being rendered as private property is analogous to the mode by which labour-power is coded as a commodity yet still remains the private property of its bearer.

The object of body work is produced as value. To approach this statement from the vantage point of value as opposed to the vantage point of the object, 'value...is an objectification of a certain aspect of labour time, its aspect being simply an expenditure of human labour-power in general.'[2] That is, in waged labour the body is rendered as the bearer of value because it is produced by abstract labour; it is the objectification of abstract labour time. To manipulate Marx's words to the features of my own problematic, the body that is the object of body work is 'the embodiment of abstract human labour.'[3] Body work is the production of bodies as value by alienated labour that can be measured in time and this value is manifested as an exchange-value of the formative shaping that has been undertaken as the aim of the work. Remembering that labour time is the measure of the magnitude of value not the magnitude of exchange-value, I argue that this general schema of value can be applied to waged body work in industries as diverse as hairdressing, food service, and cultural production. To view the production of the body as value from the perspective of the body, in the act of production the body is commodified. This is not to say that the body is rendered as an object of private property that

[1] Marcia Klotz. 'Alienation, Labor, and Sexuality in Marx's 1844 Manuscripts' *Rethinking Marxism* 18:3, (2006). 408.
[2] Elson 'The Value Theory of Labour' 132
[3] Marx *Capital vol. I* 64

can be exchanged – although as the bearer of labour-power it can be exchanged. It is to say that the body is capable of being formatively shaped and that in this labour process in which the aim is the formative shaping of the object both the capacity to formatively shape and the act of formative shaping – in whatever concrete form it takes – have an exchange-value. I argue that as a consequence of the burgeoning ideological character of production/consumption in contemporary capitalism the concrete aspect of labour is no longer subsumed under the primacy of the abstract character of labour to the same degree as in industrial production. The concrete character of labour-power in emergent forms of labour is socially-fixed in such a way as expand the magnitude of value that labour in its abstract aspect can produce. Body work in its various concrete manifestations is an apparatus of capitalistic subject formation because it is a dual process of the worker alienating the object – other humans – from him and herself and of making the object alien from its human capacities, twisting and distorting those capacities and potentialities so that they appear merely as vessels for the embodiment of value.

This process of subject formation proceeds within a production of the world as 'an immense accumulation of commodities' and the production of bodies as the consumer of those commodities and the producers of capital, as I argued in my discussion of the instrument.[1] Thus, the capitalist organisation of body work is predicated on the possibility for the commodification of use-values that satisfy, expand, and create novel desires; the possibilities for which follow from the unfinished character of the human body. To illustrate the reciprocal relationality that pertains in the production of the body and the centrality of the figure of alienation, the human body is alienated from itself by alienated labour in which the character of objectification proceeds according to the logic of the accumulation of capital, which is the logic of alienation. Thus there is a dual character to the alienation of labour in which the object is a human body. Labour activity itself is made an object within capitalist relations-in-production and the human body is shaped in a labour process in which the intended aim of labour is a dual mode of the production of surplus-value. First, surplus-value is exploited from labour time in the usual ways, as absolute and relative surplus-value, and the body of the consumer, as the object of labour, is coded as a repository for exchange-value. Second, the act of producing the body is not merely a moment in production but is a process of producing the body as a desiring body needful of forms of self-production, as the production of self and reproduction. As Bernard Cova and Daniele Dalli put it, although deploying a rather uncritical moniker, '*post-modern* individuals are on a never-ending identity quest; a quest to define the meaning of their

[1] Karl Marx. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.* Tr. S.W. Ryazanskaya. Ed. Maurice Dobb. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970). 27.; Marx *Capital vol. I* 43

lives.'[1] The reification of the labour-power of body work, and the attendant alienated character of its productions, simultaneously exploits this desire for self-production and produces the body/self in modes that make it suitable for particularly capitalistic modes of self-production. Emergent forms of labour demonstrate that these forms of body-production are being monopolised by capitalist production. I argued in chapter four that emergent forms of labour are reliant on the articulation and management of emotion and affect, the use of language and communicative capacities, and require that workers change themselves. A defining characteristic of capitalist relations-in-production is the domination of "measure". Specifically, the need to discipline labour in such a way as to produce an optimum level of surplus-value from the outlay on variable capital results in attempts to reify labour as a product, as that which 'can be reproduced exactly, and is in fact the result of repetitive acts and gestures.'[2] As well as rendering the human body as an object, to be worked upon in order to produce surplus-value, body work is the reification of the consuming human body as a product, but one that is never finished and is therefore always needful for forms of self-realisation, the availability of which are more and more limited to commodified forms. Thus the contradiction identified by Federici must be extended. It is not simply a dual contradiction where the production of the human collides with the production of labour-power fit for the labour market; the production of the human also collides with the production of a body fit for the expanding sphere of consumption.

