Deleuze, Marx and Politics

Nicholas Thoburn

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A critical and provocative exploration of the political, conceptual and cultural points of resonance between Deleuze's minor politics and Marx's critique of capitalist dynamics, *Deleuze, Marx and Politics* is the first book to engage with Deleuze's missing work, *The Grandeur of Marx*.

Following Deleuze's call for an interpretation that draws new relations and connections, this book explores the core categories of communism and capital in conjunction with a wealth of contemporary and historical political concepts and movements – from the lumpenproletariat and anarchism to Italian *autonomia* and Antonio Negri, immaterial labour and the refusal of work. Drawing on literary figures such as Kafka and Beckett, *Deleuze, Marx and Politics* develops a politics that breaks with the dominant frameworks of post-Marxism and one-dimensional models of resistance towards a concern with the inventions, styles and knowledges that emerge through minority engagement with social flows and networks. This book is also an intervention in contemporary debates about new forms of identity and community, information technology and the intensification of work.

This book will serve as an introduction to Deleuze's politics and the contemporary vitality of Marx for students and will challenge scholars in the fields of social and political theory, sociology and cultural studies.

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

Works by Deleuze

N   *Negotiations: 1972–1990* (1995)

Works by Deleuze and Guattari

AŒ   *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, volume I (1983)
ATP   *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, volume II (1988)
K   *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986)

1 Introduction

The grandeur of Marx

> For the race summoned forth by art or philosophy is not the one that claims to be pure but rather an oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, and irremediably minor race.
>
> (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 109)

> one does not belong to communism, and communism does not let itself be designated by what it names.
>
> (Blanchot 1997: 295)

Gilles Deleuze's (1995a: 51) comment that his last book, uncompleted before his death, was to be called *The Grandeur of Marx* leaves a fitting openness to his corpus and an intriguing question. How was this philosopher of difference and complexity – for whom resonance rather than explication was the basis of philosophical engagement – to compose the 'greatness' of Marx?[1] What kind of relations would Deleuze construct between himself and Marx, and what new lines of force would emerge? Engaging with this question and showing its importance, Éric Alliez (1997: 81) suggests that 'all of Deleuze's philosophy . . . comes under the heading "Capitalism and Schizophrenia"'. Since the proper name of such a concern with the 'demented' configuration of capitalism[2] is of course Marx, Alliez continues: 'It can be realized therefore just how regrettable it is that Deleuze was not able to write the work he planned as his last, which he wanted to entitle *Grandeur de Marx*.' But this is not an unproductive regret. For, as Alliez proposes, the missing book can mobilize new relations with Deleuze's work. Its very absence can induce an engagement with the 'virtual Marx' which traverses Deleuze's texts:

> we can take comfort from the possibility of thinking that this *virtual Marx*, this philosophically clean-shaven Marx that Deleuze alludes to in the opening pages of *Difference and Repetition* . . . can be mobilized in the form of an empty square[3] allowing us to move around the Deleuzian corpus on fresh legs.
>
> (Alliez 1997: 81)

As even a cursory reading of Deleuze and Guattari's two-volume work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (*AŒ*, *ATP*) shows, a Deleuze–Marx resonance would, indeed, not have been wholly new.[4] The importance of Marx in Deleuze's thought has been noted, certainly since *Anti-Oedipus* (cf. Donzelot 1977; Lyotard 1977), and Deleuze himself more than once proposed that he and Guattari were Marxists (*N*: 171; Deleuze 1995a: 51). Yet Deleuze's relation with Marx has remained a relatively unexplored dynamic. A recent essay on Deleuze's 'many materialisms', for example, only mentions Marxism once, and then rather disparagingly to suggest that the use of the term 'production' in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* is 'no doubt . . . a lingering influence of orthodox Marxian thought' (Mullarkey 1997: 451). An interest in Deleuze's relation to Marx has, however, been developing in recent years (cf. Hardt 1995; Holland 1997, 1998, 1999; Massumi 1992; Surin 1994, 1997). In these works the focus has tended to be placed on the centrality of an analysis of capitalist dynamics in Deleuze's system. This is rightly so, for Deleuze places the question of capital – the ways that the capitalist social machine, or 'socius', engineers the flows of life – at the centre of his project, and declares himself a Marxist in these terms:

> Félix Guattari and I have remained Marxists, in our two different ways, perhaps, but both of us. You see, we think any political philosophy must turn on the analysis of capitalism and the ways it has developed. What we find most interesting in Marx is his analysis of capitalism as an immanent system that's constantly overcoming its own limitations, and then coming up against them once more in a broader form, because its fundamental limit is capital itself.[5]
>
> (*N*: 171)

For Deleuze, following Marx, the capitalist socius is premised not on identity – like previous social formations – but on a continuous process of production – 'production for production's sake' – which entails a kind of permanent reconfiguration and intensification of relations in a process of setting, and overcoming, limits. In this sense, difference and becoming – or a certain form of becoming – is *primary*. Deleuze and Guattari's assertion that the 'line of flight' is primary in, and functional to, capitalist assemblages echoes Marx's famous description of capital as a state of being where 'All that is solid melts into air' and where relations 'become antiquated before they can ossify' (Marx and Engels 1973: 37). But there is another aspect to Marx that has been less often taken up in critical work on Deleuze's relations with Marx: politics. If we are interested in maximizing the potential of a productive resonance between Deleuze and Marx, the question of politics must be central, for one can only do justice to Marx's thought if his analysis of capital is considered through this lens.

One gets the sense that the foregrounding of Marxian concerns through an emphasis on capitalism has emerged to suit a time of political impasse. It is as

if after the deterritorializing joys of '68 (a time when Guattari (1998: 213) said he 'had the impression sometimes of walking on the ceiling') and the early English-language reception of Deleuze and Guattari's work, our more sombre times require a recognition of the increasing isomorphism of processes of complexity and difference to *capitalist* productivity (cf. Holland 1998).[6] Impasse is not an alien condition for Deleuze and Guattari, and one should not assume that their 'joyful'[7] project, like the worst forms of leftism, should circulate around a continual optimism. Indeed, as we will see, Beckett's (1979: 382) proposition that it is the very impossibility of life that compels life – 'I can't go on, I'll go on' – expresses a more appropriate tenor for the Deleuzian political than the popular image of unlicensed desire. Nevertheless, it would not do justice to the potential of a Deleuze–Marx resonance if Alliez's call for a 'fresh legs' movement around Deleuze's virtual Marx focused exclusively on aspects which show a closing-down of political possibility, as if Marx returned to sober up Deleuze.

   With this in mind, I want to suggest that it is in our apparent impasse that Marx becomes even more important in exploring Deleuze's politics. This is not because of the centrality of an analysis of capitalism per se (though the contemporary re-emergence of interest in capitalist dynamics is certainly timely), but because Marx remains the pre-eminent thinker of the impossibility of any easy or given political escape from the infernal capitalist machine, whilst simultaneously positing such possibility and potential on relations formed *within* and *particular to* capitalism itself. This condition is what Marx calls 'communism'. To foreground Marx's communism is not to turn to a different set of Marx's texts (for example, the early works, as against *Capital*). For Marx, communism is the immanent potential that haunts, and emerges in and through, capitalism. It is thus a *perspective* for interpreting capitalism and developing politics, and is hence found throughout Marx's works.[8] Marx does present some general aspects of what a post-capitalist mode of life might involve – as a milieu of becoming which overcomes the strictures of identity, abolishes work, forms a non-fetishized relation with Nature or the world, and, if we are to follow Deleuze and Guattari's reading, sets the desiring machines loose from their anthropomorphic sexuality.[9] Generally, however, the communist perspective is not an elaboration of a different 'communist society', and it is certainly not, to use Nietzschean terms, a reactive denial of current life in a postponement for the beautiful tomorrow. It is, rather, a process of continual engagement with the flows and constraints of the capitalist socius toward its overcoming, as is evident in Marx and Engels' necessarily ambiguous definition:

> Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence.
>
> (Marx and Engels 1974: 56–7)

The riddle of politics

This book seeks to contribute to a Deleuze–Marx resonance through a fore-grounding of the question of politics immanent to capitalist relations. It is, in a sense, a Deleuzian engagement with Marx's communism. It explores a series of milieux and conceptual territories – from the question of the proletariat, to the problem of value, control, and the critique of work – to see how Deleuze's engagement with Marx and with Marxian concerns can develop useful and innovative political figures. At the centre of the book is the question of Deleuze's politics, and it is to an initial presentation of this, and its possible problems, that I now turn.[10]

At one level, an initial presentation of Deleuze's politics is a relatively simple task. Deleuze and Guattari are self-proclaimed 'political' thinkers. Indeed, politics is central enough to their understanding of the formation of life that they can write that 'politics precedes being' (*ATP*: 203). Deleuze's politics, like indeed all his and Guattari's concepts and categories, is closely related to his Spinozist and Nietzschean materialism, with its conception of the world as an ever-changing and intricately related monstrous collection of forces and arrangements that is always constituting modes of existence at the same time as it destroys them. Such a materialism conceives the world as not only without finitude, but also without delineated subjects or objects; let us call them 'things'.[11] Of course, this is not a refutation of the existence of things, but it is a refusal to present them in any ontological or epistemological primacy. There are things, but only as they are constituted in particular, varied, and mutable relations of force.[12]

If the world is at base a primary flux of matter without form or constant, then things are always a temporary product of a channelling of this flux in what Deleuze and Guattari call 'assemblages' or 'arrangements' (cf. *ATP*: 503–5).[13] Nietzsche calls this channelling a process of 'interpretation': the process whereby matter is cut and assembled by a particular series of forces that, as Foucault's work has emphasized, respect no 'ideal'/'material' dichotomy. Any interpretation of a thing or an event does not come after the fact, but is part of its composition, as one of many forces immanent to it. As Deleuze (n.d.a: n.p.) puts it: 'Nietzsche's idea is that things and actions are already interpretations. So, to interpret is to interpret interpretations and, in this way, already to change things, "to change life".' The coherence of things is not, then, a function of their position in the centre of a series of concentric circles of channelling or interpretation. Things are far more unstable than this. Without a primary form before interpretation, the thing is situated at a meeting point of a per-petually changing series of interpretations/forces and is thus never 'finished'.[14] A thing thus embodies difference within itself as a 'virtuality' or 'potential' to be actualized in different interpretations and configurations.[15]

This 'virtuality' is not in opposition to the 'real'; rather it is the reality of a creative matter as it exists in ever-new configurations as the base of the real (it is in opposition only to the fixed determination of relations) (cf. *ATP*: 99).

Nancy (1996: 110) puts this well: Deleuze's 'thought does not have "the real" for an "object" – it has no "object". It is another effectuation of the real, admitting that the real "in itself" is chaos, a sort of effectivity without effectuation'.[16] Thus, it is not only that 'facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations' derived from our historically formed values (Nietzsche 1968: §481), but that we are called to an active *creation* of new and different interpretations, or 'lives'. If all is contested interpretation as the production of being, then politics is immanent to life, politics precedes being: 'Practice does not come after the emplacement of the terms and their relations, but actively participates in the drawing of the lines' (*ATP*: 203, 208). Interpretation, or politics, is both a process of intricate attention to what makes a thing cohere, what makes an assemblage work, and, as far as possible (it is not a product of a simple *will* to change, but is a complex and difficult engagement), an affirmation of new senses, new lives, or new possibilities.

In Deleuze and Guattari's monist thought, then, 'life' has no primary forms or identities but is a perpetual process of configuration and variation, where politics is an art of composition, an art that affirms the variation and creation of life – 'molecular' or 'minor' processes, against striation and identity – 'major' or 'molar' processes (though, as I will show, there is no simple minor/major dichotomy).[17] The ramifications of this generalization of politics across the plane of life are great, and this manoeuvre plays a not insignificant part in the positive reception and use of Deleuze and Guattari's works in recent years, where a frequent theme is an explication of this politicized life in a 'politics of becoming'. However, at another level, this generalization of politics poses problems for an account, and indeed a development, of Deleuze's politics. For, if politics is immanent to the creations of life such that politics is everywhere, one is left wondering what the *specificity* of politics might be. This question is explicitly taken up by Alain Badiou (1998: 16–17; 2001). Badiou argues that, in generalizing politics everywhere, Deleuze's system lacks a specifically political register of thought. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari isolate the fields of Art, Science, and Philosophy, paying intimate attention to the mode of creation specific to each, but they do not do the same for politics, leaving it as the essence or process of creation immanent to these spheres rather than anything specific in itself. For Badiou, the marker of a specifically political register is the engagement with capital; politics must be adequate to capital. Badiou of course knows that an engagement with specifically capitalist dynamics is a central feature of Deleuze's work. He argues, however, that when it comes to a politics of capital, Deleuze drops the politics of creation and falls back on a rather politically empty model of 'critique'.

Badiou's point is important, and he is right to draw attention to the possible problems of generalizing politics across the terrain of life. His critique at this level is not, however, adequate to the depth and complexity of Deleuze's politics. For, in Deleuze's works, there is at once a rich conception of what a politics of life might be, as it is explored through a range of specific sites and problems, *and* considerable discussion of a political engagement with

specifically capitalist configurations. Indeed, contrary to a distinction between creation and critique, I would argue that Deleuze's project is precisely concerned to develop a politics of invention that is adequate to capital. And it is the very difficulty of, and commitment to, this project that necessitates that Deleuze does not delineate the specifically political register of thought that Badiou discerns as lacking. Politics for Deleuze is neither a specific field of human activity nor merely a generalized process of invention; there is an imperative to a grander project which bears striking similarity with that of Marx's communism, a project which Deleuze and Guattari (*AŒ*: 382) describe as the calling forth of a 'new earth'. This project is not reducible to a *political* solution, but is rather a process of engagement with the *social totality*. It is for similar reasons that Engels (in Marx and Engels 1973: 12) describes Marx as a thinker of social, rather than 'mere political', revolution, why Negri (1999: 266) argues that the separation of the social and political is 'unthinkable in Marx', and why those related to left communist milieux often present their politics as 'anti-political' (cf. Bordiga n.d.; Dauvé and Martin 1997). In this politics, the project of the new earth, as Ansell Pearson (1999: 211) aptly puts it, is a kind of 'riddle'.[18] That is, it is not something which can be laid out, mapped, and determined – it can have no set structure or narrative, and is not available, to use Marx's (1976: 99) words, like a recipe that can be drawn up for the cook-shops of the future. It is, rather, to be developed and drawn forth through a continual and inventive engagement with the forces of the world. Politics for Deleuze, then, is at once a process of the invention of life and an engagement with specifically capitalist relations. And in this it is the practice of a riddle, an undetermined and continually open, but no less practical, project.

This dual emphasis – of a politics of life that is adequate to capital – is especially evident in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'minor'. It is explicitly emphasized when, in no uncertain terms, they align their privileged political category of the minor with the proletariat – Marx's figure of the over-coming of capital: 'The power of minority, of particularity, finds its figure or its universal consciousness in the proletariat' (*ATP*: 472) This conjunction of the proletariat and the minor is central to the Deleuzian engagement with Marxian problematics that is the topic of this book, and I do not want to pre-empt the argument here. It is more useful to introduce the core political figure of the book – 'minor politics'[19] – and show its relation with Marx's communism.

Minor politics

As I noted above, the minor is in opposition to the molar or major. Minor and major are expressions that characterize not *entities*, but *processes* and *treatments* of life. Essentially, major processes are premised on the formation and defence of a *constant* or a *standard* that acts as a norm and a basis of judgement. As such, major relations are relations that are fixed and denumerable. They are relations of identity. Deleuze and Guattari explain the situation thus:

> Let us suppose that the constant or standard is the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language (Joyce's or Pound's Ulysses). It is obvious that 'man' holds the majority, even if he is less numerous than mosquitoes, children, women, blacks, peasants, homosexuals, etc. That is because he appears twice, once in the constant and again in the variable from which the constant is extracted.
>
> (*ATP*: 105)

If the major is *denumerable* and in relation to a standard, the minor is *non-denumerable* in so far as it is a relation not of identity but of variation and becoming which deviates from any major axiom or standard, and where in each connection or subdivision the set changes in nature (cf. *ATP*: 470). In a sense, the molar identitarian form comes first, since one always finds oneself in a stratified, identified molar configuration – a configuration where relations are determined between identities which exist in relation to an abstract standard – and it is against this configuration that politics emerges. However, the abstract standard of the molar form is precisely that – abstract. The molar standard exists across the plane of life to judge and determine the configurations of life, and in this it is necessarily 'nobody' – it is an abstract type which induces the world to conform to a model, but which in itself cannot fully exist in concrete form. The minor, on the other hand, is found in concrete moments of deviation from the model. Since the model is never fully realized, the minor is 'everybody':

> the majority, insofar as it is analytically included in the abstract standard, is never anybody, it is always Nobody – Ulysses – whereas the minority is the becoming of everybody, one's potential becoming to the extent that one deviates from the model.
>
> (*ATP*: 105)

The minor, then, is the process of deviation or deterritorialization of life – it is a process of calling forth the virtuality of the world – against the molar standard. In this sense it is active, yet unformed. Or, rather, it is active inasmuch as it escapes the already formed. As Deleuze and Guattari write of the related concept of the war machine, 'it exists only in its own metamorphosis' (*ATP*: 360). Given these two tendencies in the treatment of life, Deleuze and Guattari identify three basic forms: 'the majoritarian as a constant and homogenous system; minorities as subsystems; and the minoritarian as a potential, creative and created becoming' (*ATP*: 105–6). The minor is not, then, a minority subgroup, but is seen in the movement of groups, in their variations, mutations, and differences and hence has no membership, coherence, identity, or constituency in itself. It is a becoming of which no one has 'ownership' (*ATP*: 106). But the minor is not somehow 'outside' of identity. Rather, it is always implicated in any major or molar configuration. Deleuze and Guattari are adamant that they are not producing a new dualism;

identity and difference are intricately enmeshed in a continuum of more or less deterritorialized and decoded forms (the molar looks like identity, but it is only that, a 'likeness' or 'optical effect', produced on the surface of something that is always dissipating).

