



The Gray Zones of Creativity And Capital

- Introduction
- The Missing Chapter of Empire*
Santiago Castro-Gomez
- Within The Image*
Jonathan Beller



The initial idea that led to the preparation of this publication was not a reflection of the editors’ wish to merely add another publication focusing on a critique of the relationship between creative industries and capital to the huge corpus of similar publications taking a critical stance towards the process of co-optation of creativity, creative industries, art or the domain of abstraction in general by capital. Even though, precisely through the logic of the mass production of critical texts dealing with the above-mentioned context, this publication as well will ultimately exist in such a register, the distinctive feature of this publication is its aspiration to place the relationship between creativity and capital in the context of an analysis wherein capitalism is treated as the framework of a broader relationship of domination, which to a great degree goes beyond the currently popular critical niche focused on analyzing the relationship between creativity, abstraction or representation in general and capital.

The vast majority of such publications are characterized by such a perception of the relationship between creativity and capital, which implies that the co-optation and exploitation of work, creativity and attention occurs in a post-class, post-ideological or post-colonial context of the so-called “networked world or networked democracy”, wherein all subjects and their actions are reportedly subjected to the logic of capital in the same way. Regardless of whether we speak of the ideological use of the concept of creativity in the name of rationalization of the neoliberal strategies of transforming the city into ghettoized class and racial apartheid, whether we speak of the exploitation of attention (the economy of attention) by financial capital or generally about the epistemological positioning of creativity, abstraction or the domain of representation within the dominant form of rationalization and reproduction of capitalism, this publication strives to retain a critical view that sees these processes as forms of the perpetuation of the hegemony of capitalism in the so-called contemporary era.

As regards the temporal framework encompassed in this publication, although certain texts, through the logic of the necessity of historicization of specific strategies and practices refer to historical periods preceding the 21st century, the majority of the texts contained in this publication refer to social and political processes from the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, that is, the current period. In this sense, the dominant ideological discourses, strategies and power relations of today constitute the focus of attention of the topics of this publication.

This publication, then, occupies a position that treats “the networked world”, its democracies, cognitivities, attention and culture as domains wherein, or with help of which, forms of the reproduction of capitalism as a heterogeneous form of hegemony, primarily of the First World of capital or the West, are reorganized, “modernized”. The title “The Gray Zones of Creativity and Capital” does not, therefore, point primarily to instances of vagueness and dichotomy in the analysis of the social meaning of the cooperation between creativity and capital, but assumes a critical stance towards “gray areas” in those dominant interpretations of capitalism that try to view it as a post-ideological, post-class or post-bloc system.

In this sense, the introductory text by Santiago Castro-Gómez, entitled “The Missing Chapter of Empire - Postmodern reorganization of coloniality and post-Fordist capitalism”, critically addresses the interpretation of contemporary capitalism (presented in the text “Empire” by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt) that views it as a system of equal exploitation of all. Castro-Gomez sees the capitalism of today as a modernized form of the colonial division of the world, in which the First World of capital, the West, still retains a monopoly on defining progress, and in which that same world retains a surplus