Thus the alienation of the object of labour is not the alienation of the object as private property but rather is the production of the political character of the labour/capital antagonism by means of the intervention of value in the production of bodies. That is, in continuation of my argument from chapter five that emergent forms of labour foreclose on the potency of the indeterminacy of labour-power, the production of the human body as an object of labour is a process of the determination of the body by capital as value. Body work, as work on one's own body, as both unwaged work and waged labour on the bodies of others, and as a mark made on the body by labour and by work ("work" in terms of the dual contradiction of reproductive work under capitalism) produces bodies divided. There is an antagonism in all of these forms of body work that result from the capitalistic valorisation of – and therefore their rendering as abstractions – the affective and emotional capacities of bodies and the connection of these capacities to aesthetics. This antagonism is characterised by the struggle between capital's domination of the reproduction of these capacities, in terms of their qualitative form, and the resistance to measure that has its origins in the humanness of embodied capacities, albeit a

[1] Bernard Cova and Daniele Dalli. 'Working consumers: the next step in marketing theory?', *Marketing Theory* 9:3 (2009). 316. My emphasis.
[2] Lefebvre cf. Davies. 'Works, Products, and the Division of Labour' 57-8

humanness that is already a human abstracted from its specificities in the mediation of wage-labour.

6.4. Alienated Labour, Antagonism, and the Margins of Anticapitalist Praxis

What, now, are the dimensions of alienated labour? There has been a transformation in the qualitative character of the object of labour. The human character of the object of labour renders the dual process of objectification and appropriation more immediately political than it does in the production of non-human objects. The 'metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties' of the commodity are not merely forces that make 'the social character of men's labour *appear* to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour.'[1] The enigma of the commodity has become a force that makes the particular, capitalist social character of labour an objective character of labour itself. This objective character does not emerge from labour in its abstract aspect, as the coding of the world as various magnitudes of value measured in labour time thereby making the character of productive cooperation appear as a relation between things. It emerges from the coding of bodies themselves as magnitudes of value, determinant of and determined by particular forms of concrete labour – body work – that have proliferated according to the logic of the theory of value, i.e., the logic by which labour in its abstract aspect subsumes the concrete aspect of labour. It emerges from the making of people as objects in the sphere of production though the practice of making oneself an instrument of the labour process and it emerges in the sphere of reproduction through the making of oneself as an object of the labour process and in making oneself and others the object of a contradictory process of making the body as labour-power. The dual process of objectification and appropriation is still alienated – the worker objectifies him or herself and capital appropriates the objectification as value – but this appropriation directly the confronts the dual-contradictory character of the reproduction of labour-power; the objectification is appropriated as value *qua* labour-power and as such the value that is appropriated by capital is subject to the constant tension between the reproduction of embodied capacities for the labour market and the reproduction of the human. The alienation of the political capacities of bodies today represents a limit to capital; the domination of labour in its abstract aspect collides with the concrete character of emergent forms of labour because this concrete character pertains amidst the dual contradiction of the reproduction of labour-power. Capital's supersession of this limit would look exactly like Debord's spectacle: the circumvention of this limit would

[1] Marx *Capital vol. I* 76-7. My emphasis. "appears" in original.

require that the commodity attain 'the *total* occupation of social life,' a limit that my analysis does not demonstrate has been breached.[1] To explore the politics of this contradiction I examine the subjective character of emergent forms of labour from the perspective of the alienation of embodied political capacities.