If major and minor describe tendencies in the configuration of life, they have their correlates in the human sphere of politics. Major politics are premised on identity. Modern democracy is the classic example. Democracy is a system of governance based on juridically defined identities in equivalence with each other as citizens who form a mass of 'the people'. Minor politics, on the other hand, begins with the founding condition that, as Deleuze (1989: 216) puts it, 'the people are missing'. Politics is not the terrain of the *representation* of a people (and hence does not circulate primarily around questions of 'justice' and 'truth'), but of their *creation*. The conditions of this creative composition are not the subjective and material resources (legally sanctioned and autonomous subjectivities, recognized histories, cultural consistencies) that one would conventionally associate with self-creation; these are molar forms. Rather, the creativity of minor politics is a condition of those who lack these resources, or who experience them as oppressive or inadequate. Thus, whilst Deleuze writes that 'Everybody's caught, one way or another, in a minority becoming that would lead them into unknown paths if they opted to follow it through' (*N*: 173), he and Guattari tend to look for minor processes within the 'subsystems' of minorities, as if they have a tendency, in their struggles and slight deviations from the abstract molar standard, to form different relations:

> Minorities, of course, are objectively definable states, states of language, ethnicity, or sex with their own ghetto territorialities, but they must also be thought of as seeds, crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and deterritorializations of the mean or majority.
>
> (*ATP*: 106)

The minor, then, is a creativity of minorities: those who find their movements and expressions 'cramped' on all sides such that they cannot in any conventional sense be said to have carved out a delineated social space of their 'own' where they could be called 'a people'. Without an autonomous delineated sphere, the site of minor politics becomes the wealth of social forces that traverse minorities and cramp movement into identity. It is from their very cramped and complex situations that politics emerges – no longer as a process of facilitating and bolstering identity, or 'becoming-conscious', but as a process of innovation, of experimentation, and of the complication of life, in which forms of community, techniques of practice, ethical demeanours, styles, knowledges, and cultural forms are composed.

At first sight this may appear far removed from a communist politics, and one might be forgiven for thinking that the communist movement has little

to offer a Deleuzian politics. Certainly, the communist movement, as it became solidified around the molar attractor of the Soviet model and its own molar standard of measure, 'the national worker, qualified, male and over thirty-five' (Moulier-Boutang, cited in *ATP*: 105), has had a pervasive controlling effect on radical politics. But to leave communism at that is to fall into the trap of the molar landscape, where positions are easily mapped, ambiguities and variations ignored, common sense prevails, and 'everybody knows' that communism is an enemy of difference. Marx's communism – and, indeed, much of the communist movement – is not reducible to the frameworks of the Leninist Party and the Soviet state. In Marx's formulation, cited above, communism is a movement immanent to life – as it is configured in capitalist social relations – as a whole. Its 'subject' – the proletariat – is not an identity clamouring for presence, but a mode of engagement with these relations which seeks its own *overcoming* and *abolition* through this engagement (Marx 1975a: 256). The communist movement, then, is not something that maintains a continuity through a formal party or an autonomous tradition, and is not something of which a particular group or historical current has ownership. It is, rather, a mode of engagement, an open set of political parameters and techniques, and a site of problematization that, following the sense of Blanchot's (1997: 295) argument, operates as a virtual engine within, across, and beyond any specific political manifestation.[20] This characterization should not be interpreted, of course, as a reduction in the intensity – the 'impatience' and 'wrenching violence', as Blanchot (1997: 96) puts it – of the word that caused Marx to adopt it in the *Communist Manifesto* to name his politics (cf. Engels, in Marx and Engels 1973: 12–13).[21]

Though Deleuze tends not to describe his politics as communist,[22] he sees himself as being 'on the left' (cf. Deleuze 1997a: *G comme Gauche*; Stivale 2000). The 'left' is a rather weak name for Deleuze to attach his politics to (tied, as it is, to the left/right polarity of the bourgeois revolutions), but he describes its meaning in a radical fashion. He describes being on the left as involving a perception of the 'horizon', of thinking and acting within worldwide assemblages, and as presenting life in terms of minoritarian becomings. It is in this interrelation of a perception of global assemblages which include 'everybody', and an emphasis on the minor overcoming (or becoming) of this everybody, conceived as a plane of minorities, that Deleuze's resonance with Marx's communism is most apparent. The communist resonance in Deleuze's understanding of minoritarian overcoming becomes especially clear when he comes to interpret the filmic practice of Dziga Vertov (a privileged figure in his *Cinema* books) in the early years of the Soviet revolution. Here Deleuze (1992: 40) argues that, whilst the Eisensteinian image operates a dialectic centred around the human (man *and* nature) – in many ways the orthodox Marxian dialectic – Vertov composes a dialectic of *matter*, where the eye – or, perhaps, the standpoint – is no longer the all too human immobile human eye, but the immanent mobile eye of the camera, 'the eye in matter':

> Whether there were machines, landscapes, buildings or men was of little consequence: each – even the most charming peasant woman or the most touching child – was presented as a material system in perpetual interaction. They were catalysts, converters, transformers, which received and re-emitted movements, whose speed, direction, order, they changed, making matter evolve towards less 'probable' states, bringing about changes out of all proportion to their own dimensions.
>
> (Deleuze 1992: 39)

It is this combination of the material universe of infinite interaction and the non-human perception of the eye in matter which, Deleuze suggests, is the essence of Vertov's 'communist deciphering of reality' (82). The combination shows 'the identity of a community of matter and a communism of man' (40) – not a 'man' arrived (as, of course, the Soviet system was in the process of proclaiming), but a human to come, or a human overcoming – a human adequate to the interactions of matter: 'For Vertov, the dialectic is in matter and of matter, and can only reconcile a non-human perception with the overman of the future, material community and formal communism' (83).[23]

It would seem that after the 'return of father' in the solidification of the Soviet state, the communist project becomes too discredited for Deleuze (1997b: 86) to use the name of communism to describe his politics.[24] Guattari, on the other hand, continues to see his politics in the context of a communist movement. He does, in a sense, maintain a more Deleuzoguattarian perspective on the communist movement – not as something determined by its particular history (and the reterritorialization marked by the Soviet state), but as an immanent and rhizomatic critique and overcoming of capital, following his notion that 'For me, Marxism *in general* has never existed' (Guattari 1996a: 87; emphasis added).

Against post-Marxism

The possibility of an engagement between poststructuralist concerns with a politics of difference and Marxism has been for a long time dominated, at least in Anglo-American cultural studies, by neo-Gramscian post-Marxism, as most prominently laid out in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. Neo-Gramscian work on 'hegemony' marked the passage from apparently orthodox concerns with class, capital, and the economy, into a post-Marxist concern with the possibilities of difference, agency, popular practices, and new social movements in a struggle for inclusion in the 'chain of equivalences' of social democratic political space – and it enacted this move in rather certain terms, as a 'post-Marxism without apologies' (cf. Laclau and Mouffe 1987). The historical support for this development was not unrelated to the Italian Communist Party's (PCI) 'eurocommunism' – a political framework where neo-Gramscian thought had a central place. As Abse (1985) has suggested, eurocommunism seemed for many on the British left (most

notably around the influential *Marxism Today*) to mark the possibility of a popular radical social democracy which could overcome Marxian orthodoxy and the limits of labourism; the PCI was, after all, the biggest Communist Party in Europe, and was rapidly approaching a place in government.

Despite the sense of critical engagement that the 'post' connotes, neo-Gramscian post-Marxism was in many ways a flight from Marxian problematics. Certainly it marked a movement from the politics of *production* to the politics of *democracy* and civil society. Deleuze's position on Marx is very different. Instead of moving away from the question of production, Deleuze's engagement with Marx, as I signalled above, is completely traversed by it. Deleuze has no truck with a vulgar Marxist distinction between 'base' and 'superstructure', but rather he follows Marx into an immersion in the realm of the production of life – a production which is the plane of all of the processes, flows, and constraints of politics, economics, ideas, culture, desire, and so on (cf. Deleuze 1977: 105).[25] This is so much so that Donzelot (1977) calls Deleuze's work – at least in *Anti-Oedipus* – a kind of 'hyper-Marxism': less a *post* than an *intensification* of Marx. Given this, it is notable that Deleuze's engagement with Marxian problematics has some relation to a current in Italian Marxism very different from the PCI; indeed one which the PCI was actively involved in suppressing. This current, known in the 1960s as *operaismo* and in the 1970s as *autonomia*, took an apparently orthodox and sometimes arcane focus on work, class, and capital, and engaged in an incessant reinterpretation of Marx. In this, and in its critical stance on neo-Gramscian politics, it is perhaps no surprise that the operaist current has remained largely outside of the cultural studies tradition. Times, however, change, and with the current prominence of questions of globalization, commodification, the intensification of work, and the knowledge economy, the post-Marxist trajectory looks a little less secure, and a possibility seems to have arisen for a re-engagement with the Marxian problematic of production. Certainly this would seem to have had something to do with the interest shown in Hardt and Negri's (2000) *Empire*; a book co-written by one of the main theorists of *operaismo* and *autonomia* – Antonio Negri – and which draws on many of the insights of this current.

It is in this context of a reinvigoration of the politics of production (or, labour and capital) against neo-Gramscian post-Marxism that I would situate Deleuze's virtual Marx. At a time when work has become almost the essence of sociality, and yet a remarkably unproblematized social arrangement, I would suggest that this is a timely concern. In this context, and so as to draw on an alternative trajectory than that of orthodox and post-Marxism, one of the main relations I draw with material outside of Deleuze's and Marx's texts is with *operaismo* and *autonomia*. Deleuze's virtual Marx is not wholly in accord with this current, but – and partly because of the tension – a minor reading of *operaismo* and *autonomia* does offer both the chance to explore some of the possibilities and implications of Deleuze's Marx, and a critical engagement with a useful and currently influential perspective on contemporary socio-political

configurations. There is a danger in treating *autonomia* in isolation. On one side, this can manifest itself in the delineation of a distinct 'autonomist Marxist' school and, on the other, in treating its current popular expression – Hardt and Negri's (2000) *Empire* – in a critically unproductive and politically and historically abstracted fashion as Theory's 'next big idea' (as the *New York Times*, albeit rather cynically, put it). In its minor reading of this current – intended as a productive engagement[26] – and its use of other communist material as appropriate to the argument, this book seeks to avoid such manoeuvres.

Chapter outline

This book does not attempt to draw out and map the full territory of Deleuze's engagement with Marx. A close textual reading of Deleuze's Marx could go in a number of important directions that are not taken here. Instead, the book has three specific concerns. It seeks to develop the techniques and styles of Deleuze's minor politics (in a context that emphasizes the resonance with Marx's communism), to enact a minor reading of core Marxian problematics, and critically to engage with certain communist movements and currents from a minor perspective. In this, as well as considering specific aspects of Deleuze's engagement with Marx, the book seeks to draw in new material and to make new connections outside of Deleuze's texts, seeking not to fill in Deleuze's virtual Marx, but to see how it can open toward a series of new connections and possibilities.

The first substantive chapter maps the general framework of minor politics. Each subsequent chapter is focused on a specific zone of engagement between Deleuze and Marx – the proletariat (Chapter 3), capital, machines, work, and control (Chapter 4), and the refusal of work (Chapter 5). Sometimes this engagement follows from a vague suggestion of a relation on Deleuze's part; at other times it is a central aspect of Deleuze's work. These zones of engagement are not, however, explored in isolation. Instead, in the spirit of Deleuze's empiricism,[27] each chapter draws on a particular conceptual or empirical problem or event outside of the immediate Deleuze–Marx relation – the problem of difference and the lumpenproletariat in Marx (Chapter 3), *operaismo*'s and *autonomia*'s understandings of Marx's 'real subsumption' thesis and the problems with Negri's analysis of an emerging autonomy-in-production (Chapter 4), and the politics of 'the refusal of work', 'the reversal of perspective', and the '*emarginati*' in *operaismo* and *autonomia* (Chapter 5). In this way each chapter seeks to present a minor reading of an event, rather than limit itself to textual exegesis. For example, Chapter 3 explores Marx's proletariat, following Deleuze and Guattari's alignment of the minor with Marx's political figure. Rather than simply showing the relation between the minor and the proletariat, the chapter explores the proletariat through Marx's own elaboration of the concept in relation to the lumpenproletariat and anarchism. In the course of the discussion the chapter seeks to show both how

the proletariat and the minor resonate, and how Marx himself engaged in a kind of minor practice.

Chapter 2, then, is an elaboration of Deleuze's minor politics. After setting the general scene of the minor, as a politics for a time when 'the people are missing', the chapter focuses on the specific techniques and processes of minor composition: from creation and cramped space to deterritorialization, particular intrigues, the minor relationship to the social, the line of flight, and minor authorship. It also considers Marx's mode of creation in terms of the minor author function, Guattari's analysis of groups, and Deleuze's critique of Foucault's model of 'resistance'. The chapter is centred on Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) discussion of Kafka's 'minor literature', but it develops a more general economy of minor politics. Though I discuss the techniques and concerns of the minor in detail, I should stress that minor politics is not a set of programmatic rules of a correct 'Deleuzian politics', but a mode of engagement that always begins 'in the middle' of any situation or event, and is specific to the contours of that event. The chapter ends by pointing to the centrality of Kafka's 'double flux' between capitalist relations and movements that engage with these relations, so setting the general framework for the minor relation to Marx's proletariat. The chapter relates particular aspects of minor political techniques to literary and political events and problems, but on the whole it focuses on the detail of Deleuze's argument, with the aim of elucidating the practical politics of the minor.

Chapter 3, as I elaborated above, engages with the relation between the minor and the proletariat by exploring the way Marx developed his concept of the proletariat in relation to the lumpenproletariat. After a detailed consideration of the lumpenproletariat that emphasizes the political basis for the emergence of the category (in Marx's disputes with the anarchists in the First International), I argue that despite the *frisson* of excess associated with it (and its occasional foregrounding by some groups as a 'class' of difference), the lumpenproletariat is a problematic category for a Deleuzian reading of Marx to adopt. This is because it is a category that seeks to describe identity removed from social relations, even as it looks like difference. The second part of the chapter develops an understanding of the proletariat as a minor figure or 'unnamable', rather than an identity, that is both of the manifolds of the capitalist socius and the situated process of its overcoming.

Chapter 4 is centred on the relation between Deleuze and Marx on the question of capital, machines, work, and control. Its empirical point of focus is the reading of Marx enacted by *operaismo* and *autonomia*. The chapter seeks to show how *operaismo* developed a radical and rather minor reading of Marx which is at odds with both orthodox Marxism and neo-Gramscian post-Marxism. The chapter is also concerned with problematizing Negri's understanding of capital and his interpretation of Deleuze. The chapter moves from an elaboration of Marx's and *operaismo*'s critique of technology and accounts of 'real subsumption' and the 'social factory' to Marx's 'Fragment on Machines' and the problems with Negri's reading of this text. The chapter then presents

Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of capital, axiomatics, control, and machinic surplus value in a fashion that is intended to extend the insights of *operaismo* in a different direction to Negri. The chapter concludes by sketching a little of the current condition of machinic work.

Chapter 5 turns to the other side of Kafka's 'double flux', and considers the question of politics. The focus is on the politics of 'the refusal of work' and the chapter again engages with *operaismo* and *autonomia*. It explores the conceptual components of *operaismo*'s and *autonomia*'s critique of the subject of work and their affirmation of the primacy of struggle, and considers the place of a series of particular minority interventions – from the question of the '*emarginati*' to the Wages for Housework campaign, the Metropolitan Indians, and Radio Alice. Whilst the chapter points out some of the problems with the formulations of this current, the concern is to explore some of the minor political compositions and inventions of *operaismo* and *autonomia*, and the proliferation of its minority techniques and styles.

Chapter 6 concludes the book by returning to the problem of Deleuze's relation to Marx's communism and shows how this poses a challenge to democratic politics. The chapter then considers the affective condition that arises from this political standpoint outside the nurturing social space of democratic politics. Taking off from a critical consideration of Hardt and Negri's affirmation of the 'lightness and joy' of communist politics, it explores the strange affective 'joy' and 'humour' of minor politics, as elaborated by Deleuze in his reading of Kafka and Foucault.

2 Minor politics

The styles of cramped creation

> we are not interested in characteristics; what interests us are modes of expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling.
>
> (*ATP*: 239)

> hold to the Particular as an *innovative* form.
>
> (*ATP*: 471; emphasis changed)

Deleuze's task is to develop a politics adequate to the complexity of life, a politics that can make the human worthy of the material universe of infinite interaction. This is not the same thing as a simple affirmation of chaos. Deleuze is misrepresented as a theorist of abstract and general becoming, or pure deterritorialization. Politics is primarily a process of (minor) difference against (molar) identity, but one does not easily leave identity behind, and the composition of territory is a necessity for life. As I showed in Chapter 1, the minor and the molar exist in continuous interrelation as two tendencies in matter. Politics exists, in its most general sense, to amplify minor processes. But it only does this through a continual engagement with molar stratifications and specific socio-historical relations, and in the intricate composition of ways of life. In this engagement and composition politics is, to say the least, a complicated process. This chapter seeks to explore the techniques and styles of this process – the *modes of composition* of minor politics.

The chapter starts by marking the socio-historical emergence of the possibility for minor politics on the condition that 'the people are missing' (Deleuze 1989: 216). It shows that politics begins with the experience of small peoples or minorities who exist in 'cramped spaces' fully traversed by social forces, such that the first principle of the minor is not identity but creation. After exploring this general situation the chapter considers the problematic of 'deterritorialization' to show how the minor is a continual process of engagement with molar regimes, rather than an autonomous political space. The way that the 'particular' and the 'social' are treated in minor composition is then considered in detail. In this section the concepts of 'inclusive disjunction' (to show how a milieu emerges of continual experimentation and reconfiguration within and against each 'particular' situation or identity) and the primacy of social 'lines of flight' (such that the minor has affinities with

the 'proletariat') are brought out. After a discussion of the minor author-function and Marx's own minor authorial aspect the chapter considers Guattari's analysis of groups and Deleuze's relation to Marx's understanding of the party. Because of the resonance between Foucault's and Deleuze's work, and the prominence of Foucault's model of 'resistance' in contemporary political discussion, the chapter ends with a consideration of Deleuze's critique of Foucault's model of resistance. It is important to stress that the minor politics developed here describe abstract techniques. In concrete practice the manifestation of minor politics is necessarily immanent to the contours of each particular situation. In order not to get too abstract, however, each section employs literary or political events to exemplify the particular point. In subsequent chapters, aspects of minor politics will be seen in operation in more concrete fields.

The people are missing

Minor politics begins with the founding condition that, as Deleuze (1989: 216) puts it, 'the people are missing'. Deleuze and Guattari's privileged figure for this diagnosis, and its political elaboration, is Kafka, and this chapter is centred around Deleuze and Guattari's engagement with Kafka. But before pursuing this engagement, it is useful to situate the minor condition in historical perspective. For Deleuze (1997b), the two great historical models of 'the people' are the American 'new world man' and the Soviet 'proletariat'. In these figures there is a mutual and intermingling messianism of a wholly 'new man' without fathers and without particularity: for one, this is a 'society of brothers' composed through a *universal immigration* (without the European trappings of nation, family, heritage), and for the other, it is a 'society of comrades' composed through a *universal proletarianization* (without property, family, nation).[1] In discussing the forms of composition of these models of the people, Deleuze (1989: 216) shows how they find expression in Soviet and American cinema. In Eisenstein, for example, we see the people coming to unanimity through the twists and turns of class struggle as the vanguard of change against the tsar (*Ivan the Terrible*), and against the bosses and their lackeys (*Strike*). In American cinema it is in the struggle against economic crisis, moral prejudice, profiteers and demagogues that the people exist (as evident in the Westerns of Capra and Ford).

These models, these people, were not, however, to last – 'universal emigration was no more successful than universal proletarization' – and, with the 'birth of a nation' (signalled by the Civil War) and Lenin's liquidation of the Soviets, the fathers came 'galloping back in' (Deleuze 1997b: 88). At least in the discussion of the American people Deleuze seems to have a slight lapse of historical memory: primary drop-out communities aside (cf. Sakolsky and Koehnline 1993; Linebaugh and Rediker 2000), the model of the people in American universal immigration was tainted from the start inasmuch as it was constituted on the absolute denial that the indigenous population formed a

people.[2] Nevertheless, the important point is that from the failures of the American and Soviet experiments – and the final spectacular confirmation of the failure of this model in the form of the people constituted in Stalinism and Hitlerism – the model of the people is increasingly *recognized* as being dead. For Deleuze, this recognition is first made in the 'third world' experience of colonialism, 'where oppressed and exploited nations remained in a state of perpetual minorities, in a collective identity crisis' (Deleuze 1989: 217). Colonized nations, of course, were infused with the model of the people – both that of the external 'civilizing' process and of the internal popular myths made functional to colonial regimes – but, Deleuze suggests, it was more clearly apparent that these were subjugating figures, and reflected little of the real political potential and hope of the colonized. This recognition manifests itself in the emergence of a modern cinema which breaks with the representation of the people, and begins the process of invention on the condition that the people are missing. In the case of 1970s black cinema, for example,

> instead of replacing a negative image of the black with a positive one, [it] multiplies types and 'characters', and each time creates or re-creates only a small part of the image which no longer corresponds to a linkage of actions, but to shattered states of emotions or drives, expressible in pure images and sounds.
>
> (Deleuze 1989: 220)

That the people are missing, then, is not a lament. Rather, it is an assertion that the socio-political figure of the people is at best redundant, and at worst in itself the closure of politics (and dangerously so, in so far as the model of the people can become so easily functional to the parcelling out of complex desiring relations around identitarian attractors, most notably of 'race' and 'nation'; cf. *AŒ*, esp. Ch. 2). For Deleuze, both the social democratic model of the 'citizen' and the orthodox Marxist model of 'becoming conscious' are hence over.[3] Politics thus becomes a process not of the representation of the people, but of the invention of a 'new world and a people to come'.

From this founding condition, Deleuze and Guattari develop a series of minor techniques or modes of composition. Kafka is the privileged figure. Deleuze and Guattari (*K*) explore 'Kafka' as a form of creation that challenges psychological, biographical, and individualist readings with a model of a 'writing machine' that seeks to turn everything into assemblages (with their functional relations and lines of flight), and to induce experimental effects in its readers.[4] As Morris (1994: 130) puts it, '*Kafka* is a biography of a particular mode of creation.' *Kafka* is simultaneously a minor practice itself in 'treating' the works of a canonical literary figure, and an elaboration of the conditions and processes of the minor mode of creation. It is these latter conditions and techniques that this chapter explores.

Deleuze and Guattari describe three components of Kafka's writing machine – the letters, the short stories, and the novels. Though there is communication

across these components, each has particular modes of composition and effects. The novels are singled out as the true achievement for their emphasis on social assemblages (cf. *K*: 39), and Kafka's diaries are seen as 'the rhizome itself': the milieu or site of distribution of all the work (*K*: 96). It is with the diary entry for 25 December 1911 that Deleuze and Guattari begin their elaboration of minor processes. Here Kafka (1999) ponders the situation and benefits of the literary production of 'small peoples' – undeveloped 'nations' in the midst of national majorities. Literature has the task of developing a 'national consciousness' which is 'often unrealized in public life and always tending to disintegrate . . . in the face of a hostile world'. This literature of small peoples is a kind of 'diary' of a nation – 'something entirely different from historiography and results in a more rapid (and yet always closely scrutinized) development, the spiritualization of the broad area of public life' (148). In Deleuze and Guattari's reading this diary of small peoples becomes the paradigmatic condition – and milieu of invention – of minority composition when the people are missing. From it they draw out three closely interrelated defining characteristics of minor literatures: they affect language and major forms generally with a 'high coefficient of deterritorialization', the individual is fully traversed by social concerns such that 'everything is political', and they enact a mode of 'collective enunciation' (*K*: 16–18).[5] Because I am considering the minor in a more general account of Deleuze and Guattari's politics, these three characteristics are discussed below in conjunction with other aspects of their conceptual apparatus.[6] I should say here (though it was signalled above, and will become clear in the discussion) that 'minor literature' is not a specifically 'literary' concern. At one level it concerns any art form. Cinema and theatre in particular get singled out (Deleuze 1989: 222; 1997c), and it is noteworthy that Beckett, a privileged figure in the discussion of the minor, works in all three mediums. But more than this, 'minor literature' describes a process of the composition of minorities where 'art' and 'life', content and expression, are fully entwined: 'living and writing, art and life, are opposed only from the point of view of major literature' (*K*: 41). The important aspect of minor literature is thus not the literary, cinematic, theatrical product itself, but its expression of a general process of minor composition. Aspects of this discussion focus more on literary and linguistic production, whilst others are more concerned with intervention in more apparently material social relations, but when situated around the general economy of 'minor politics', minor 'literature' should be read in this chapter not as a literary procedure, but as a general term for the composition, intrigue, and practice of minority groups.

Cramped space and the centrality of creation

If the people are missing, minor politics begins not in a space of self-determined subjective plenitude and autonomy, but in 'cramped space' (*K*: 17), amongst oppressed, subaltern, minority peoples who find their movements

and expressions 'cramped' on all sides. Minorities, in this sense, are those who are cut off, as Spivak (1996: 289) puts it, from the 'lines of mobility' of a culture. They lack the ready-made structures of history, narrative, and tradition, that would enable the easy passage of a demarcated autonomous identity through a culture. Life for minorities is thus somewhat complicated. Practice is thus not a simple case of self-expression along legitimate social routes within which one 'fits', but is a tentative manoeuvre around and within each situation. This cramped minority condition induces a particular response. In a manoeuvre that confronts liberal humanist notions of freedom and creativity (as a space of individual autonomy and self-expression) head on, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that it is precisely in *cramped* situations, in the enforced *proximity* of peoples, histories, and languages that creation occurs: 'Creation takes place in choked passages' (*N*: 133).[7] Indeed, Deleuze goes so far as to write that 'A creator who isn't grabbed around the throat by a set of impossibilities is no creator' (133). Thus, alongside a perceptual sensitivity to very real cramped minority conditions, in minor politics there is also a certain 'willed poverty' (*K*: 19) – a continual deferral of identity and plenitude – such that 'one even strives to see [the boundary] before it is there, and often sees this limiting boundary everywhere' (Kafka, cited in *K*: 17).[8] This deferral not only serves to open minor politics to 'everybody' who would experience the molar standard as restrictive, but also acts as a mechanism to induce continuous experimentation. For, rather than allow the solidification of particular political and cultural routes, forms, and identities, such 'willed poverty' serves to draw thought and practice back into a milieu of contestation, debate, and engagement, and forces ever new forms of experimentation from the intimacy of cramped experience.

The minor is thus marked by a certain 'impossibility'. Every movement presents a boundary or an impasse to movement rather than a simple possibility or option. There is no identity that is not 'impossible' to inhabit unproblematically. Yet the impossibility of action is matched with the impossibility of passivity if anything is to be *lived*. As in Beckett's (1979: 382) formula, 'I can't go on, I'll go on',[9] creation thus becomes a process of 'tracing a path between impossibilities' (*N*: 133). The difference between cramped creativity and liberal understandings of freedom and creation is expressed well by Kafka (1978) in *A Report to an Academy*, a short story which displays much of the minor sensibility. Here, an ape 'pinned down' in a cage on a ship such that he has no possibility for movement chooses to mimic his human captors and create a certain human-becoming to effect a way out of his predicament. It is the very condition of being cramped that leads to, or compels, his innovative change, but not because he desires abstract freedom, or indeed anything particular about being human. Whilst 'freedom' appears to have some value, it is an ambiguous form (as he puts it, 'all too often men are betrayed by the word freedom'; 150), and in this case only offered a suicidal flight overboard. Instead, the ape simply seeks a 'way out' of his particular condition, for which the human presents a boundary and a possibility.[10] Thus, through intimate

observation and engagement with the contours of his situation, and laborious repetition, he learns and embodies a series of human attributes (aided by a certain animality in the sailors, which is reflected in a little double becoming when his first teacher is almost turned into an ape as the narrator's ape nature flees out of him). The ape-becoming-human describes his form of 'escape' thus:

> I fear that perhaps you do not quite understand what I mean by 'way out'. I use the expression in its fullest and most popular sense. I deliberately do not use the word 'freedom'. I do not mean the spacious feeling of freedom on all sides . . . 'self-controlled movement'. What a mockery of holy Mother Nature! Were the apes to see such a spectacle, no theatre walls could stand the shock of their laughter.
>
> (Kafka 1978: 150)

Minor politics, then, is not a pluralist process of minority groups 'speaking out', of voicing an identity. Whilst the minoritarian is concerned with expression (Deleuze even writes that it is a question of getting 'people without the right to speak, to speak.'; *N*: 41), such expression is not 'communication' in the sense of the manifestation of an identity or a process of bringing people into a public sphere where all may be heard. The question is rather one of the invention or creation that occurs in a cramped space. The minor political questions are not 'are we communicating enough?', or 'are we all heard?', but are of a different order, concerned with *how we are composed* and *how we create* in fashions that deterritorialize dominant or major forms, where 'Creating has always been something different from communicating' (*N*: 175). We can now move to consider the ways such creative engagement with cramped space occurs.

Deterritorialization

The minor is a rather self-effacing figure. Not only is it without demarcated subject positions, but it lacks the arrogance, certainty, and self-inflation of much overt statement of the political. This is not to say that its effects are not 'violent' in the sense conjured by Deleuze and Guattari's related concept of the 'war machine' (to be minor is 'To hate all languages of masters'; *K*: 26). But its violence is directed at the order, direction, and structure of major forms that cramp minority potential, and hence is manifest as an indeterminate, uncertain, tentative, and mutable process (thus Deleuze and Guattari's fondness for Kafka and Beckett, whose work they characterize in terms of 'stammering', 'dryness', 'sobriety', and a 'willed poverty'). Deleuze and Guattari's first characteristic of minor literature is thus that it effects language 'with a high coefficient of deterritorialization' (*K*: 16). To explain this it is necessary to elucidate the difference between major and minor language.

For Deleuze and Guattari, language is never a distinct plane of human relationship that can be considered in itself outside of particular material assemblages. Language is not 'representation' but is as much a material form

as any more apparently concrete practice or process (though it has no *primary* structuring agency), and is hence immanent to the system of relations that actualize configurations of matter, or assemblages. As with Foucault (1970), it is the composition of the milieu that counts, not any 'words and things' distinction.[11] A 'major language' is not, then, an autonomous language, but a language that is immanent to the formation of molar identity (though one of the characteristics of major language is that it is naturalized, not least by linguistic science, as an autonomous practice). It operates in terms of constants, universals, standardization, and regularized grammar: it composes 'codes' and 'territory'. A 'minor language', on the other hand, is any language immanent to the process of 'deterritorialization' of molar identity. It is less a process of communication between identities than creation across and against identities. But the minor does not designate a different language as such. Minor languages are not ghettoized languages of minorities that exist as self-identical reflections of autonomous communities. If the people are missing, they can never be 'at home' in a language, but rather always live in a language that is 'not their own' (hence Kafka, a Prague Jew, writes in German). Minor languages, instead, describe different *treatments* of a major language: 'Minor languages do not exist in themselves: they only exist in relation to a major language and are also investments of that language for the purpose of making it minor' (*ATP*: 105). The different techniques and characteristics of minor language vary in different authors, but essentially minor languages are characterized not by constants, but by 'continuous variation'. Minor languages restrict constants and overload and extend variables (though, it seems, more with sobriety and dryness – as in Beckett and Kafka – than excess and exuberance – as in Joyce; *K*: 19) such that constants are 'sidestepped' (*ATP*: 104). Deleuze (1994b: 25) writes, 'as in music . . . the minor mode refers to dynamic combinations in a state of perpetual disequilibrium'.

Deleuze and Guattari describe 'ghetto languages' in these terms. For example, the language of American black popular culture is presented not as an autonomous 'black' language (or even a distinct patois) as an other to English, but as a minoring of English, a 'black English' (cf. *ATP*: 104). Kafka (1954) himself exemplifies the point in his description of Yiddish theatre, where he presents Yiddish as a 'tangle' in 'continuous flux' without coherent grammar (382). Though Yiddish is of course a language in itself, for Kafka its importance is as a composite form and mode of practice:

> It consists solely of foreign words. But these words are not firmly rooted in it, they retain the speed and liveliness with which they were adopted. Great migrations move through Yiddish, from one end to the other. All this German, Hebrew, French, English, Slavonic, Dutch, Rumanian, and even Latin, is seized with curiosity and frivolity once it is contaminated with Yiddish, and it takes a good deal of strength to hold all these languages together in this state.
>
> (Kafka 1954: 382)

This deterritorialization of language has effects on identity. Kafka suggests that the mode of engagement with Yiddish, mutating tangle that it is, is not only more one of 'intuition' than 'sense' (as representation), but, in this, is a process of deterritorialization of the molar subject:

> You begin to come quite close to Yiddish if you bear in mind that apart from what you know there are active in yourselves forces and associations with forces that enable you to understand Yiddish intuitively . . . But once Yiddish has taken hold of you and moved you – and Yiddish is everything, the words, the Chasidic melody, and the essential character of this East European Jewish actor himself – you will have forgotten your former reserve. Then you will come to feel the true unity of Yiddish, and so strongly that it will frighten you, yet it will no longer be fear of Yiddish but of yourselves.
>
> (Kafka 1954: 385–6)

The minor, then, is not a question of *who* one is, but where one is situated vis-à-vis a particular set of identities, relations, practices, and languages, and *what one does* with this situation. One is always 'in the middle' of a major language, working with a set of conditions and possibilities that this language offers. Inasmuch as one feels cramped and seeks to express a different community, the minor is a process of forming relations with these conditions that deterritorialize them, or cause them to mutate as something new is created:

> One must find the minor language, the dialect or rather idiolect, on the basis of which one can make one's own major language minor . . . It is in one's own language that one is bilingual or multilingual. Conquer the major language in order to delineate in it as yet unknown minor languages. Use the minor language to *send the major language racing*.
>
> (*ATP*: 105)

Two moments from the work of Jean Genet can help exemplify the relations between cramped space, creation, and deterritorialization. In exploring the language used by George Jackson (1971) in *Soledad Brother*, Genet foregrounds a certain cramped and deterritorializing mode of composition. After a discussion of the cramped conditions of prison (the necessary complicity with the guards, the intensification of racism) and the 'delicate and brutal' labour demanded of the prisoner's mind and body if he is to compose means to endure the penalty, Genet moves to consider Jackson's mode of literary expression. '[N]othing' of *Soledad Brother* – a collection of Jackson's letters – was 'willed, written or composed for the sake of a book' (17). The desires, loves, hatreds, and political alliances that drive the letters have too much of a cramped immediacy for the book-form. The letters appear for Genet, also, to express a

new aspect of black literature – a refusal or 'stripping' of a certain coherent tradition, and a 'raw', 'singular', 'clear-eyed' immediacy. 'The time for blues is over, for them. They are creating, each according to his means, a revolutionary consciousness. And their eyes are clear' (24). From Richard Wright to George Jackson, Genet argues, 'we now hear almost no echoes of the great Hebrew prophets' (20–1). This singularity is infused with a craving for 'a separate language belonging only to his people' (22), but its immediacy is premised on a recognition of a complete lack of plenitude. Jackson – living under the condition that the people are missing – is in practice thus compelled to engage with the dominant language, and to strain to open it to something else:

> He has then only one recourse: to accept [the enemy's] language but to corrupt it so skilfully that the white men are caught in his trap. To accept it in all its richness, to increase that richness still further, and to suffuse it with all his obsessions and all his hatred of the white man. That is a task . . . [W]ords will no longer serve concepts inculcated by the whites, but new concepts.
>
> (Genet, in Jackson 1971: 22)

A second example can help stress the non-exclusively literary aspect of minor literature. In *Prisoner of Love* – a book which circulates around Genet's experience of the struggles of the Palestinians and the Black Panther Party (BPP) – Genet (1989) reports the radical effects (rendered here in minor terms) produced in a television interview with the BPP's Bobby Seale, filmed in San Quentin prison. Whatever the motives behind the Californian authorities' decision to let the film be broadcast, one cannot doubt that the broadcast occurred in a rather heavy majoritarian framework (it was certainly not the BPP's 'own' or 'natural' territory and mode of expression). And, indeed, as Seale responds to the first question about food with detailed descriptions of his mother's and his wife's cooking, Genet reports being 'shattered' at seeing the revolutionary leader reduced to 'talking like a chef'. But then, 'suddenly' – for it was at first imperceptible to Genet – he realizes that within the molar framework of the talking-head *broad*cast, something else was occurring that deterritorialized the molar subject positions of 'chef' or decontextualized 'revolutionary'. The familiarity, ease, and loving detail of Seale's account of food served to actualize an affective consistency with his community such that when Seale moved to talk about politics, he was able to open an active and intense space of composition:

> Then suddenly – and it *was* suddenly, again – both his face and his voice hardened. And to all the Blacks listening in the ghetto he addressed revolutionary slogans all the more open and uncompromising because the sauces recommended at the outset had been so smooth.
>
> (Genet 1989: 216)

The particular and the social in minor composition

Deleuze and Guattari's second characteristic of minor composition is that 'everything is political' – or, put another way, the particular individual concern is immediately merged with social forces; 'the arteries of the inside are in immediate contact with the lines of the outside' (Deleuze 1989: 220). In *major* composition, autonomous, particular, or individual concerns are able to soar into a self-actualizing grandeur since the social exists as a facilitator of the molar individual form. Of course, these individual concerns meet with others, in a society of sorts, but there is no real intensity in the relations since each individual concern is on a similar scale, as an 'exclusive disjunction' (either this identity, or that, but never in between)[12] with a closeted interior space:

> In major literatures . . . the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as a mere environment or a background; this is so much the case that none of these Oedipal intrigues are specifically indispensable or absolutely necessary but all become one in a large space.
>
> (*K*: 17)

The relation between the particular and the social in *minor* composition is rather more complex. In minor composition the social milieu is everything. There are 'individual concerns', but because there is no autonomous identitarian space, each individual concern is comprised of a conjunction of many different individual concerns of different forms and scales cramped and interlaced together, all of which are in intimate contact with the social forces that traverse and compose them. This relation needs considering in some depth.