In discussing labour activity, Marx states that labour is 'not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a *means* to satisfy needs external to it.'[2] The instrumentalisation of the political capacities of bodies shapes the body in such a way that in and as a result of emergent forms of labour under capitalism bodies come to possess the needs/desires that these forms of labour activity can – and I stress "can" as opposed to do – satisfy. Thus, the subjective aspects of Marx's theory of alienated labour activity – perfectly reasonable generalisations – become less sure. 'The worker,' Marx states, 'only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself... [He or she] does not feel content but unhappy.'[3] Having worked in a few factories and on building sites myself, knowing quite a few factory and building workers far more skilled than I, and, of course, having studied Taylor, Braverman, Burawoy, and so on, I assent to the potency and validity of these generalisations. Labour is time lost from life. Having worked in a few bars, restaurants, call centres, done work inside and outside academia that Bifo would describe as 'properly cognitive labour', knowing people who have done the same, and having studied post-*operaismo*, Hochschild, Wolkowitz, and so on, these subjective feelings regarding the forced character of labour and its painful aspect are commonplace enough in all of these branches of production.[4] Nonetheless, the empirical analysis of emergent forms of labour, when compared with forms of labour common to the period of monopoly capital, does not offer such a universalising view on subjective feeling towards labour activity. Therefore, although the presence of alienated relations is not contingent upon the subjective feeling of workers, and this imposed limitation on alienation theory in American Sociology represents one of the nails in the coffin of the alienation theory that I am trying to retrieve, it is remiss to simply brush aside subjective feeling with recourse to notions of the structural characteristics of economic organisation. More importantly, I argue that an examination of subjective feeling in light of the objective conditions of alienation illuminates further the politics of alienation in way that a consideration of objective conditions alone cannot.

The qualitatively heterogeneous character of subjective feelings toward work in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism indicates new dimensions to the production of the

[1] Debord *Society of the Spectacle* Para 42. Emphasis in original.
[2] Marx *1844* 74. Emphasis in original.
[3] Marx *1844* 74
[4] Berardi *Soul at Work* 87

political character of the antagonism between labour and capital. First of all, let me qualify what I mean by heterogeneous. There are workers in emergent forms of labour who love their jobs; their labour processes provide subjective meaning and satisfaction in and of themselves. There are workers who love elements of their jobs and these workers can be found in all branches of industry that constitute emergent forms of labour. Fleming observes that 'our jobs now become something very intimate to us, especially when they rely on interpersonal aptitudes and emotional intelligence to make things happen.'[1] And of course, there are workers in emergent forms of labour who hate everything about their jobs. Why is there a love of work, whether apparently complete or momentary or limited in its concrete circumstance? I argue that my examination of alienation can explain this love of work and can indicate the political dimensions that are attendant to these transformations in the organisation of labour.

Advertising creative work has been reported to be one of this jobs that is intimate to the worker who does it. As demonstrated in chapter four, advertising creative work appears as the worker's objectification of their imagination; imagination is an intimate aspect of the self. Imagination is part of the suite of embodied capacities from which the potential to engage in praxis emerges. My analysis of the labour process of creative workers, in particular of the modes by which creative workers make their imagination an instrument in order to effect a change on the objects of labour in accordance with the remit of the client brief, demonstrates that the elements of the advertising creative production process is a determination of political subjectivity; the creative worker changes themselves *in order to* effect a change on the two objects of the labour process; i.e. on the media that forms the advertising and on the bodies that consume the advertising. That is, work renders the practice of the powers of imagination as something that is undertaken – both during work-time and outside of it – as a practice that has as its aim the realisation of commodities and the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. The powers of the imagination of creative workers are exercised only with the aims of creating a political and ideological environment of conspicuous consumption and the reproduction of commodity fetishism; the potential of imagination is more and more reduced to its capacity to realise the exchange-value of commodities. The creative worker designates their imagination an instrument and, in this designation, imagination is both transformed and separated from the worker but simultaneously remains an intimate aspect of the worker's body. As such, this alienation of imagination is the determination of the worker's very subjectivity.

[1] Peter Fleming. *Resisting Work: The Corporatization of Life and Its Discontents*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014). 5.