The particular and inclusive disjunction

In minor composition there is a certain move away from grand themes, traditions, and projects toward a focus on particular, quotidian, minor detail. Kafka (1999: 150) suggests that the quotidian 'petty theme' takes on an importance that is amplified to a matter of 'life and death', yet at the same time it is kept from exceeding its position as a 'small enthusiasm' because, in cramped space, it is unable to hook up to the normative structures that would enable the easy passage or elevation of the particular into a grand autonomous event in the erection of a 'language' or a 'work'. As we saw in the case of *Soledad Brother*, minor literature does not operate in conditions of conventional literary production. Kafka talks of 'schools' and 'magazines' as the site for the polemic, debate, and contestation of minor literatures. In these milieux, the apparently petty theme is intimately debated, and infused with and subject to a 'multiplicity of interpretations' (Kafka 1999: 149):

> There is universal delight in the literary treatment of petty themes whose

scope is not permitted to exceed the capacity of small enthusiasms and which are sustained by their polemical possibilities. Insults, intended as literature, roll back and forth. What in great literature goes on down below, constituting a not indispensable cellar of the structure, here takes place in the full light of day, what is there a matter of passing interest for a few, here absorbs everyone no less as a matter of life and death.

(Kafka 1999: 150)

In this focus on the particular, however, there is no retreat to individual concerns. As Deleuze and Guattari show through their discussion of Beckett, the mode of engagement with the particular has effects that break open individualized concerns, even at the most intimate levels.

Beckett does not present a vast array of character and intrigue, and neither is his composition of individual autonomous forms. Instead he develops an intricate focus on the most limited, stripped-down of spaces. Beckett's (1954) *Waiting for Godot* is a case in point. In Beckett's most successful play, the 'end' or 'reason' is suspended through the almost masochistic deferral of the eponymous Godot's arrival. In the space of this deferral we are left with a series of particular, quotidian events. The play opens with Estragon sitting in a near deserted place, involved in a simple process that he starts, stops exhausted, and starts again, before uttering an apparent closure as the first line:

> *A country road. A tree.*
> *Evening.*
> *Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again.*
> *As before.*
> *Enter Vladimir.*
> ESTRAGON: (*giving up again*). Nothing to be done.

(Beckett 1954: 6–7)

This move into the stripped-down space – where nothing is to be done – is important not so much for its *focus* – something like a 'poetry of the everyday' – but for the mode of *engagement* with particularity which arises in it. For Beckett, even the simplest situation (or demarcated 'disjunction') is a composite form to be explored, reiterated, and reconfigured. Deleuze suggests that Beckett's characters 'exhaust' the possible variations of a situation in a continual process of combination without order, preference, or end: 'one combines the set of variables and permutations of a situation, on the condition that one renounce any order of preference, any organization in relation to a goal, any signification' (1997c: 153). In the space created by the deferral of Godot's arrival there is, then, a continual repetition of simple concerns and practices – Estragon's attempt to pull off his shoe, the two tramps' failed efforts at hanging themselves, their discussion of 'waiting' for Godot, the return of

Lucky and Pozzo – in a circuit which seems to mutate through degrees of differentiation, even as 'nothing' is done.

   This process is explained in *Anti-Oedipus* as the 'inclusive disjunction'. In the minor mode of engagement with particularities or disjunctions, the *exclusive* disjunction of 'decisive choices between immutable terms' as an 'either/or' formula where each disjunction is 'closet[ted] . . . inside its own terms' (*AŒ*: 78) is replaced with an *inclusive* disjunction of 'either . . . or . . . or' of continuous movement and relation across the disjunctions (*AŒ*: 12). This relation 'across' disjunctions is not a Hegelian manoeuvre of a new synthesis of identity from the disjunctions (*AŒ*: 76), and neither is it a simple affirmation of 'flow' – the operation of the three syntheses is such that disjunction is immanent to all life (cf. note 12). The disjunctions do not subsume in a new whole; the differences between them are maintained. But, as they are placed in relation with each other in continuously reconfiguring permutations and the 'subject' 'wanders' across them, a process of deindividualization occurs that breaks the structures of exclusive disjunction. The net effect of such inclusive disjunction is the construction of an intensive milieu that is never autonomous in itself, but always composed of different variables in ever new configurations. However small, personal, or individual such a milieu, it is still always characterized by a combinatorial process. Particularities and anomalies are not seen as alien bodies to be synthesized or negated (as if a 'better', more 'appropriate' disjunction could be found); rather, they are to be actively engaged with. As the engagement with the disjunctions (everything in a milieu that can in some way be embodied or used) accelerates, the components of a group (its members, theories, literatures, concepts) lose their distinct identities in a space of experimentation and reconfiguration. Even the smallest intrigue becomes connected, debated, affirmed, negated, and above all, 'taken up' within the milieu. At extremes, the inclusive disjunctive process affirms the infinite virtual – the potential of infinite permutation – within any particular actual, as in Nietzsche's delirious formula, 'every name in history is I' (cited in *AŒ*: 21), where each name signifies a state of being, a zone of intensity on the Body without Organs that is affirmed as part of a reconfiguring series that the 'subject' traverses. The extreme is evident too in Deleuze and Guattari's account of the 'schizophrenic' process:

> [The schizophrenic] is and remains in disjunction: he does not abolish disjunction by identifying the contradictory elements by means of elaboration; instead, he affirms it through a continuous overflight spanning an indivisible distance. He is not simply bisexual, or between the two, or intersexual. He is transsexual. He is trans-alivedead, trans-parentchild. He does not reduce two contraries to an identity of the same; he affirms their distance as that which relates the two as different. He does not confine himself inside contradictions; on the contrary, he opens out and, like a spore case inflated with spores, releases them as so many singularities that he had improperly shut off.
>
> (*AŒ*: 76–7)

This limit point, however, is not particularly useful in accounting for minor composition, which is always a situated, tentative, and pragmatic process and does not reach the limit point. The point to stress, instead, is that politics begins from each particular disjunction, and that each disjunction is always a composite and open to combinatorial relations with other disjunctions. Bensmaïa (1994: 214–15) makes this clear in her discussion of Kafka and minor literature. 'Literature no longer begins with man in general . . . but rather with this particular man or that particular woman'. Since the particular, even at its smallest levels is itself a complex inclusive disjunction, Kafka's 'particularity' is actually an inclusive series as 'a Jew, a Czech, one who speaks Yiddish and Czech but writes in German in a Prague ghetto'. Minor composition, then, is not a synthesis, but an amplification of disjunctions. It creates a milieu or a collectivity that emerges not through a unity, but through the reconfiguring of differences. It is as if without an autonomous space of manoeuvre every disjunction triggers an intensive vibration, some kind of rhizomatic domino effect, such that 'everything' in minor composition 'is political' (*K*: 17). One reaches boundaries, intrigues interconnect and multiply, nothing can stand alone. As Guattari (1996b: 220) writes of Genet, 'His writing resulted not in a dialectical uplifting, but an exacerbation of his contradictions and upheavals.'

The social and the line of flight

The second point to stress about the particular in minor politics is its intimate relationship with social forces. If it is concerned with minor detail and small intrigue, this is far from a *parochial* concern. Indeed, the parochial is a much more fitting characterization of *major* literatures, for, inasmuch as they *flourish* in a given environment, major literatures leave social forces largely unproblematized. For minor literature, since social forces fully traverse and cramp minority milieux, social, even global concerns are their very substance. Thus, if the minor tends to deterritorialize 'sense' (as Kafka was seen to say about Yiddish), this is in terms of the identities that are composed in sensible, molar regimes. The minor does not signify nonsense but non-identity. Indeed, inasmuch as the deterritorialization of identity is an engagement with the 'real' – the primary machinism of matter – it is immanent to a *greater* understanding of the world (cf. *AŒ*: 87; Deleuze 1990: 72–3).[13]

Pursuing this minor relation to the social, Deleuze and Guattari (*K*: 41, 95) point out that what made Kafka most indignant was being presented as a writer of intimacy and solitude withdrawn from the world. Indeed, they suggest that Kafka studies only truly began when critics started to notice the importance of the 'double flux' of his belonging to the strong bureaucracy of the Workmen's Accident Insurance Institution,[14] and his attraction to Prague's socialist and anarchist movements:

> from one end to the other, he is a political author, prophet of the future world, because he has two poles that he will know how to unify in a

completely new assemblage: far from being a writer withdrawn into his room, Kafka finds that his room offers him a double flux, that of bureaucrat with a great future ahead of him, plugged into real assemblages that are in the process of coming into shape, and that of a nomad who is involved in fleeing things in the most contemporary way and who plugs into socialism, anarchism, social movements.

(*K*: 41)

By situating Kafka at this 'double flux' of most contemporary social relations and social movements that seek to flee these relations, Deleuze and Guattari present two very important aspects of the minor relationship to the social. First, the minor is specifically concerned with the intricacies of modern social arrangements within which life is enmeshed. Thus, in contrast to the definition of major literature given above, Deleuze and Guattari write:

Minor literature is completely different; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it. In this way, *the family triangle connects to other triangles – commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical – that determine its values*.

(*K*: 17; emphasis added)

Kafka does not, then, write abstract treatises on becoming, but explores – especially in the novels – the modes of composition of these commercial, economic, bureaucratic, and juridical forces, and displays a continuing fascination with maids, servants, workers, judges, bureaucrats, lawyers, bailiffs, and technical machines – all of which are considered as parts of social machines. Second, moving to the other side of Kafka's 'double flux', politics does not develop an ideal form or programme that it seeks to manifest, nor does it abstractly affirm 'every name in history', but rather it is brought forth around a 'most contemporary' problematization of these social forces in the social movements of anarchism and socialism, or what, for ease of argument, I will call communism.

There are two aspects to this politics. First, it is contemporary, and most apparent problems that start the political process. Deleuze and Guattari (*ATP*: 470–1) thus write: 'Once again, this is not to say that the struggle on the level of the axioms is without importance; on the contrary, it is determining (at the most diverse levels: women's struggle for the vote, for abortion, for jobs . . .).' Essentially pragmatic process that the minor is, minorities could be expected to begin with conditions they felt most pressing, or that offered some possibility for improvement of their situation. Yet, to turn to the second aspect, this is only the start of the process. The minor is only actualized in so far as these major forms are deterritorialized, and hence the passage continues: 'But there is also always a sign to indicate that these struggles are the index of

another, coexistent combat.' This 'other coexistent combat' is the general process of deterritorialization that Deleuze proposes is the essence of life. But deterritorialization only emerges within social systems, each of which engineers its own lines of deterritorialization, such that there are 'objective lines [of flight, or deterritorialization] which cut across society' (Deleuze 1997d: 189). If the minor is an engagement with social forces and begins from problematizations of particular cramped social sites, the second aspect of Kafka's 'double flux' does not simply link the minor to deterritorialization in the abstract, or to situated social movements in general, but *to social movements that seek to engage with the 'objective' lines of flight immanent to the social system.*

This is a crucial point and needs elaborating. Deleuze and Guattari's affirmation of the primacy of flows and difference rather than identity is such that in their account of social assemblages, emphasis is placed not just on what makes an assemblage cohere, but also on what causes it to mutate – the 'lines of flight' which are immanent to it: 'the diagram and abstract machine have lines of flight that are primary, which are not phenomena of resistance or counterattack in an assemblage, but cutting edges of deterritorialization' (*ATP*: 531). Assemblages are thus determined as much by what escapes them as by what they fix. Or, rather, the composition of an assemblage is always through its lines of flight. Deleuze and Guattari often pose this primacy of the line of flight against a Marxist affirmation of the primacy of 'contradiction' (cf. *ATP*: 216). Yet, whilst it is true that Deleuze and Guattari's conception of flight challenges a simple bi-polarity of contradictions (forces of production/ relations of production, bourgeoisie/proletariat), this is not such a profound difference with Marx.[15] For Marx and Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism is a radically transformative social system that is *premised* on lines of flight; it was born through a new means of mobilizing and conjoining flows of money and flows of labour. The essence of capital is that it continually sets free its lines of flight – its mad scientists, its countercultures, its warmongers – in order to open new territories for exploitation. It is thus a perpetual process of setting and breaking limits. Politics is not an assertion of a class or minority *identity*, but is a process of engagement with these 'objective' lines of flight. Inasmuch as an assemblage 'works' in a social system, its lines of flight are *functional* to it – they are not *in themselves* revolutionary. Politics thus seeks to engage with these flows (of people, ideas, relations, and machines in mutual interrelation) and, in a sense, push them further or take them elsewhere, against their immanent reterritorialization in fashions functional to the realization of surplus value. This is why for Marx the communist movement needs to follow a path through the flows of capitalism, not oppose an identity to it, and why Deleuze and Guattari suggest that minorities do not so much create lines of flight, as attach themselves to them (cf. Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 43).

In relating the second aspect of the minor political double flux to communism one does, however, have to be careful. One must at the very least distinguish between the communist mode of engagement in general – as I sketched through Marx in Chapter 1 – and specific communist and anarchist

movements. If we take Kafka as a case in point, the communism of his double flux is not so much through the concrete manifestations of communist practice, though Kafka has relations to this,[16] but through his approach to the social processes of deterritorialization. The point, then, is not to name Kafka as communist, but to see how communism and Kafka's minor mode of engagement resonate. And it is such a resonance – operating at the level of modes and styles of engagement – that, I would suggest, is the basis for Deleuze and Guattari's (*ATP*: 472) alignment of the minor with the proletariat, following their argument that 'The criteria [of proletarian literature] are obviously difficult to establish if one doesn't start with a more objective concept – that of minor literature' (*K*: 18).

The minor author-function

Deleuze and Guattari's third defining characteristic of minor literature – that it enacts a 'collective enunciation' – concerns the specific mode of minor authorship. Deleuze and Guattari refute two models of authorship: collective 'representation' and the individual 'master'. If in minor composition 'everything takes on a collective value' (*K*: 17), this is not because the minor author is an 'ethnologist of his people' (Deleuze 1989: 222). Such a model of authorship is still based on an archetype of 'consciousness', where the author expresses or represents the conditions and truths of a particular group as a fully present people. This model dies with the political model of the people:

> The death-knell for becoming conscious was precisely the consciousness that there were no people, but always several peoples, an infinity of peoples, who remained to be united, or should not be united, in order for the problem to change.
>
> (Deleuze 1989: 220)

But neither is the author an individual 'master', where composition is the product of an autonomous author separated from a community. Instead, minor authorship is a 'collective enunciation' that emerges in the cramped conditions of a culture – it is the elaboration and proliferation of the collective intrigue as it is expressed in particular moments by particular authors:

> Indeed, precisely because talent isn't abundant in a minor literature, there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that 'master' and that could be separated from a collective enunciation. Indeed, scarcity of talent is in fact beneficial and allows the conception of something other than a literature of masters; what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren't in agreement.
>
> (*K*: 17)

This emphasis on collective enunciation is not to say that there is no space for innovation or singularity – far from it. The author is both of the milieu that s/he actualizes 'collectively' and, inasmuch as the people are missing or lack coherence, is in a position to express a different configuration, a different sensibility unconstrained by a fixed identity, and relatively freed from the weight of tradition that would come with a coherent people. At the same time, because there is no space for the elevation of master authors (cramped as the community is), the author-function is distributed across the milieu, such that the collective and the author are both implicated in each other, in a process of continuous feedback. The minor author-function is thus a reversal of that identified by Barthes and Foucault as that which functions to produce a coherent and regular individual oeuvre. As I said above, moments of minor authorship tend to emerge in what Kafka (1999: 148) describes as the 'incessant bustle' of 'magazines' and 'schools' in a series of ever new and changing 'borderlines' or 'anomalous' points that incorporate and amplify difference in a community.[17] The minor author is like the subject of this account of the 'pack-form', only it is a characteristic of all elements of the pack:

> I am on the edge of the crowd, at the periphery; but I belong to it, I am attached to it by one of my extremities, a hand or a foot. I know that the periphery is the only place I can be, that I would die if I let myself be drawn into the centre of the fray, but just as certainly if I let go of the crowd.
>
> (*ATP*: 29)

If the author-function is situated on the periphery, between the community and the outside, it is driven by the concerns of the limited community, but also by the relations that cross it and the anomalous points that lead it elsewhere. In this sense the authorial moment, just like the general process of minor composition, is an engagement with an outside that is almost 'forced' rather than 'chosen', but that finds in such engagement new relations, new possibilities for inclusive disjunction. As such, the minor author is not a subject, but an event or a singularity, a composite 'foci of creation' (Deleuze 1998d: 42). In these foci of creation there is, as Kafka (1999: 150) writes, plenty of space for polemic. Or, as Guattari (1998: 196) puts it, 'It's not a question of creating agreement; on the contrary, the less we agree, the more we create an area, a field of vitality.' But polemic and disagreement must develop as points of relation across disjunctions, as productive borderlines, not as means to harden disjunctions into the self-certainty of autonomous identity.[18]

Marx as a minor author

For an example of minor authorship we can turn to Marx's own mode of creation. It is, of course, easy to see Marx as a molar author – to accept the dominant twentieth-century image of Marx as the 'father of modern socialism',

whose role in the descent of orthodox Marxism is guaranteed by the iconic portraits which graced the walls of the Kremlin and its Communist Party outposts for more than seventy years. But a look at his own practice can reveal something else. The combination of Marx's iconic status and the importance of his analysis of capitalist dynamics are such that relatively few texts have sought to examine his mode of authorship. One notable exception is Lyotard's (1993) essay in *Libidinal Economy*, 'The desire named Marx'. It is too dense and complex a text to be fully explored here, but it presents a useful position to start a discussion of Marx's minor authorial mode of composition.

Lyotard discerns a split in Marx's libidinal economy between an obsession with the textual 'prosecution' of capital – the 'old man' Marx, the 'accuser' – and a continual deferral of the conceptual and practical elaboration of the proletariat – the 'girl Marx' who desires the communist reconciliation of humanity with nature. Lyotard sees a model of bad conscience operating in this tension, and a religio-redemption narrative where the proletariat is necessarily deferred through a continual emphasis on its suffering in Marx's 'perpetual *postponement* of finishing work on *Capital*' (96):

> the little girl Marx, offended by the perversity of the polymorphous body of capital, requires a great love; the great prosecutor Karl Marx, assigned the task of prosecution of the perverts and the 'invention' of a suitable lover (the proletariat), sets himself to study the file of the accused capitalist.
>
> What happens when the person assigned to the prosecution is as fascinated by the accused as he is scandalized by him? It comes about that the prosecutor sets himself to finding a hundred thousand good reasons to prolong the study of the file, that the enquiry becomes meticulous, always more meticulous . . . [T]his swarming of perverse fluxes that is supposed to have to produce (dialectically), never stops moving away, escaping him, being put off.
>
> (Lyotard 1993: 97)

Lyotard (1993: 99) cites as evidence a letter from Marx to Danielson, his Russian translator, concerning the delay in his revisions of *Capital*. Here, referring to the workers' movement, Marx writes: 'there are circumstances where one is morally bound to busy oneself with *things much less attractive* than study and theoretical research'.

Though he does not say it, Lyotard's argument is a kind of holding to account of Marx to the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: 'The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to *change* it' (Marx and Engels 1974: 123). As he gets sucked into the perverse body of capital, Marx, it would seem, fails to leave the level of interpretation. There are, however, other ways to read Marx's engagement and his 'perpetual postponement'. Lyotard's argument is problematic, for it posits two dichotomies in Marx – prosecution/practice (as evident in his choice of Marx's letter to Danielson), and capital/the full body of inorganic nature (the 'suitable lover' of the

proletariat). In showing the problems with these dichotomies, Spivak's (1996) reading of the eleventh thesis is illuminating. Spivak argues that Marx's concepts are part of a method that is politically motivated toward the transformation of the situation it conceives, without ever fixing the subject of transformation. In returning to the German, Spivak shows how the apparent distinction between 'interpretation' and 'change' in the eleventh thesis is not as simple as it might first appear. Whilst 'interpret' (*haben interpretiert*) is a completed meaning commensurate with a phenomenon, the word used for 'change' (*zu verändern*) is an open-ended 'making-other' (of, by inference, the self-identical) rather than a completed transformation (Spivak 1996: 217–18). The eleventh thesis, then, does not present a dichotomy between theory and practice, but, rather, is an injunction to a form of critique and practice that seeks to continually 'make-other' the self-identical.[19] In this framework, Marx's critique of capital (Lyotard's moment of 'accusation') is not one side of his engagement, but is immanent to his practice – it is in this critique, this fascinated engagement with capital (as part of the milieu of the workers' movement), that the proletariat as a movement of overcoming is called forth.

If the dichotomies of theory/practice and proletariat/capital are not so clear cut, then we can consider Marx's mode of engagement less as a product of bad conscience than as a minor politics. The tension displayed between the writing of *Capital* and the engagement with the workers' movement that the letter to Danielson exemplifies can be seen as the tension of a minor author – Marx as part of the workers' movement (along with many others), but a workers' movement that is not an already arrived people that Marx should somehow represent, but a people in formation. Marx's engagement with capitalist dynamics in the writing of *Capital* would then be his contribution on the borderline of the group, his polemic, his intrigue with the group with whom he is never fully at one: a group which may well be 'less attractive', for, following Kafka's (1999: 150) characterization of the literature of small peoples, disagreement, intrigue, even insult are essential to its formation. Marx is famous for endlessly moving in and out of the writing of *Capital* (the first volume of which arrived a full sixteen years after he wrote of it: 'The material I am working on is so damnably involved that, no matter how I exert myself, I shall not finish for another six to eight weeks'; cited in Wheen 1999: 188) and for moving into and withdrawing from the affray of the workers' movement (after the collapse of the Communist League in 1851 Marx did not become involved in a workers' organization until the formation of the International Working Men's Association in 1864).[20] In his anomalous situation, what seems to drive him – to the frustration of Engels – is not the great work, but the particular intervention. A political event, an adversary, a war, a revolution, an economic crisis sets him off and he produces yet another pamphlet, forms one more alliance, partakes in another heated polemic; that is, he takes up the particular event, the apparently 'petty theme' and intricately engages with it. This mode of engagement is amply evident in Engels' comment about Marx's journalism:

> He is no journalist, and will never become one. He pores for a whole day
> over a leading article that would take someone else a couple of hours as
> though it concerned the handling of a deep philosophical problem. He
> changes and polishes and changes the change and owing to his unremit-
> ting thoroughness can never be ready on time.
>
> <div align="right">(Engels, cited in Wheen 1999: 131–2)</div>

And in this incessant and intricate engagement, Marx does not limit himself
to a particular and autonomous discipline, but draws on the wealth of fields
that surround him, from political economy to literature (notably Shakespeare
and Dickens) and even gossip columns (cf. Wheen 1999: 237), and employs
diverse modes of argument, from technical elaboration to literary flourish and
polemic (*Capital* would not be the same without the scatological tones of
its denunciations of the bourgeoisie). His work seems to take him over,
becoming, perhaps, that 'matter of life and death' (Kafka 1999: 150): the
pamphlets, sometimes arising from petty squabbles, multiply in length (*The
Holy Family* grows from a 20-page polemic to a 200-page work), and he
invariably develops illnesses, boils, and carbuncles at the point of writing.

There is, then, some truth in Lyotard's suggestion that Marx practises an
endless postponement, but this postponement is not driven by a *ressentiment* of
endless 'accusation', and neither is it a diversion from the real point in hand
(be that the completion of *Capital* or the formation of the workers' move-
ment). Rather, like the deferral of Godot's arrival, this postponement –
induced by capital's endless overcoming of its limits, and by the proletariat's
need to overcome itself through capital – is immanent to the construction of a
plane within which intense and intricate engagement occurs.

Guattari's analysis of groups

The problematic of group organization has been evident throughout this
discussion of the minor, but it is useful at this point to consider the question of
the group in more depth. To do this I will focus on Guattari's work on group
formation, with particular reference to the problematic of the political group.
Guattari's political, clinical, and theoretical work is thoroughly infused with
the problem of group formation. Deleuze and Guattari's (*ATP*: 3) insistence
on the 'crowd' of the self aside, Deleuze writes that 'Félix was a man of the
group, of bands or tribes' (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 16). As such, the problem
of the group is more a perspective to read Guattari's work as a whole rather
than one of its distinct aspects – and, indeed, the minor is essentially a prob-
lematic of group formation. But Guattari also presents some specific analyses
of the modes of group formation – in particular, in relation to the institutions
of mental health (including those of *anti*-psychiatry; cf. 'Mary Barnes "Trip"'
in Guattari 1995a) and the left-political milieu. Though these analyses are
interlaced, it is Guattari's work on the latter that I want to explore.

Deleuze and Guattari's respective relations to political groups is a useful

place to start. Deleuze must be unique in his generation for never having joined the Communist Party (even Foucault had a brief stint in the French Communist Party; cf. Macey 1993: 37), just as he was never in analysis; he remained outside the two dominant schools of French theoretical and political practice. Deleuze had some involvement in post-'68 group activity – notably with Foucault in the Prison Information Group – and wrote a number of articles and letters in support of the Palestinian struggle, and against the bombing of Vietnam, the firing of politically active homosexuals from faculties, human rights violations in Iran, the imprisonment of Antonio Negri and the repression of Italian *autonomia*, the extradition of the Red Army Faction's lawyer Klaus Croissant, and the Gulf War.[21] Nevertheless, Deleuze's politics was not particularly practical (cf. Guattari 1995a: 28–30; Deleuze 1997a). Guattari, on the other hand – no doubt as part of the 'wild rodeo' of his life (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 11) – had a life-long involvement in radical politics, from a ten-year membership of the French Communist Party, through Trotskyist groupuscules and the FGERI (Federation of Study Groups in Institutional Research), which was central in the occupation of the Odéon in May '68, with his base not in the academy but in the psychiatric clinic La Borde (cf. Guattari 1995a; Genosko's introduction to Guattari 1996b; *N*: 13–24, 183). The difference between Deleuze's and Guattari's styles in this matter is marked by Guattari's account of their meeting and decision to work together:

> the pre-project work [for *Anti-Oedipus*] with Deleuze was still very much along these lines [of the FGERI]. The idea was to discuss things together, to do things together – it was 1969, a period that was still marked by the turmoil of '68. Doing something together meant throwing Deleuze into the stew. In truth, he was already there, he was meeting people, he was doing all kind of things . . . It was during the time of the GIP (Group Information on Prisons) that I had gotten Deleuze together with Foucault to embark on what eventually became the CERFI (Centre for Study, Research and Institutional Training), by obtaining a research grant for them and their co-workers. In a way then, there really was a moment for this kind of collective work. But as soon as we agreed to work together, Deleuze immediately closed all other doors. I hadn't anticipated that.
>
> (Guattari 1995a: 28–9)

The presentation of Deleuze's withdrawal from group activity here is interesting. Guattari (1995a: 27–8) clearly perceived his involvement with Deleuze as an aspect of his group work. In this context, Deleuze's withdrawal is presented as at least a little problematic. At the same time, and in the same conversation, Guattari talks about the way Deleuze helped him problematize a certain relation to groups: 'Deleuze', Guattari (1995a: 31) says, 'carefully, and with a light touch, broke down a kind of myth about groups that I had.' The passage is ambiguous, but Guattari appears to be saying that he invested too much in

the idea of group work as in itself a progressive mode of activity – as if the formation of a group was always a movement in the right direction. This is manifest in what he says was 'my way of pushing everything toward a positive project, a "good cause"', and, in another piece, his 'contributi[on] [to] a certain activism, an illusion of effectiveness, a headlong rush forward' (Guattari 1995a: 32, 1984: 29). Given Guattari's increasing sense of the dogmatism of the post-'68 groupuscules, Deleuze, it would appear, gave him a way out.[22] In the context of his problematization of group work, Guattari thus draws attention to another side of his relations to groups: 'the other dimension of unconscious sabotage, a kind of passion for returning to the zero-point' (32). This tension between immersion in and distance from the group is clearly evident in Deleuze's comment that whilst Guattari was a 'man of the group', he was at the same time 'a man alone' (in Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 16). This sense of group formation is central to Deleuze and Guattari's elaboration of the 'pack-form' – the minor mode of group relation. In the pack, one exists on the periphery or the borderline – at once part of the group and the outside. As Fanny Deleuze is quoted as saying in *A Thousand Plateaus*: 'I know that the periphery is the only place I can be, that I would die if I let myself be drawn into the centre of the fray, but just as certainly if I let go of the crowd' (*ATP*: 29). The tension in Guattari's position is most apparent in his essay 'The group and the person', when he writes of the denunciations his attempts at introducing group analysis to the class struggle received. 'One Trotskyist group', Guattari writes

> did me the honour of devoting over half a sixteen-page pamphlet to a vehement denunciation of my tedious theories of group subjectivity. I almost collapsed under the weight of their accusations: petit-bourgeois, impenitent idealist, irresponsible element! 'Your false theories could mislead good militants'. They compared me to Henri de Man, a Nazi collaborator sentenced in his absence to forced labour when the war was over.
>
> (Guattari 1984: 25)

More or less extreme experiences of the kind of micro-fascist group ego that this denunciation reflects have turned – and still turn – many away from radical groups. But Guattari – displaying the tension and affective complexity of minor engagement – is still adamant that involvement with radical groups was essential to his political projects, and he writes 'Yet I believe that no one who had the experience of being a militant in one of those youth organizations or mass movements, in the Communist Party or some splinter group, will ever again be just the same as everyone else' (Guattari 1984: 29).

It is in the context of Guattari's own mode of engagement that he elaborates his theories of group analysis. Guattari's analysis of groups seeks to account for the wealth of attributes and modes of being of a group – its enunciative and tactical structures, its forms of leadership and militancy, its affective relations,

and its relations with the outside.[23] This complexity is evident in the context of his discussion of the groupuscules:

> It's a whole axiomatics, down to the phonological level – the way of articulating certain words, the gesture that accompanies them – and then the structures of organization, the conception of what sort of relationships to maintain with the allies, the centrists, the adversaries.
>
> (Guattari 1995a: 58)

Guattari's analysis of political groups starts from a rejection of the dichotomous models of spontaneist anarchism and the Leninist party and its 'democratic centralism' (cf. Guattari 1984: 63; 1995a: 24, 62). The model of spontaneous anarchism (considered in Chapter 3 as a humanist politics) is woefully inadequate in the face of the unified machine of capital. 'It is obvious', Deleuze (1977: 104–5) writes in his foreword to Guattari's *Psychanalyse et Transversalité*, 'that a revolutionary machine cannot content itself with local, punctual struggles'. But the orthodox party model, on the other hand, merely serves to cathect desiring production to the state-form and thus integrates politics to capital – for Deleuze (1977: 102), the prime function of the Communist Party. The problem is to develop a form of what Deleuze describes as a 'unification' that is functional to a diffuse collective production, and Guattari (1995a: 60) proposes as a model of chemical 'crystallization' of invention across the socius. Against a model of stages, where the revolutionary moment is seen to need mass spontaneity in the first stage and centralism in the second (as in the Soviet experience), Deleuze (1977: 104) provocatively writes that 'From the outset we should be more centralist than the centralists.' This sounds like a worrying irruption of Leninism, but Deleuze's 'centralism' or 'unification' is proposed as a process of 'analysing' – or drawing out, problematizing, and connecting – the complex of social, political, economic, and libidinal relations of group and mass formations: 'The . . . unification must be brought about by *analysis*, and should have a role of *analyzer* with respect to group and mass desire, rather than the role of synthesis that proceeds by way of rationalization, totalization, exclusion, etc.' The 22 March Movement[24] in the French uprising of '68, though it had its problems (not least, a cult of spontaneity which 'probably indicated a massive resurgence of anxiety at facing the unknown') is, for Guattari, exemplary:

> everything revolved around it without its becoming part of any overall movement or being taken over by any other political group. Those involved set out to interpret the situation, not in terms of some programme laid down at successive congresses, but gradually, as the situation itself unfolded in time . . . They refused to present their movement as the embodiment of the situation, but simply as a something upon which the masses could effect a transference of their inhibitions, and

opened the way to a new understanding and a new logical formulation outside of any framework of conformism.

(Guattari 1984: 214–15)

Guattari poses the general problematic of the group as analyser in terms of two kinds, or modes, of group formation – *subject groups* and *subjugated groups*. Partly because of Guattari's increased wariness toward groups, after *Anti-Oedipus* he stops using these categories in favour of the analysis of specific territories (be they 'groups' or not) in a fashion more akin to this chapter's account of minor politics.[25] When it comes to the analysis of specific political groups, however, these categories are still useful. The two modes, of course, interrelate, and as such are best seen as tendencies immanent to any formation (cf. Deleuze 1977: 103). 'Subject groups' are the group correlate of minor politics – they seek to put minor practices into play, to open to the outside, and develop innovative forms of enunciation and collective composition. In this they allow for the 'death' of the group. 'Subjugated groups', on the other hand, are those which manifest molar modes of organization and seek to maintain coherence against an outside identified as hostile. In Deleuze's words:

> Subjugated groups are just as subjugated in terms of the 'masters' which they take on or accept, as they are in terms of their own masses. The hierarchy, the vertical or pyramidal organization that characterizes them is constructed in such a way as to avert all possible inscriptions of non-sense, death or explosion into the body of the group, to prevent the development of creative breaks, thereby assuring the mechanisms of self-conservation based on the exclusion of other groups. Their centralism operates by structuration, totalization and unification, substituting a set-up of stereotyped statements, cut off both from reality and from subjectivity, for the conditions of a real collective 'enunciation'.
>
> (Deleuze 1977: 103)

The classic model of the subjugated group is the Communist Party and its Trotskyist splinters, but for Guattari these models also manifest themselves in the groupuscules. Anarchist and Maoist groups, for example, may differ in their *style* – 'the definition of the leader, of propaganda, a conception of discipline, loyalty, modesty, and the asceticism of the militant' – but the subjugated group-form of the 'little church' is never far away (Guattari 1995a: 59).[26] Guattari locates the emergence of this model in what he calls 'the Leninist break' of 1917 (cf. 1984: 30–2; 184–95), and it is worth considering his argument to illustrate a little of the style of analysis. Here Guattari perceives a number of attributes of the leftist subjugated group that were to dominate twentieth-century radical milieux. It is important that Guattari sees something creative in the Bolshevik intervention between February and October 1917 – an interpretation of the military, economic, social, and political collapse as the potential for the immediate socialist revolution,

despite the weakness of the Russian proletariat, and without regard for the possible reaction. In this the Bolsheviks

> prevent[ed] the natural development of things; they blocked what would 'normally' have taken place following a national débâcle on such a scale – some kind of coalition of the left and centre, living in hopes of better days and the recovery of power by traditionalist parties.
>
> (Guattari 1984: 184)

One could interpret the subsequent development of the revolution and the Soviet state in terms of the 'recuperative' power of Bolshevism, or of the revolution's ultimate impossibility, given the failure of the German revolution and the incorporative effects of social democracy. However, Guattari proposes instead a more complex analysis of the 'different orders of determination' of the event. He focuses in particular on Lenin, and the organizational, political, theoretical, and ethical aspects of Bolshevism, and goes back to the 'moment of the fundamental Leninist breakthrough' at the end of the Second Congress of the All-Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1903. A series of disputes – around two words in the membership statutes, the number of members of the *Iskra* editorial committee, and the Jewish militants' desire to maintain a minimum of organizational identity – set off a 'claustrophobic psychodrama' of splits and assertion of party discipline, from which 'a new signifying system came into being, a new axiomatic of the revolutionary movement, on which our thinking is still largely dependent today' (Guattari 1984: 189). Guattari describes the characteristics of this 'professional Bolshevik style and attitude' and the new 'militant subjectivity' as the solidification of statements into dogma, the formation of dominant utterances that function to control divergent utterances, a fondness for creating splits on matters of principle combined with an almost duplicitous flexibility of tactics, a new area of inertia that functions to restrict openness and encourage uncritical acceptance of slogans and doctrine, and a domineering and contemptuous attitude to those who would be henceforth known as 'the masses'. At the centre is the model of the militant – the 'hateful "love" of the militant who knows everything *a priori* and systematically refuses to listen to anything other than the party line' (190). Due to this group formation, Guattari argues that despite the power of the 'Leninist break', ultimately the Bolsheviks were only able to conceive of the development of the revolution through the party and its 'messianic vocation' (187). There was never, then, as Trotsky had it, 'a healthy proletarian State supposedly perverted by bureaucracy', but rather, in the way the Bolsheviks answered the crisis in and through the party, 'everything was already played out or betrayed' (Deleuze 1977: 103).[27]

Returning to Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the subject group as analyser, one should not infer from the critique of the Leninist break that Deleuze and Guattari offer a simple anti-party position. In his forward to Deleuze's *Foucault*, Bové draws attention to what he sees as Deleuze's suggestion

that Foucault brings us towards 'another conception of the Party' (in Deleuze 1988: xxix–xxx). Bové's incredulity – 'one must think that Deleuze has made an error' – is not surprising. Foucault's attention to the subtleties of authority and his wariness of Marxian conceptual figures would not lead one to expect to find any forwarding of the party formation in his works, and Deleuze is no doubt being a little mischievous in suggesting otherwise. Bové's conclusion that Deleuze is displaying his own desire 'to have a Party again', however, is not quite as bizarre as one might think. If we draw back from the Leninist model to Marx's own comments on the party in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* we can discern a formation that is not so alien to Deleuze's understanding of the role of the group as analyser of struggle. The *Manifesto* has very little to do with the kind of party one might expect. It sets itself up to present a 'Manifesto of the party itself' to counter the bourgeois 'nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism' (Marx and Engels 1973: 31). But this party is not announced as a set of organizational statutes or programmes. Rather, it is presented as the immanent critique of the capitalist socius (Parts 1 and 2) and of contemporary socialist organizations (Part 3). Given this, as Marx writes:

> The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.
>
> They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.
>
> They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.
>
> The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.
>
> (Marx and Engels 1973: 49)

In the last section of the *Manifesto* – and it is by far the shortest – which elaborates the 'Position of the Communists in relation to the various existing opposition parties', Marx simply points to a series of contemporary European struggles and highlights the specific aspects that the Communist minorities would support – with the only proviso that the 'property question' would be brought to the fore. It draws to a close with the comment 'In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things' (Marx and Engels 1973: 77).