The alienation of the instrument and the object in emergent forms of labour are apparatuses of the determination of the political subject. Of course, this determination is not a universal, qualitative determination of content; determination is not *deterministic*. The question of the politics of alienation is not a simple algebra constituted by independent variable "economic organisation"/dependent variable "political subjectivity." This manner of interpreting Marx's theory has resulted in the gravest errors of interpretation and theoretical production by both Marxists and critics of Marx. Rather, determination in general pertains within contradiction and the determination of human subjectivity pertains within the context of the subjective, active, thinking and practical character of human beings. The making of the body as an instrument is a determination of form; the particular content, quality, and degree of instrumentalisation is determined within the opposition between domination and resistance. This is the political space of alienation. The important point here is that the form of determination – a contextual and precarious determination of the body, and therewith of political subjectivity itself – bears upon the *potential* for the resistance to domination. The form of labour-power in emergent forms of labour is engendered by the capitalist valorisation of the capacities of bodies – the capacity to learn, to change, to work – from which resistance emerges. There is no universal formula that connects the determination of the body with either interminable domination or structural refusal but rather the results of domination and practices of refusal are embodied. The body, in work and in life, is itself the site of the domination of the capitalist mode of production and of resistance to it, at whatever degrees it may present itself.

Emergent forms of labour indicate that economy is organised such that the human capacities and potentialities from which resistance to alienation can emerge are themselves alienated from the bodies that bear them. Alienation is a process of the twisting and distorting of human capacities such that they fulfil the needs of value, the reification of these capacities as commodified labour-power, and the separation of these capacities and their estrangement in the body of the person who is the object of the work. A call centre worker works on their own body so as to make their capacity to communicate, and the suite of concrete forms that this communication takes, can serve as an instrument in a labour process that is designed to effect and alteration on the object of labour. The capacity to communicate is exercised solely in service of the production of value and so the body itself is formatively shaped to engage in the world in this way. Thus a circle is made in these processes of alienation that nonetheless persists within a contradiction between the production of the body as variable capital and the production of the body as human. This alienation is not simply a phenomenon in production but rather extends throughout spheres of production and consumption, these spheres mediated within the dual contradictory character of the reproduction of labour-power. The potential for

resistance to domination is subsumed under the figure of value. As a result, antagonism is not merely a general alienation of humanity as separate and opposed figures of labour and capital. Nor is antagonism simply the domination of one figure by the other, nor is it the resistance to domination. It is the construction of that antagonism in an assemblage of political economic forms, with the production of bodies at its centre, such that the capitalist organisation of production appears as a natural, eternal figure that is more or less suited to the provision and satisfaction of need and desire because the production of bodies under capitalism formatively shapes, within contradiction, need and desire in almost every field of life. Emergent forms of labour shapes bodies such that antagonism is occluded, domination internalised, and the indeterminate figure of the potential for praxis is determined as a commodified use-value of labour-power.

The capacities and potentialities of bodies for praxis – the qualities of bodies that humans draw upon to express their Being as political Being – has become the social form of the domination of labour by capital. The political problem is that economic domination takes a form in which it shapes the potential for resistance in the image of value, in the image of itself. Production in body work is not simply a phenomenon that is attendant to the separation of humanity in the antagonistic figures of labour and capital; body work emerges from a labour process for which the intended aim is the formative shaping of the political capacities and potentialities of bodies in accordance with the logic of value. Bodies are made so as to labour and consume in particular ways; this formative shaping simultaneously determines the possibilities of politics at the point of production and beyond it. The politics of capitalist productive relations is not merely articulated as the alienation of humanity in the form of a generalised antagonism between labour and capital. It is the alienation of human capacities such that the form of this alienation structures this antagonism in relation to the potential for praxis.

As a consequence of the expansion of alienation I argue that the possibilities for anti-capitalist politics are beset on all sides by the forces of domination; the anticapitalist project is no longer to simply expropriate the expropriators but is to do so while simultaneously liberating ourselves from the commodity logic that has alienated us from what is most human about us. Alienated emergent forms of labour are at the centre of this organic system of domination. Emergent forms of labour formatively shape bodies so that the antagonistic relation between labour and capital, and the ontological fissure that lies beneath this antagonism, is both occluded and fortified. I argue that the emerging politics of alienation perform the same function in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism as the Protestant Work Ethic did for the phase of the formal subsumption of labour under capital and it performs the same function as

the structural integration of resistance to capital within the capitalist state did for the period of monopoly capital. As both of these phases of capitalism represent the extension of the social form of domination by capital over life so the alienation of the potential for praxis in our present forms of economic organisation represents the contemporary figure of capital's interiorisation, and the potential for the nullification, of the possibilities of resistance. However, these same conditions that apparently demonstrate an interminable character to the domination of life by capital are also the conditions that produce the political spaces in which a practical, critical approach to the organisation of production and of life can be exercised.

Alienation in the emergent labour process is not confined to the labour process. However, the extension of capitalist power is simultaneously the limit to anticapitalism and the possibility for the transcendence of this limit. The alienated unity of the productive and reproductive spheres appears interminable as capital is on the verge of the total domination of life by commodity logic. But the instrument of the labour process is the worker's body; it is the worker's capacity to change, to create, to engage in human relationships and to produce the world. As such, the alienation of these capacities as instrument brings species-being directly into confrontation with capitalist production within the labour process. Therefore, the emerging politics of alienation connects the 'colossal, but timid, limit to capital' – the power to work, to create, to change, to engage and interact with the world in a practical, critical way – directly to the site of production. The emergent labour process brings the dual contradictory character of the reproduction of labour-power into a direct confrontation with the logic of value at the point of production. The reproduction of the human confronts the commodification of the human as labour-power in the labour-process itself.

The capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – is the social form of the domination of labour by capital. The emerging politics of alienation persists in the gap between the totalisation of commodity logic and the totalisation of working class antagonism. The marks made on bodies are not indelible but are made on subjects within history; capital is an active subject shaping bodies and bodies are active subjects shaping their own bodies and the bodies of others. What matters is *how* this contradiction takes antagonistic forms.

Conclusion: The Anticapitalist Politics of Alienation

"The historical knowledge of the proletariat
begins with knowledge of the present, with
the self-knowledge of its own social situation
and with the elucidation of its necessity."

Georg Lukács[1]

7.1. The New Contradiction of the Social Form of Domination

The original contribution to knowledge that my thesis makes is as follows: the capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – has become the social form of the domination of labour by capital. This is the fundamental contradiction of the organisation of production in this period of capitalism and is, therefore, the 'condition which offer[s] the most determinate possibilities for emancipatory social change.'[2] My original contribution on the contradiction of the capitalist organisation of labour and the political capacities of the body, and the process by which I make it, is significant to the fields of politics, labour studies and the sociology of work, political economy – particularly the political economy of work and the political economy of reproductive work – studies on the body in the contemporary social constitution, and critical research in Marxist theory – particularly studies of the theory of alienation and studies in Italian Autonomist Marxism. In this concluding chapter I restate the process by which I have made this original contribution, indicating its relevance to these fields. I then discuss areas indicated by my thesis for future research on work, the body, and the emerging politics of alienation.

I began my investigations from a political problem that emerges from an empirical transformation. I situated my analysis within the rich stream of research that is concerned with the transition from monopoly capitalism to its contemporary configuration. More specifically, I focused on problematics that approach the politics of labour/capital relations, which identify that there has been a transformation in the way people work and that this transformation is important to politics. My thesis is part of this research into the relation between the organisation of production and the production of politics and of political subjects. My thesis contributes to the discipline of politics by demonstrating that work and labour are intimately

[1] Georg Lukács. *History and Class-Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Tr. Rodney Livingstone. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968). 159.
[2] Antonio 'Immanent critique as the core of critical theory' 330

connected to politics. This problematic led me to an examination of the conceptual field that seeks to describe these emergent forms of labour; namely the concepts of aesthetic labour, emotional labour, and the triadic conception of affective/immaterial labour and biopolitical production. To ground my investigation of this conceptual field within an ontological theory, an epistemological approach, and a method, I analysed and interpreted an appropriate historical materialist approach for a political perspective on the problematic of the relations between work, labour and capital. This theoretical grounding also provided my investigations with a fundamentally necessary conceptual tool for the historical examination of the politics of work: the distinction between work and labour. My epistemological approach and ontological theory were implied by the problematic in two important ways. First, a fundamental characteristic of the transition to emergent forms of labour is a transformation in the character of the object of labour. In emergent forms of labour the object of the labour process is a human being – a body. The relation between the worker and the object of labour is a fundamental aspect of Marx's theory of alienation. Second, Marx's theory of alienation is primarily concerned with explaining the complexity of the labour/capital relation and the ways in which the organisation of capitalist production produces politics.