Marx presents the Communist Party, then, not as a distinct and timeless organizational *form*, but as a mode of engagement that is immanent to the *content* of the proletariat-in-struggle, which in turn is immanent to the particular configurations of capital.[28] This is not to say, of course, that Marx did not at

times partake in, or actively contribute to, the formation of specific groups – notably the Communist League and the First International – but he was wary of these becoming separate bodies apart from the proletarian movement as a whole, and it was actual struggle – as he saw, for example, in the Chartists – where he located the movement of capital's overcoming, not in a distinct political formation or a state in waiting.[29] It is possible, then, to conceive of 'the party' in Marx as a plane of the development of a body of experience, practice, and knowledge that develops through particular historical experiences and movements, and that is able, at the same time, to transcend particular experience, and maintain a critical stance to aspects of these movements, whilst, at certain moments, operating as a catalyst of struggle.[30] Odd as it might seem, it is in this context that I would suggest that Deleuze's model of 'unification' and the group as 'analyser' should be considered; with the proviso, of course, that critical activity would draw out and problematize the wealth of relations and forces – not just tactical, but libidinal, affective, and personal – that operate in any group and in the socius as a whole. I am not suggesting that Deleuze and Guattari are theorists of the party – there is no need to draw them into a category that would seem to have to become too problematic to be politically productive today (though cf. *AŒ*: 344). But, against models which affirm the spontaneity of struggle in itself or the adequacy of local punctual struggle, Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of group activity and Marx's figure of the party have points of resonance that should not be lost to a false subsumption of the two into different sides of the rather limited pro- and anti-party dichotomy.

Creation against resistance (Deleuze and Foucault)

Before concluding this chapter I want briefly to turn to Deleuze's interpretation of the problematic of 'resistance' in Foucault in order to emphasize how minor politics challenges a theory of resistance, and show some of the relations between Deleuze's and Foucault's politics.[31] The concept of resistance has had some prominence in postmodern political discourse, as if it conveys a situatedness and a more modest remit than the modern paradigm of class struggle. This focus has often, if implicitly, been associated with Foucault (no doubt this has been aided by Foucault's refusal to link his work to the Marxian project).[32] Once the more malevolent critique of Foucault, that he foreclosed politics in a disciplinary archipelago,[33] was overcome, his name has come to signify not only our times of micro-powers, but also our appropriate political response – seeing, as he did, that a 'multiplicity . . . of points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network' (Foucault 1980: 95). Yet this idea of resistance has its problems.

   The problematic of resistance is a persistent theme in Deleuze's engagement with Foucault. The great resonance between Deleuze's and Foucault's work (cf. *N*: 85) is such that it would be a stupid move indeed to pose this question in terms of a serious disjunction. It is much better to think of it as a

productive differential in their relation, as the fact of Deleuze's not infrequent return to the subject conveys. The nub of Deleuze's argument is that in his later years Foucault had a sense of becoming 'trapped in something he hated' (*N*: 109), namely 'power'; that Foucault felt he was 'getting locked into the play of forces' that he had mapped and that 'he needed "some opening"'(*N*: 92, 109). Deleuze thus attaches considerable importance to Foucault's eight-year break in book publication after the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* – a period Deleuze describes as one of 'general crisis' (*N*: 83) – when the planned structure of the series was suspended (even though the research was probably mostly completed; *N*: 108–9), and from where emerge volumes II and III around the new paradigm of 'subjectification' and 'techniques of the self' in what Foucault (1982: 208) calls his third 'mode of inquiry'. Deleuze is rightly very careful to present this third dimension as the product of the whole of Foucault's work, as a 'broken line' (*N*: 92) of invention, crisis, probing, and blockage that itself is 'the mark of its creativity, the mark of its ultimate consistency', rather than as some kind of 'new Foucault' (it is 'a creative crisis, not a recantation') (*N*: 83, 98). However, it is clear that Deleuze sees this point as Foucault's overcoming of the *problem* of resistance.

It is precisely at this time of 'crisis' that Deleuze takes it upon himself to pass on to Foucault a series of notes on his interpretation of their similarities and differences – a piece which circulates around the questions of resistance and the line of flight (Deleuze 1997d).[34] Of all Deleuze's commentaries on Foucault, these notes are the most critical. Though the notes follow Deleuze's usual practice of drawing out lines of resonance with other works, here he also quite explicitly marks his and Foucault's differences. Deleuze's argument centres around his positioning of the primacy of assemblages of desire (rather than power) and the centrality of lines of flight in the constitution of assemblages (cf. also *ATP*: 530–1). Deleuze suggests that, since for him lines of flight or desiring relations are primary, and hence the site of political composition, he 'ha[s] no need for the status of phenomena of resistance' (1997d: 189). In Foucault, on the other hand, because *dispositifs* of power are primary, and there appears to be no equivalent of the line of flight in his work, politics can only be a 'resistance' to power. Politics is hence left as a strangely unmotivated, almost reactive phenomenon (188). It is true that for Foucault (1982) resistance lies at the heart of power, but in this it is always functional to power configurations. Although in volume I Foucault (1980) presents three political possibilities – a fully situated set of micro-resistances that work 'vis-à-vis' the *dispositifs*, a new conception of a counter-politics of truth, and the affirmation of 'bodies and pleasures' against 'sex' identity – Deleuze sees Foucault grappling with the problem of the 'status' of these phenomena and the question of where they come from, and he argues that 'their character, their origin, their production were still vague' (Deleuze 1997d: 188; *N*: 98, 109). Deleuze perceives this as most evident in Foucault's (1979) essay 'The life of infamous men' – a text which Deleuze presents as both a masterpiece

and as a text of the 'crisis' (*N*: 90, 108). Here, Foucault grapples with the problem of bringing little moments of excess, crime, and transgression into analysis without losing their intensity. In the past, Foucault (1979: 77) says, 'for want of the necessary talent' these intensities were left outside his analysis, yet he credits the vibration and intensity of these moments as a fundamental driving force of his research. We can think of Foucault willing himself to do something with this intensity, but his solution here is to present these little transgressions in picaresque fashion as they are lit, for brief moments, by power relations. Their intensity is not theorized, but displayed.

In Foucault's (1990, 1992) work after the 'crisis', however – once he moves into the problem of 'subjectification' and 'techniques of the self' in volumes II and III – Deleuze sees the problem of resistance overcome. He reads the new work as the final working-out of a problematic of the 'Outside' that pervaded all of Foucault's work, as itself the line of flight, or the primacy of undetermined force in a kind of vitalism (*N*: 91). This is no return of the subject, but an emphasis on the ways power is deflected and opened, and a space of the self-as-event (or series of events) is produced in 'foldings' of the Outside/force in the invention of 'styles of life' (*N*: 93, 108–9, 114–16). Against a model of the outside – as infamy, madness, and so on – which is either functional to power, or a flash of transgression, the outside becomes a site which – through careful, tentative work on the self – emerges immanently to a life, as a way of escaping the self. The problem Deleuze sees Foucault addressing is one of 'need[ing] both to cross the line [of the Outside], and make it endurable, workable, thinkable' (*N*: 111): 'how far can we unfold the line without falling into a breathless void, into death, and how can we fold it, but without losing touch with it, to produce an inside copresent with the outside, corresponding to the outside?' (113). Thus in Foucault's later work the fold becomes a matter of

> Bending the line [of the Outside] so we manage to live upon it, with it: a matter of life and death. The line itself is constantly unfolding at crazy speeds as we're trying to fold it to produce 'the slow beings that we are', to get (as Michaux says) to 'the eye of the hurricane'.
>
> (*N*: 111)

Deleuze's (1988) reading of Foucault's work as a whole thus ends with a consideration of Nietzsche's overman through a kind of Foucauldian 'primacy of resistance' which has resonance with his own emphasis on composition (and includes none of the positioning of his and Guattari's differences to Foucault that were evident before). This is not to say that Deleuze's *Foucault* presents the two authors as one; the distinctions between them are, to extend Deleuze's (1997d: 189) comparison on the question of the primacy of desire, 'more than a question of words'. It is, rather, to say that for Deleuze 'resistance' is a bad model of politics, and ultimately one that Foucault himself overcomes.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that minor politics poses a direct challenge to political models founded on a delineated identity – whether in the form of a 'people' or a self-declared marginal – where a particular people seeks to determine a coherent consciousness, history, and trajectory bolstered against the becoming of the world. Against these *molar* models, which are premised on the fetishization of an already present identity, minor politics is seen in the processes of *creation*, composition, and change *within* and *across* identities, programmes, and practices. This chapter has sought to describe the minor modes and techniques of this creation. First, politics begins with specific and particular experience and oppression in the 'cramped spaces' and 'impossible' positions of 'small peoples' who lack or refuse coherent identity – those who, constrained by a wealth of determining social relations, exist under, and in a sense affirm, the condition that 'the people are missing'. But minor politics is not a resigned turn to the local or particular as such. Rather, it is a politics oriented towards *social relations* and their possibilities for becoming beyond identity. For, in cramped space – without self-secure delineated identity and autonomous concerns – politics ceases to be a self-referential process of self-actualization, and becomes a process of engagement with the social relations which traverse minorities and determine their movements: a necessary move if anything is to be actively lived. Each cramped situation shows a point of departure, a point of deterritorialization. In this sense, politics emerges across the social – there is no privileged site or subject of minor politics. This is not, however, a pluralist process of the affirmation of each minority concern. Minorities only actualize minor politics in so far as they continually open up to social relations and to the lines of deterritorialization of the social. Because of the relay between the particular intrigue and social relations, politics is driven as much by situation and event as by the concerns of the particular minority. Gone, then, is any existential or political security of a ghettoized margin. Deleuze is indeed somewhat contemptible of such states: 'Marginals have always inspired fear in us, and a slight horror. They are not clandestine enough' (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 139).[35] Marginals in this sense are those who appreciate the cramping force of major forms, but, rather than choose to engage with these relations, seek instead to carve out an autonomous identity against them, shoring up their own particularity against the world. This is perhaps the greatest threat to the minoritarian becoming of minority groups, who after deterritorializing major identity (as cultural or national minority, worker, heterosexual, and so on) can easily reterritorialize around a particular minority identity (as self-affirming – and outside-excluding – minority nationalist, communist, anarchist, feminist, homosexual, and so on). Rather than a fetishization of marginal identity, in minor politics particular minority situations or disjunctions are intensively engaged with, elaborated, and complicated, to open out the either/or disjunctions of identity into movements and permutations across disjunctions such that an intensive milieu of inclusive

disjunction emerges. The particular thus becomes the site of innovation (not identity) as minorities rework their territory and multiply their borders. At each moment, even as its concerns become collective matters of 'life and death', the little intrigues are prevented – through a certain 'willed poverty' and a continual engagement with the social – from solidifying into determined modes of practice, such that minor intrigue is always drawn back into a milieu of experimentation. As such, the milieu of such an engagement is never able to settle, or soar into the self-actualizing grandeur of a people, or its representatives, master authors. Instead, it is an 'incessant bustle' charged with vitality, with polemic, and with a continuous process of interrogation, intrigue, and invention as minorities engage with these social relations and seek to turn them away from their molar effects, towards, as Deleuze and Guattari (*AŒ*: 382) enigmatically suggest, a 'becoming everybody/everything' in the ever renewed calling forth of a 'new earth'.

Beyond this general process, the minor relation to the social is characterized by Kafka's 'double flux' as a site of contemporary social arrangements and their lines of flight. The first part of the double flux requires a perceptual awareness to both the ways social machines work (for example, the bureaucracy of *The Trial*, as a complex machine of endless deferment) and to the ways they mutate and to the lines of flight they engineer (hence Kafka's bureaucracy, as a sign of 'diabolical powers to come' (*K*: 83), is seen to make 'impossible' connections where people and rooms are polymorphously connected in a self-transforming labyrinth). It is at this point of social assemblages and their flight that the little intrigues of minor composition emerge and operate. Hence, following the second side of Kafka's double flux, minor politics has affinity with the 'most contemporary' political movements – with the proletariat and communism – which have sought to find and actualize fissures, cracks, and deviations in the flows and arrangements of the capitalist socius.

As I argued, such minor engagement has its correlate in forms of authorship as foci of creation on the borderlines of a group that operate as relays between the group and the social. Marx's mode of creation was seen to manifest such authorship. The chapter also showed how this style of composition related to the question of group formation through discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of subject groups, the group as analyser of social formations, and the resonance between Deleuze and Marx's understanding of the party.

Beyond these modes, styles, and techniques, however, the minor has no programme. As Deleuze and Parnet (1987: 137) put it: 'Politics is active experimentation, since we do not know in advance which way a line is going to turn.' One does not judge political movements by their success or failure – whether they achieved a set of goals or not – because the minor has no final goal: 'only stagnation can do harm' (Kafka 1999: 148). This is not to say that creation is unrelated to intended goals, or that this is a renunciation of the possibility of radical social change in favour of little, punctual creations. This would be a misunderstanding of Deleuze and Guattari's politics, and one which Deleuze (1994a: xx) suggests is the 'greatest danger' of his invocation of

difference: letting it lapse 'into the representations of a beautiful soul: there are only reconcilable and federative differences, far removed from bloody struggles'. The point is that the way to interpret political movements is to consider their major and minor tendencies, what relations of identity they deterritorialize, and what they manage to create, following the sense of Guattari's (1996b: 124) observation that 'One cannot understand the history of the workers' movement if one refuses to see that, in certain periods, institutions of the labor movement have produced new types of subjectivity': 'mutant' workers in 'veritable *wars of subjectivity*'.

3 The lumpenproletariat and the proletarian unnamable

When the proletariat proclaims the *dissolution of the existing world order*, it is only declaring the secret of its own existence, for it *is* the *actual* dissolution of that order.

(Marx 1975a: 256)

Let us accept once and for all that classes are not social super-individualities, neither as objects nor as subjects.

(Balibar 1991: 179)

When Marx writes of the proletariat in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, he presents less a neat dialectical trajectory of an authentic historical subject than a process of complication, interrogation, and iteration. 'Proletarian revolutions', he writes, 'such as those of the nineteenth century, constantly engage in self-criticism, and in repeated interruptions of their own course. They return to what has apparently already been accomplished in order to begin the task again.' To mark that this return is not a repetition of the same, but an always situated process which seeks to draw in the new, he tells us that the proletarian social revolution 'can only create its poetry from the future' (Marx 1973b: 150, 149). This chapter takes up something of Marx's injunction and returns to the question of the proletariat. It returns not to reproduce that way of thinking Donzelot (1979: 73) describes as a compulsory reverence for a certain set of revered political figures, but from a contemporary concern to elucidate the function and place of 'difference' in Marx's proletarian standpoint. It seeks to show that at the core of Marx's formulation of the proletariat – and despite the work of orthodox Marxism and those who would draw too neat a historical break between modernist and postmodernist political thought – lies a politics which at once highlights the problems of identity and compels a minor practice of invention and becoming. This is an important move if Marx is to maintain contemporary pertinence not just as an analyst of the dynamics of capital – as the bad-conscience-fuelled praise of 1990s business journals would have it (cf. Wheen 1999: 5) – but also as a thinker of its overcoming.

Talking of the proletariat in terms of difference might seem a little strange, since it is in many ways the great unitary teleological subject *against* which much post-'68 work on difference emerged. From Frantz Fanon and the Black Panther Party, through European countercultural groups such as the British *Heatwave* magazine and the Dutch Provos (both of which had some relation to the Situationist International), 1970s deviancy theory, to recent post-structuralist exploration of a politics beyond identity, it is toward the *lumpenproletariat* that interest in complexity and difference in Marx has tended to be oriented.[1] Here the lumpenproletariat is variously seen as the *déclassé* break with an incorporated working class, the class of the refusal of work,[2] or the site of an unassimilable heterogeneity that breaks Marx's otherwise modernist meta-narrative. There are of course different reasons for the take-up of the category amongst these perspectives, but two are prevalent (at least in the earlier focus on the category). First, there seems to have been a general sense that the Communist Party's conflation of Marx's proletariat with the party, and the incorporating effects of regular employment and consumer culture (in processes of 'embourgeoisment', 'one-dimensionality', 'recuper-ation' and so on) had curtailed the proletariat's revolutionary potential. Second, a growing population of unwaged, marginalized, excluded, and countercultural groups were seen to be unrepresented in the conventional figure of the proletariat, work-based as it was.[3] Thus, whilst still being readers of Marx, and insistent on praxis at the level of 'capital', these groups and perspectives replaced the proletariat with a different, apparently revolution-ary subject, and indeed one that carried a particular frisson of radical excess.