Following from this methodological, epistemological and ontological discussion I examined the concepts of aesthetic labour, emotional labour, and affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production using the method of immanent critique. This examination contributed to a variety of sub-fields of labour studies, brought a political perspective to primarily sociological studies in aesthetic and emotional labour, and contributed to the critical debate on Italian Autonomist Marxist approaches to the cognitive capitalism thesis. I found that although these concepts have very similar concrete forms of labour as their object – what I termed as emergent forms of labour – there were differences in the ways they describe what was important about these forms and there was a radical contradiction between the forms of politics and the forms of subjectivity that they propose are attendant to transformations in the organisation of labour. The conceptualisation of aesthetic labour appears to endorse the ways in which the capitalist organisation of labour frames the politics of work within a purportedly natural and immutable labour market in which labour-power is a commodity. The aesthetic labour thesis was unable to explain the formation of the subject, or what its proponents call subjects' "dispositions". The politics of emotional labour does not go so far in its internalisation of the politics of capitalist wage-labour relations, but situates the politics of work within the bounds that were attendant to tripartite labour/capital/state relations. Important contradictions in the emotional labour thesis were its proposals for the possibility of a divided public/private self and for the desirability of this alterity in the face of the

pernicious ontological consequences of emotional labour. The conceptualisations of affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production propose a radically different politics. Its proponents argue that the exodus from capital is immanent in the transformation of the form of labour and therein argue that the organisation of labour produces subjects who are autonomous and anticapitalist.

I then examined the theoretical context to these claims of an immanent becoming of anticapitalist exodus by analysing how its proponents – the post-*operaisti* – deploy the theory of alienation and by examining the effects of this deployment on the key aspects of their conceptual matrix. I found their characterisation of alienated labour both lacking and self-contradictory. The various post-*operaisti* conceptualisations of alienation are focused on explaining the immanent becoming of autonomy and the refusal of work, unlike Marx's theory which explains the ontological consequences of labour under capitalism. I found that when pernicious aspects of alienation emerge from the post-*operaisti* analysis of alienation they obviate and obscure these aspects beneath the figure of a purportedly autonomous worker. The autonomous worker emerges into the analysis not from an empirical enquiry but from a philosophical formulation, namely Tronti's inversion of the labour/capital antagonism. As such, the post-*operaisti* strip the theory of alienation from their reconfiguration of Marx's theory of general intellect, such that this reconfiguration appears to corroborate their theories of the autonomous worker. The post-*operaisti* claim that their theory of alienation is not predicated on a "return to human essence" and therefore it is radically different from Marx's theory; they are mistaken in two ways. First, this is a mischaracterisation of Marx's theory of essence, which is not predicated on a static theory of human nature but rather understands human nature as inimitably connected to the modes by which humans interact with nature. Second, the post-*operaisti* underplay the function of "human essence" in their own theory; they characterise human essence as necessarily anticapitalist and therefore as a fundamental factor of their own teleological theory of the exodus from capital. As such, they do not recognise the Hegelian Geist that haunts their own theories.[1] These analyses contributed to the critical research on Italian Autonomist Marxism and more broadly to studies in the political economy of work.

To further investigate the problems with the political and political economic conclusions of the conceptual landscape of labour, and to further examine the post-*operaisti* proposals of an autonomous worker, I examined theories on the labour process and theories of the labour

[1] "Geist" is the German word for "ghost" and is a word that Hegel uses as a cognate for his Absolute Subject of history.

process under capitalism as a precursor to a theoretical-empirical examination of two concrete forms of emergent labour: advertising creative work and front-line call centre work. As such, these examinations and analyses engaged with and contributed to theories on political economy and the political economy of work, the sociology of work and Labour Process Theory and Labour Process Analysis approaches to labour studies. These examinations demonstrated that emergent forms of labour remain bound by the fundamental features of labour under capitalism. Most importantly, this examination demonstrated that workers in emergent forms of labour deploy aspects of their being as the instrument of the labour process and that the object of the labour process of emergent forms of labour is the bodies of others. It is from this theoretical-empirical analysis of the labour process that an important aspect of my original contribution emerged: this analysis demonstrated that the capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – are subject to capitalist command during labour time.