It is indeed in the lumpenproletariat that difference and anomaly as a property of peoples is most apparently foregrounded by Marx, such that, when placed in contrast with the conventional image of the Marxian proletariat, it *appears* to be an attractive category for those seeking to develop a politics of difference.[4] That Marx's critique of the lumpenproletariat is frequently framed in rather moral terms seems only to add to its appeal, as if even for Marxists a lumpenproletarian politics offers the possibility to overcome the last remnants of bourgeois morality in his world view. This chapter argues, however, that this is a problematic interpretation. Through a consideration of the way Marx elaborates the contours of the proletariat in a kind of *fort/da* game with the lumpenproletariat (in a continual excision and return of the category), the chapter seeks to show, against conventional interpretation, that they describe not *social groups*, but *modes of political composition*. Despite the frisson of excess that circulates around the lumpenproletariat such that it looks like a category of *difference*, the chapter argues that the lumpen-proletariat is actually a mode of composition which is oriented toward the maintenance of *identity*, and that it is in the proletariat where difference emerges, as a mode of complication, invention, and becoming immanent to the social flows and relations of the capitalist socius.

To make this case the chapter seeks to show that Marx's proletariat resonates with the kind of difference, becoming, and creation elaborated in

Deleuze and Guattari's minor politics. To condense the argument of Chapter 2 a little, there are three interrelated aspects of minor politics that are useful for considering Marx's proletariat: (1) a politics *against identity*, (2) a consequent emphasis on *social relations*, and (3) an *intensive mode of engagement*. (1) As I argued, Deleuze and Guattari's minor politics is a direct challenge to political models founded on the representation of a subject or an identity, whether in the form of a 'people' or a self-declared marginal. Against these *molar* models, which are premised on the fetishization of an already present identity, *minor* politics operates in the 'cramped spaces' and 'impossible' positions of 'small peoples' and 'minorities' who lack or refuse coherent identity – those who, constrained by a wealth of determining social relations, exist under, and in a sense affirm, the condition that 'the people are missing' (*K*: 16–17; Deleuze 1989: 216). (2) But minor politics is not a resigned turn to the local or particular as such. Rather, it is a politics oriented toward *social relations* and their possibilities for becoming beyond identity. For, in cramped space – without self-secure delineated identity and autonomous concerns – politics ceases to be a self-referential process of self-actualization, and becomes a process of engagement with the social relations which traverse minorities and determine their movements: a necessary move if anything is to be actively lived. (3) The milieu of such an engagement is never able to settle or soar into the self-actualizing grandeur of a people and its representatives, master authors. Instead, it is an 'incessant bustle' charged with vitality, with polemic, and with a continuous process of interrogation, intrigue, and invention as minorities engage with these social relations and seek to turn them away from their molar effects, toward, as Deleuze and Guattari (*AŒ*: 382) enigmatically suggest, a 'becoming everybody/everything' in the ever-renewed calling forth of a 'new earth'. Linking this project with Marx, Deleuze and Guattari (*ATP*: 472) suggest, in a passage that has received scant critical attention, that 'The power of minority, of particularity, finds its figure or its universal consciousness in the proletariat.'

In its exploration of the proletariat as a minor political figure, this chapter is in two main parts. The first part explores Marx's elaboration of the lumpenproletariat. It starts with a brief summary of critical work on the category, and then shows how the lumpenproletariat emerges across Marx's works – in terms of its relation to history, production, and political action. This part ends by showing how Marx's critique of the lumpenproletariat as a non-revolutionary (non-)class is related to his critique of Bakuninist anarchism. Despite looking like difference, the lumpenproletariat is shown to be a mode of practice oriented toward the bolstering of identity cut off from social relations. The second part of the chapter turns to the proletariat. It argues that the proletariat is less a group of people than a mode of practice that is premised on the minor condition that the people are missing. It exists in Marx's texts as a non-identitarian mode of practice – a minor figure or 'unnamable' – immanent to the mutational social relations of capital.[5] This part explores the absence of the proletariat from *Capital*, Marx's intensive or minor mode of engagement, and

the proletariat's relation to the manifold social relations of capital and the critique of work. Whilst the first part of the chapter follows the empirical detail of Marx's critique of the lumpenproletariat (and, in this, shows some of Marx's own minor or proletarian mode of engagement with his milieu), the second part works at a more conceptual level, and is relatively concise. Though there is some discussion of Marx's actual practice, the point here is to map the general framework, or mode of composition, of Marx's proletarian unnamable: a practical elaboration of which is necessarily left to the multiplicity of specific, and ever new socio-historical situations within which the proletariat finds itself.

Critical work on Marx's lumpenproletariat

In the relatively small amount of critical work devoted to explication of Marx's lumpenproletariat it is something of a truism that Marx leaves the category rather undeveloped. Yet, whilst one may be tempted to interpret this conceptual underdevelopment as a sign of the relative insignificance of the category as compared to the serious business of Marxian political economy (one might hence point out that it is in Marx's historical and journalistic essays, rather than, say, *Capital*, where the category figures most prominently), the lumpenproletariat actually has a pivotal place in Marx's understanding of radical class formation. The critical work on Marx's category falls roughly into two perspectives. First, in the 1970s it tends toward a mapping and *clarification* of the category in the process of delineating a clear constituency of the lumpenproletariat and proletariat, and second, in the '80s and '90s, the lumpenproletariat returns as a site of *difference* in poststructuralist attempts to deconstruct Marx and open up difference in his texts.[6] I will briefly consider these perspectives.

   The classic work by Draper (1972) begins by lamenting the tangled 'misunderstandings, misinterpretations and even mistranslations' (2285) that have accompanied the category of the lumpenproletariat. In an admirable work of explication, Draper develops what he sees as the specific historical, political, and economic meanings of the category, suggesting that though underdeveloped, there is nevertheless something quite distinct about the lumpenproletariat as, most essentially, those peoples that 'are being exuded, extruded, excreted from the class structure and onto the scrapheap' (2308). Hirst (1972) undertakes a similar task of clarification, though this time in favour of laying bare the facts of Marxian class analysis in an analytic arbitration that replicates Marx's contempt, but now specifically directed at radical deviancy theorists who would seek to include criminal practice and marginals within the community of the workers' movement. Hirst suggests that the condemnation of the lumpenproletariat should not be dismissed merely as a bourgeois moralism on the part of Marx and Engels; on the contrary, it is the result of a sophisticated materialist understanding of the reactionary nature of the marginal and criminal classes.

The conceptual contours of the lumpenproletariat are, however, not so easily identifiable. Marx's account of the lumpenproletariat cannot be easily read as a simple analytic cleansing of the dangerous classes for the simple fact that he does not succeed in producing a clear constituency – successfully excised or not. This nebulous non-class takes multiple guises (from financial aristocracy and Louis Bonaparte to secret society conspirators, criminals, service workers, and indeed 'pen pushers') and is placed in varying historical trajectories (sometimes as a last manifestation of pre-industrial forms, some-times as a strictly modern manifestation of industrial cities). As such, it appears to pop up everywhere rather than exist as a neat and distinct social group.[7] Such confusion has led some more recent theorists influenced by psychoanalytic and poststructuralist frameworks to posit the lumpen-proletariat not as a social group, but as the irruption of heterogeneity in Marx's conceptual system. In a fascination/repulsion account of lumpen decrepit excess Andrew Parker (1993) suggests that in Marx's lumpen-proletariat we see the '(de)structuring effects of eroticism' (23) and a repressed 'economy of anal pleasures' (34) between Marx and Engels. And Peter Stally-brass (1990) uses psychoanalytic frameworks to argue that Marx composes the purity of the dialectic through the spectacle of lumpen heterogeneity. In this, he suggests, the lumpenproletariat may be the space of 'the political' as it escapes from determined class composition (in an argument which would seem to make Laclau and Mouffe, with their 'autonomy of the political', cultivators of a contemporary lumpen swamp flower). But the classic work here is Jeffrey Mehlman's (1977) *Revolution and Repetition*. Mehlman argues that on Marx's contact with the lumpenproletariat in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* 'a certain proliferating energy is . . . released' (13) that disrupts all dialectical identities with an unassimilable heterogeneity:

> Where the *higher* was inevitably to be overthrown by the *lower* – the *bourgeoisie* by the proletariat – those two poles remain constant and are mutually impoverished by a strange irruption of something lower than the low . . . at the top. For Bonaparte seems to short-circuit both dialectic and class struggle in gathering in his service the 'scum (*Auswurf*), offal (*Abfall*), refuse (*Abhub*) of all classes', the *lumpen-proletariat* . . . [A] specular – or reversible – relation is exceeded by a heterogeneous, negatively charged instance whose situation is one of deviation or displacement in relation to one of the poles of the initial opposition.
>
> (Mehlman 1977: 12, 13)

Mehlman's rather Derridean conclusions that, despite himself, Marx cannot help affirming the heterogeneity of the lumpenproletariat, and his notion that it is a specifically *literary* Marx where difference emerges, are problematic (not least, as is also the case with Derrida (1994), because the argument fails seriously to address the materialist core of Marx's thesis). However, Mehlman's concern not to elaborate the *identity* of the lumpenproletariat but

to consider its relation to heterogeneity across Marx's system as a whole is one I have some affinity with. Where this chapter differs is that it presents heterogeneity not as a lumpen disruption of a neat dialectical schema of the bourgeoisie and proletariat as two distinct classes, but as a property of the category of the *proletariat*. To make this case we need to turn to Marx's work.

The lumpenproletariat as Marx's knave class

Marx's category of the lumpenproletariat does not emerge as a simple addition to an already fully developed historical materialist lexicon populated by clearly elaborated class agents. Indeed, in many ways the categories of the proletariat and lumpenproletariat develop integrally. In the 1840s, as Bestor (1948) has shown, the vocabulary of the nascent socialist, communist, and anarchist movements was in a state of formation, and many different terms were coined in rapid succession in a veritable neological feast.[8] It is striking, for example, that when in 1848 Marx and Engels (1973) set forth the communist programme, the word 'communist' was only eight years old (emerging from the secret societies under the July Monarchy) and was still very much undetermined in its content.[9] More pertinent to my argument, whilst the term *proletarius* was used to describe the lowest class of ancient Roman community, the European variants of the words 'proletariat' and 'proletarian' were only emerging into a modern definition as 'free wage worker' in the late 1830s and '40s with the developing workers' movement (cf. Bestor 1948: 275; Draper 1972: 2286; Linebaugh 1991: 121–2).[10] Until then, it had decidedly derogatory connotations.

Originally designating those who had no value other than that they produced offspring, then vanishing from use in the second Christian century (Briefs 1937), from the fourteenth century up until Marx's era 'proletarian' was a derogatory term akin to 'rabble' and 'knave'. In Samuel Johnson's 1755 Dictionary (cited in Linebaugh 1991: 122), for example, the proletariat was described as 'mean, wretched, vile, or vulgar', and later, in the 1838 *Histoire des classes ouvrières et des classes bourgeoises*, Granier de Cassagnac described it as a subhuman class formed of a cross between robbers and prostitutes (Benjamin 1983: 22). Haussmann characterized the proletariat as a 'mob of nomads', and in 1850 Thiers spoke of 'this heterogeneous mob, this mob of vagabonds with no avowed family and no domicile, a mob of persons so mobile that they can nowhere be pinned down' (cited in Chevalier 1973: 365, 364).

At a basic level, the lumpenproletariat is Marx's mechanism for freeing up his concept of the proletariat from the bourgeois image of a seething rabble; he transfers all the old content into the new category of the lumpenproletariat. In a sense, then, Stallybrass and White (1986) are right to situate Marx's excessive account of the lumpenproletariat in the general economy of bourgeois obsession with the 'other' of the poor (as most notably exemplified by Henry Mayhew). However, inasmuch as Marx is concerned with the problematic of revolutionary class formation (rather than the formation of bourgeois identity

through moral condemnation and eroticization of the mass), there is a lot more going on in this transfer.[11] As such, we would be wrong to stop here.

Marx and Engels are credited by the OED as the first to coin the composite 'lumpenproletariat'. It first appears in *The German Ideology* where it is used to describe both the ancient Roman plebeians (as 'midway between freemen and slaves, never becoming more than a proletarian rabble [*lumpenproletariat* in German]') and Max Stirner's self-professed radical constituency of the *Lumpen* or *ragamuffin* (Marx and Engels 1976: 84, 202). The prefix 'lumpen' is not to be taken as synonymous with poverty. Though Marx and Engels do often use the term to describe the very poor, Draper (1972) suggests that the principal root is not *Lumpen* meaning 'rag' and 'tatter', but *Lump* (pl. *Lumpen*, *Lumpe*) meaning 'knave'. This definition of the lumpenproletariat as a class of depraved knaves is no clearer than in Marx's famously excessive description of Louis Bonaparte, 'the chief of the lumpenproletariat', and his 10 December Society:

> On the pretext of founding a benevolent society, the *lumpenproletariat* of Paris had been organized into secret sections . . . Decayed *roués* with dubious means of subsistence and of dubious origin, ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, rubbed shoulders with vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, *lazzaroni*, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *maquereaux*, brothel-keepers, porters, *literati*, organ-grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars – in short, the whole of the nebulous, disintegrated mass, scattered hither and thither, which the French call *la bohème*; from this kindred element Bonaparte formed the core of the December 10 Society. A 'benevolent society' – in so far as, like Bonaparte, all its members felt the need to benefit themselves at the expense of the labouring nation.
>
> (Marx 1978: 73)

The constituency of this knave class is complex indeed. And, as if to match this complexity conceptually, the word lumpenproletariat is itself unstable in Marx's and Engels' work. In the many translations, including those by Engels, the German 'lumpenproletariat' is variously rendered as 'social scum', 'dangerous classes', 'mob', 'swell-mob', 'ragamuffin', 'ragged-proletariat'. And Marx and Engels often use other terms in place of 'lumpenproletariat' (particularly '*la bohème*' and '*lazzaroni*' but also German versions of the above English translations), all of which conjure different specific meanings as they are used to characterize an apparent group of people. This is indicative of the way Marx seems to need to resort to empirical description of the lumpenproletariat (albeit in a rather theatrical fashion) rather than present a neat conceptual class definition (such as with wage labourers: those who have nothing to sell but their labour). He sees the lumpenproletariat as by definition a nebulous, disintegrated group *without* stable collective determination – they are a 'non-class', a 'people without a definite trace' (Marx 1973c: 52–3).

It thus seems as if Mehlman (1977) was right. The content and contours of the lumpenproletariat appear to proliferate beyond all reason, as a nebulous mass in an indeterminate category. We would be wrong, however, to interpret this nebulous non-class as a force of difference. Across all its various manifestations there is, in fact, a key defining characteristic: it is a mode of practice oriented toward the bolstering of identity cut off from the flows and relations of the social. The lumpenproletariat is not *itself* an identity (a particular social group), but in each of the diverse sites of its emergence in Marx's texts, it is a *tendency toward the maintenance of identity*. To make this case I will look at the ways the lumpenproletariat functions in relation to four themes: history, production, political action, and – drawing these together – anarchism.

The lumpenproletariat and the backing up of history

Marx's most detailed consideration of the lumpenproletariat emerges in his accounts of the 1848–52 revolutions in France (or, more precisely, the triumph of counter-revolution) in *Class Struggles in France* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. Indeed, in identifying the twenty-seven times that Marx and Engels use the term 'lumpenproletariat' and its direct cognates, Traugott (1980: 712) has shown that the bulk appear in this four-year period. The years of reaction that followed the wave of revolutions were not a good time for the emerging workers' movement, or for the predictive efficacy of Marx's historical method. Mehlman (1977: 24–5) thus suggests that *The Eighteenth Brumaire* reads as though 'Marx must have lived the history of France from 1848 to 1852 – the revolution careening backwards – as resembling nothing so much as a latrine backing up'. Despite a relatively developed capitalist social structure and the ease by which Louis-Philippe was deposed and the Second Republic established, France experienced not the emergence of proletarian power, but the return of reaction under the leadership of Louis Bonaparte. Thus, quite contrary to Engels' assertion that *The Eighteenth Brumaire* reflects Marx's discovery of 'the great law of the motion of history' (preface to Marx 1978: 7), it reads as Marx's attempt to explain a historical development that by his system is actually somewhat of an *anomaly*. In this explanation the lumpenproletariat has a central place.