From this identification of the centrality of bodies' political capacities and potentialities to the labour process of emergent forms of labour I examined theories on the body at work. This examination made contributions to theories of the body in capitalism, the political economy and sociology of work, theories on reproductive work, and critical research in Marxist theory. A key problem with these theories on the body at work is that they fail to consider the way that different body work practices, in the labour process, in consumption, and in reproduction, ontologically entail one another. I developed a dialectical conception of body work as a mode by which these relations could be understood and thereby their political and political economic character could be uncovered. My approach to the work that people do on their own bodies, the work that they do on the bodies of others, and the marks that labour makes on the body demonstrated that there is a fundamental inner connection between these practices that indicates a reciprocal relation between the power relations of the capitalist labour process, the logics of capital accumulation and modes of interaction that produce bodies undertaken apparently far from the gaze of the wage-labour relation. My analysis of body work, and the process by which its relations extend from the labour process to the sphere of reproduction by means of the dual contradictory character of the reproduction of labour-power, demonstrated a further aspect of my original contribution: the capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – are formatively shaped as objects of the labour process, as a consequence of the consumption of commodities and their cultural and ideological content, and as a result of reproductive work, within the forced character of the capitalist labour market.

In the final chapter I examined the transformation in the character of the object and of the instrument of the labour process in terms of how capitalist production is contingent on their alienation from the worker. Or rather, in terms of how capitalist production is contingent on the worker's alienation of the object and the instrument of labour. This examination made contributions to critical research in Marxist theory, politics, the political economy of work and theories on reproductive work. Bodies and their capacities and potentialities to engage in praxis are not simply formatively shaped within the capitalist organisation of production, labour, consumption, exchange, and reproduction, as demonstrated in chapters four and five. These capacities and potentialities are separated from their bearers. By examining this formative shaping of embodied capacities from the perspective of alienation, I demonstrated that these capacities and potentialities are not simply *deployed* in the production of value; the capacities by which humanity can understand and realise its potentialities are distorted and perverted. This distortion and perversion of bodies' capacities is such that their purpose, the modes of their exercise and practice, and their modes of Being, is the production, realisation, and consumption of commodities. These modes create bodies as the commodity labour-power. The emerging politics of alienation is the reproduction of an entire cultural, political, and economic system of abstraction, self-abasement and a distinct *un*freedom within a distinct ideological form. There is a systematic and systemic extension of capitalist modes of Being throughout life, pervading from the labour process, through the labour market, to the production and reproduction of life itself. The very capacities by which people are able to resist domination are subject to the domination of capital. The embodied capacities by which people can engage in praxis – are able to communicate with one another, cooperate, and share visions of the organisation of interaction with the world and with each other – are socially-fixed within the logic of alienation. The collective potential of human bodies to create, to change, to learn, and to *be* is caught in the flux between the exercise of human capacities and the dehumanisation of those capacities that is attendant to alienation. The desire to tend to one another's needs, emotional, affective, symbolic, the desire for care and nurture and the desire to be nurtured and cared for is transformed into the power to produce bodies as commodities for exploitation. It is from this final stage of my analysis that I made my original contribution to knowledge: the capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis – the properties of bodies with which humans express their Being as political Being – is the social form of the domination of labour by capital.

The autonomy of labour from capital is not immanent in the organisation of the emergent labour process or in the vicissitudes of reproduction under capital and under the capitalist state. There is no formula that can predetermine a relation of liberation that is to emerge from

the contradictions of the organisation of emergent forms of labour. There is no teleological calculus that will allow us to measure the historical development of the social form of capital's domination and to pinpoint the condition at which labour will overturn the denial of humanity by capital accumulation. Autonomy must be – can only be – produced by active subjects engaging in the reappropriation of political, social and economic life, but the organisation of production in emergent forms of labour does not indicate that this is a process in becoming; on the contrary, the existential character of the social form of domination illustrates the enormous challenges to the project of anticapitalist praxis and its Sisyphean character. But there is an immanent condition in the organisation of production in emergent forms of labour that makes effective modes of praxis possible: the alienation of the potential for praxis is simultaneously the condition for the confrontation between praxis and the labour process. The emerging politics of alienation connects the colossal, but timid, limit to capital – the power to work, to create, to change, to engage and interact with the world in a practical, critical way – directly to the site of production, bringing value and praxis into direct confrontation with one another. Autonomy does not proceed from the labour process itself but from our understanding of the labour process, to the furthest extent of its relations, as a denial of the collective potential of humanity. Autonomy proceeds from our knowledge of ourselves as the bearers of this potential, and our practical, critical activity against this denial. This is the anticapitalist politics of alienation.

7.2. Areas for Future Research

My thesis opens up potential areas and foci for future empirical and theoretical research. First, and most broadly, it opens up perspectives in political research for the consideration of research subjects, institutions, and structures as being constituted by people who are doing work and labour. The distinctions I made – following Marx – between work and labour, my examinations of work and labour as sites for the production of political subjects, and my detailed examination of the processes by which certain qualities of political subjectivities are formatively shaped, can be brought to bear on a variety of themes regarded as more orthodoxly "political". For example, my examination of the processes of body work and the matter of the wage-labour relation, in the context of the aspect of my original contribution that the capacities and potentialities of bodies to engage in praxis are subject to capitalist command during labour time, should be brought to bear on examinations of the relationship between the organisation of political parties and the ways in which a variety of aspects of their work proceeds, such as in policy development, political communication, representative

selection, and electioneering. This should be brought to bear on the politics that proceed from the technical and social division of work/labour in political parties in an examination of the dynamics between the key divisions between representatives, waged party workers, unpaid volunteers and party members. My investigations could equally be brought to bear more specifically on work of elected representatives and government officials.

My findings make a broad range of contributions to the field of labour studies that open up a variety of theoretical debates and offer new frameworks for empirical analysis. First, my restatement of the relevance of Marx's disaggregation of the elementary factors of the labour process opens up new approaches to Labour Process Theory and Labour Process Analysis approaches to the politics and political economy of work. My finding that the fundamental empirical transformation in the organisation of labour in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism is the character of the instrument and the object of the labour processes restates underplayed dimensions to these approaches, offering a framework for discussion and examination in both empirically- and theoretically-focused analyses that take into account a broader range of concrete forms of labour.

My examination of aesthetic and emotional labour opens up further possibilities for a political focus to theoretical and empirical approaches to these concepts and the concrete forms of work from which these abstractions are drawn. My examination of the post-*operaisti* formulations of affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production made several arguments against their effectiveness as part of the project to understand transformations in the organisation of labour and the production of politics. The internal contradictions of these concepts and their elements that are inchoate with the concrete objects of their study are worthy of further analysis, particularly empirically. Similarly, the lacunae that I identified in these approaches, particularly in terms of how the form of labour is characterised and the relation between the form of labour and the ways in which it bears on the character of political subjectivity is also worthy of further analysis and critique.

Most importantly, from the perspective of my conceptual contributions, my generalising concept of body work makes important provocations to the concepts of aesthetic labour, emotional labour and to the concepts of affective/immaterial labour}biopolitical production that should be examined both theoretically and empirically. Critique should be brought to bear on whether my concept of body work is better equipped than the existing conceptual field for the examination of the production of politics in work and labour, across the spheres of production and reproduction.

My examination of post-*operaismo* theories on political economy in the contemporary conjunction of capitalism from the perspective of alienation identified a number of incongruences in the relations between the concepts that make up their common conceptual matrix. Their theories of general intellect and autonomy should be revisited, both empirically and theoretically, in terms of how their understanding of alienation bears upon them.

My perspectives on alienation, in post-*operaismo* and the emergent organisations of labour under capitalism also indicates that Marxist theories of alienation should be revisited. In particular, my identification of the alienation of the workers body as the instrument of labour bears further theoretical and empirical examination, as does the relation that pertains from the human character of the object of labour.

My analyses have been drawn from a number of feminist contributions to my chosen problematic and, as such, open up a number of areas for further work that needs to be done. A key limitation of my thesis is that it does not disaggregate the working class as a differentiated working class and the most important aspect of this is my failure to differentiate the working class as gendered. My aim in this project was to dig down to the oppression of the working class in the new forms of the organisation of work; the work of digging down to the oppression of the gender, and racial and sexuality, differentiated working class, from the perspective of my own formulations, is still to do. As such, there are a number of more specifically-oriented approaches, both empirical and theoretical, to be taken to the body at work problematic. There are different specific forms of labour in different branches of industry to be examined from this perspective. Furthermore, the analysis of this gender differentiation is crucial to examining the relation between production and reproduction and the politics of gender. My conceptualisation of the reciprocal relationality of body work offers a framework for the examination of the gender politics that pertain in the dual contradiction of the reproduction of labour-power and offers approaches to examining how these modes of inequality bear upon the character of the production of political subjectivity, the production of bodies, and the production of bodies as labour-power.

Finally, my analyses open up spaces for action research on the emerging politics of alienation as it pertains in the spheres of production and reproduction. It is in these spaces that we, as academics, can engage in practical, critical modes of activity against the social form of the domination of labour.

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