Laying the foundation for Marx's explanation of this anomalous development, the opening pages of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* consider not the neat teleology of class struggle (as laid out, for example, in the *Communist Manifesto*, written just before the 1848 revolutions), but the complex nature of the relation between memory and forgetting in the passage of historical change. The discussion resonates less with the historical narratives of orthodox Marxism than with Nietzsche's account of historical repetition. Marx (1973b: 146) famously opens the *Eighteenth Brumaire* thus: 'Hegel remarks somewhere that all the great events and characters of world history occur, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.' History,

then, is a form of repetition. For Marx, historical production is an engagement with past events, for it is only through a certain engagement with the past that something new can be formed:

> The tradition of the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living. And, just when they appear to be engaged in the revolutionary transformation of themselves and their material surroundings, in the creation of something which does not exist, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they timidly conjure up the spirits of the past to help them; they borrow their names, slogans, and costumes so as to stage the new world-historical scene in this venerable disguise and borrowed language.
>
> (Marx 1973b: 146)

But this mode of repetition takes at least two forms – a 'tragic' and a 'farcical' repetition. In the *tragic* repetition,

> the resurrection of the dead served to exalt the new struggles, rather than to parody the old, to exaggerate the given task in the imagination, rather than to flee from solving it in reality, and to recover the spirit of revolution, rather than to set its ghost walking again.
>
> (Marx 1973b: 148)

For Marx, the tragic repetition comes first, for it is the mode of repetition of the bourgeois revolutions – it is a revolutionary repetition that develops through the motive force of capital. The *farcical* repetition, with which I am concerned here, is of another time, and emerges in the much more uncertain period of the potential proletarian revolution (a third mode of repetition that I consider in the second part of this chapter). Marx's farcical repetition is usefully explored alongside that of Nietzsche. In Foucault's (1977: 160) reading, Nietzsche detects a European tendency to raid the historical 'storeroom of costumes' in a process of the 'substitution' of 'alternate identities' – the sword of the German hero in the Wagnerian era, the knight's armour in romanticism. This process may look like difference, play, and masquerade (and, indeed, such a carnivalesque relation to history offers some hope for the genealogist), but it is actually a guise for the 'parodic' or 'farcical' repetition of the identity-form: each historical costume is drawn upon not to 'unrealize' or overcome, but to solidify present identity. Marx describes the French under Bonaparte in precisely these terms. At the moment of revolution, under the repetition of Napoleon in Louis Bonaparte, the French 'thought that it had provided itself with a more powerful motive force' (148), when in fact the repetition functioned as a parody, in a reactionary return to the identities of the past. History thus repeats itself as farce, in a repetition, as Deleuze (1994a: 91–2) interprets Marx's passage, which falls short of accentuating difference and instead falls back on a kind of comic 'involution, the opposite of authentic creation':

> An entire people, which had imagined that by means of a revolution it had imparted to itself an accelerated power of motion, suddenly finds itself set back into a defunct epoch and, in order that no doubt as to the relapse may be possible, the old dates arise again, the old chronology, the old names, the old edicts.
>
> (Marx 1978: 12)

Though Marx (1978: 125, 127) argues that Bonaparte's class base is the smallholding peasant, it is ultimately the lumpenproletariat which is the sign of this farcical repetition. Marx presents the Bonapartist state as a great farcical ruse whereby the non-class of the lumpenproletariat, in the 10 December Society and the 'swamp flower' of the Mobile Guard, seems to *transfix* the potential becoming of history. The lumpenproletariat thus emerges in the text as a plethora of farcical identities, ruses, and anomalies in a world turned upside down, where the bourgeoisie cried 'Only theft can still save property; perjury, religion; bastardy, the family; disorder, order!' (1973b: 245). As Parker (1993) has argued, Marx reads the period 1848–52 as quite literally a farcical piece of theatre where correct class roles are undermined as the people act through their confused simulacral roles as '*remplaçants*' and 'substitutes' (Marx 1973b: 244). Thus, the description of Bonaparte and his 'society of disorder, prostitution and theft' (198), the 'drunken soldiery, which he has bought with liquor and sausages' (Marx 1978: 124) continues:

> An old, cunning *roué*, he conceives of the historical life of nations and their state proceedings as comedy in the most vulgar sense, as a masquerade in which the grand costumes, words and postures merely serve as a cover for the most petty trickery . . . For his landing in Boulogne he put some London flunkeys into French uniforms to represent the army. In his Society of 10 December he assembled ten thousand rogues, who were supposed to represent the people in the way that Snug the joiner represented the lion . . . [T]he serious clown [Bonaparte] . . . no longer sees world history as a comedy but his comedy as world history.
>
> (Marx 1973b: 197–8)

Crucially, however, it is not, as Parker (1993) argues, the 'acting' – the theatrical use of historical costume – per se that is problematic. Though Marx's argument does at times rest on a dichotomy between lumpen 'acting' and 'real' historical production, the important point is that it is a mode of acting, a farcical mode of repetition which seeks to maintain identity, rather than move towards its overcoming. What Marx suggests is missing from the lumpenproletarian 'substitutes' is not so much a 'real life', an ontological presence, as a relation to the forces of becoming in capital, as is clear when he writes that Bonaparte's 'experiments will burst like soap bubbles at their first contact with the relations of production' (1973b: 241).

The unproductive lumpenproletariat

The basis for the lumpenproletariat's reactive relation to history lies in its relation (or lack thereof) to productive activity. This is, of course, the most important aspect of Marx's account, for it is their relative relations to production which distinguish the lumpenproletariat and the proletariat. I want to leave the discussion of productive relations until the second part of this chapter. Here I will only mark Marx's and Engels' comments about the lumpenproletariat's relation to production.

Marx's and Engels' most vehement assaults are saved for those who seem to revel in surviving outside of productive relations. This point is made implicitly in Marx's critique of the debauched pleasures of the lumpenproletarian drunkard, but it is also made explicitly. In an example highlighted by Draper (1972), Engels contemptuously describes a procession of the 'unemployed' (Engels' scare quotes) through Pall Mall (organized by H. M. Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation) as 'mostly of the kind *who do not wish to work* – barrow-boys, idlers, police spies and rogues . . . [T]he lumpen proletariat Hyndman had taken for unemployed' (in Marx and Engels 1995: 407, 408; emphasis added). But this severing of relations with productive activity is a mark not just of the 'unemployed' poor. In his discussion of the July Monarchy (1830–48) in *Class Struggles in France*, Marx describes the *financial aristocracy* as lumpenproletarian. If the 10 December Society was a historical inversion where the social dregs of society had somehow swindled their way to the top, here we find the social elite performing as the social dregs, where financial speculation replaces the proper class role of engagement with productive industry:

> The July monarchy was nothing more than a joint-stock company for the exploitation of France's national wealth . . . Commerce, industry, agriculture, shipping – the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie were inevitably in permanent peril and at a permanent disadvantage under this system . . . [T]he same prostitution, the same blatant swindling, the same mania for self-enrichment – not from production but by sleight-of-hand with other people's wealth – was to be found in all spheres of society, from the Court to the Café Borgne [disreputable bars and cafés]. The same unbridled assertion of unhealthy and vicious appetites broke forth, appetites which were in permanent conflict with the bourgeois law itself, and which were to be found particularly in the upper reaches of society, appetites in which the wealth created by financial gambles seeks its natural fulfilment, in which pleasure becomes *crapuleux* [debauched], in which money, filth and blood commingle. In the way it acquires wealth and enjoys it the financial aristocracy is nothing but the *lumpenproletariat reborn at the pinnacle of bourgeois society*.
>
> (Marx 1973c: 38–9)

Lumpenproletarian spontaneity

A third manifestation of the lumpenproletariat is seen in the context of political activity, when Marx writes of its possible radical tendencies. The lumpenproletariat is not *always* counter-revolutionary. Though in his extremes Engels supports the shooting of thieves at the start of revolutionary events, Marx's and Engels' sense of the relative capacity of the lumpenproletariat as a revolutionary force is ambivalent. The lumpenproletariat vacillate (in *The Peasant War in Germany* Engels suggests that each day of the revolution sees them change positions) and are prone to reaction, usually offering their services to the highest bidder.[12] But they can also find themselves involved in revolution, as their lack of stability leaves them easily swept up into revolutionary fervour. Thus, even the lumpenproletarian 'swamp flower' of the Mobile Guard, in so far as it was 'thoroughly tractable', was 'capable of the greatest acts of heroism and the most exalted self-sacrifice' (as well as, of course, 'the lowest forms of banditry and the foulest corruption') (Marx 1973c: 52–3). Marx makes a similar case with regard to the secret society professional conspirators.[13] He argues that their 'precarious' means of subsistence dependent on 'chance' in 'irregular lives', and their 'constant dangers' situate this group as part of *la bohème* with an inclination to insurrection:

> the greater the insecurity, the more the conspirator hastens to seize the pleasures of the moment . . . The desperate recklessness which is exhibited in every insurrection in Paris is introduced precisely by these veteran professional conspirators, the *hommes de coups de main* [men of daring raids]. They are the ones who throw up and command the first barricades, who organize resistance, lead the looting of arms-shops . . . In a word, they are the officers of the insurrection.
>
> (Marx and Engels 1978: 318)

But though insurgent, Marx criticizes the conspirators for their extra-social spontaneity. As 'officers of the insurrection' (rather than the revolution) these conspirators mistake the adequate preparation of their conspiracy for the revolution, and thus they attempt

> to launch a revolution on the spur of the moment, without the conditions for a revolution . . . They are like alchemists of the revolution . . . They leap at inventions which are supposed to work revolutionary miracles: incendiary bombs, destructive devices of magic effect, revolts which are expected to be all the more miraculous and astonishing in effect as their basis is less rational.
>
> (Marx and Engels 1978: 318)

Bakunin's lumpenproletariat

In these three manifestations of lumpenproletarian practice (in relation to history – as comic repetition of past identities, production – as self-separation

from social productive activity, and politics – as vacillating spontaneity) we see a category which is marked by its externality to capitalist social relations and its inability to engage with the potential becoming of history. The political importance of this account comes to the fore in the unfolding of the First International – the emerging split between Marxism and anarchism – in Marx's dispute with Michael Bakunin, the man Engels dubbed as 'the lumpen prince' (cited in Bovenkerk 1984: 25).[14]

Though the conventional presentation of the split between Marx and Bakunin centres on a statism/anti-statism conflict over the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', a far more important distinction (for all else emerges from it) resides in their differences on the question of the revolutionary agent.[15] Whereas Marx, as I consider below, sees the emergence of the revolutionary proletariat as immanent to capitalist social relations, Bakunin considers workers' integration in capital as *destructive* of more primary revolutionary forces. For Bakunin, the revolutionary archetype is found in a peasant milieu (which is presented as having longstanding insurrectionary traditions, as well as a communist archetype in its *current* social form – the peasant commune)[16] and amongst educated unemployed youth, assorted marginals from all classes, brigands, robbers, the impoverished masses, and those on the margins of society who have escaped, been excluded from, or not yet subsumed in the discipline of emerging industrial work – in short, all those whom Marx sought to include in the category of the lumpenproletariat (cf. Pyziur 1968). Thus, as the people capable of uniting 'private peasant revolts into one general all-people's revolt', Bakunin focuses on

> free Cossacks, our innumerable saintly and not so saintly tramps (*brodiagi*), pilgrims, members of '*beguny*' sects, thieves, and brigands – this whole wide and numerous underground world which from time immemorial has protested against the state and statism.
>
> (Bakunin n.d.: 19)

Such people, Bakunin (n.d.: 20) argues in a fashion not so different from Marx's account of lumpen 'spontaneity', are fired with a transhistorical instinctual rage, a '*native* movement' of a 'turbulent ocean', and it is this revolutionary fervour, immanent to their identities, not class composition within capitalism, which elects them for their political role:

> Marx speaks disdainfully, but quite unjustly of this *Lumpenproletariat*. For in them, and only in them, and not in the bourgeois strata of workers, are there crystallised the entire intelligence and power of the coming Social Revolution.
>
> A popular insurrection, by its very nature, is instinctive, chaotic, and destructive, and always entails great personal sacrifice and an enormous loss of public and private property. The masses are always ready to sacrifice themselves; and this is what turns them into a brutal and savage

horde, capable of performing heroic and apparently impossible exploits, and since they possess little or nothing, they are not demoralised by the responsibilities of property ownership . . . they develop a passion for destruction. This negative passion, it is true, is far from being sufficient to attain the heights of the revolutionary cause; but without it, revolution would be impossible. Revolution requires extensive and widespread destruction, a fecund and renovating destruction.

(Bakunin 1973: 334)

Though Bakunin's category of the lumpenproletariat may have a broader catchment than Marx's,[17] it is clear that they both largely agree on its components as an identity removed from capitalist social relations. Whilst for Marx the lumpenproletariat is a tendency – vis-à-vis history, production, and political action – toward identity, for Bakunin the lumpenproletariat embodies in its present identity a kind of actually existing anarchism.[18] The centrality of present identity to Bakunin's formulation is such that, when he does venture into theory, he places a premium on abstract humanist concepts like freedom and equality.[19] Bakuninist anarchism – for all its emphasis on the marginalized, down-trodden, and rebellious – is thus subject to the same critique Marx raised against Utopian Socialism, as that which posits a transcendent idea of a perfect social form and deploys historically decon-textualized 'eternal truths' of 'Human Nature' and 'Man in General', rather than engaging with the expansive 'fluid state' of material life in specific socio-historical relations (Marx and Engels 1973: 69, 67; Marx 1976: 103).[20] It is to a politics of these fluid relations that I now turn.

Capital's missing proletariat

If Marx's lumpenproletariat as a category of identity emerges through the amassing of attributes and historical examples, the non-identity of the proletariat – what I will call the proletarian 'unnamable' – is formulated with a decided lack of empirical description and hardly any sense of its positive content. In carving off the lumpenproletariat, Marx leaves the proletariat in a rather anaemic, stripped-down state. We would be wrong, however, to interpret the apparent lack of positive description as a sign of the simplicity or weakness of the proletarian political figure. In fact, as I argue below, the stripped-down formulation of the proletariat is central to its political force. Despite the fact that the proletarian mode of composition has been translated – through orthodox Marxism and the Soviet model – into a delineated molar subject with a clear and well-determined set of political practices and tech-niques, I want to argue that Marx's proletariat describes a mode of composition which calls forth processes of minor difference and creativity without or against determined subjectivity. To make this case, the following discussion explores the mode of composition of Marx's proletariat through the frame-work of minor politics laid out in the introduction to this chapter. It considers

the 'absence' of the proletariat from *Capital*, Marx's consequent intensive and incessant engagement with his milieu (aspects 1 and 3 of minor politics), and the place of manifold social relations and work (aspect 2).

In seeking to elaborate the contours of the proletarian unnamable it is instructive to follow some of Balibar's argument in 'In search of the proletariat' (in 1994; cf. also the other version, Balibar 1988). Balibar begins his search by pointing to a central paradox in *Capital*, namely that the proletariat – the agent of Marx's politics, that which links the analysis of exploitation to revolution – is almost completely absent. It is absent from the consideration of the labour process, the process of exploitation and of wages, and emerges only in terms of its insecurity, instability, and embodiment of an economically instituted violence, rather than, say, its positive force. Unlike Negri (1991a), who sees this absence as a sign of the 'objectivist' nature of *Capital* (such that he chooses to map his more 'subjectivist' *Marx beyond Marx* through the *Grundrisse*), Balibar (1994: 149) suggests that it is central to what Althusser sees as Marx's opening of a 'new continent of thought', vis-à-vis not just liberal categories of economics and politics, but also the radical political current of which he is part. This opening is not manifest as a neat break with the presentation of a new subject because – given the proletariat's essence as a self-abolishing overcoming of the 'existing world order' (Marx 1975a: 256) – it is impossible for Marx to present a positive identity within the terms of the milieu and *episteme* he works within. Instead, Marx practises an intense and heated engagement with the terms of his milieu. As Balibar argues, the vacillations in Marx's more overtly politically engaged works between the oppositions of economics/politics, statism/anarchy, compulsion/freedom, hierarchy/equality arise not from an intellectual weakness or uncertainty, but because these are the essence of the conceptual and political milieu of Marx's time, within which he is constrained – the space being 'full', or to use Deleuze and Guattari's terms, 'cramped':

> In fact, what these still allusive analyses demonstrate is that Marx's 'political' theory and action have no proper space in the ideological configuration of his time. For this configuration is itself a 'full' space, devoid of any gap in which a specifically Marxist discourse could have established itself alongside, or opposite, other discourses.
>
> (Balibar 1994: 135)

Given this cramped condition, Balibar (1994: 134) argues, for example, that Marx is unable to write an 'Anti-Lassalle' or an 'Anti-Bakunin' (however much more timely than *Anti-Dühring* these would have been). Instead, he presents 'notes' on the Gotha Programme and various notes and critiques of Bakunin as *interventions* in the milieu of the workers' movement – a little of which I have shown in Marx's work on the lumpenproletariat.

In this engagement – what I elaborated in Chapter 2 as Marx's minor authorial mode of creation – we can see precisely that process of iteration,

'interruption', and 'self-criticism' that Marx's (1973b: 150) account of the proletarian mode of politics (cited at the start of this chapter) emphasizes. The ease of the bourgeois revolutions – as they 'storm from success to success' (Marx 1973b: 150) – can be explained by the way that their political concerns are nurtured by the social environment of capital.[21] As Deleuze and Guattari (*K*: 17) write of major literatures and politics, 'the social milieu serv[es] as a mere environment or a background' for the easy elaboration and facilitation of individual concerns. The proletarian movement, on the other hand, experiences the social environment as hostile, as something which cramps its possibility for composition and expression. It is thus unable to express any autonomous concern, and is forced instead to intimately and constantly engage with these social relations. And it is precisely through this engagement – and the conceptual and practical invention that arises from it – that the proletariat composes itself, unsettling these relations, and seeking to open them up to something new. Balibar (1994: 136) thus argues that in his interventions Marx enacts a 'twisting of the dominant discourse that, in a given conjuncture, make[s] its coherence vacillate'. And it is here, in this act of twisting, disruption, and complication, that Balibar (1994: 136) finds the essence of the critical force of Marxism, as, rather than demarcating an identity within nineteenth-century political discourse – rather than positing a people – it compels a 'perpetual work of refutation, interpretation, and reformulation.' It is precisely because it *is* unnamed – or, demarcated and elaborated as an autonomous political subject – that the radical force of the proletariat, vis-à-vis the identities and dichotomies of nineteenth-century thought is maintained.

To be at once unnamed and to carry the force of disruption there must, nevertheless, be signs of the proletariat – something for this incessant engagement to draw out. Balibar (1994: 127) thus places considerable importance on the few explicit references to the proletariat in *Capital*. First, Balibar suggests that the occasional use of the term is the 'bridge' which allows Marx to cite significant passages from his earlier work, and so embed the text's analysis of capital in the workers' movement – a move symbolically confirmed in the dedication to Wolff. Second, Balibar draws attention to the addition of two references to the proletariat in the second 1872 edition: Marx's suggestion in the postface that the 1848 revolutions caused the breakdown of classical economics through the irruption of its repressed political content, and his discussion of the role of the working class in abolishing the Combination Acts (cf. Marx 1976: 97–8, 903). Crucially, these additions show the first signs of the proletariat not in the form of an autonomous identity – something which might 'face' capital as an opposing subject – but as a movement immanent to capitalist relations.

Manifold relations and the refusal of work

Moving away from Marx's own mode of engagement and the specific work of *Capital*, these signs of the proletariat can now be placed in the broader context

of Marx's conceptual system as a whole. Marx famously ties the proletariat – as we saw, in contradistinction to the lumpenproletariat – to social productive capitalist 'work'. This is a work which produces more than mere subsistence, or 'surplus value' as value in excess of the equivalent: a work which, as Spivak (1996: 109) puts it, is 'super-adequate'. This emphasis on work leads Marx to say some rather outrageous things about the politically educational benefits of child labour,[22] and the legacy of orthodox Marxism has done much – as it collapsed communism into a red wage slavery[23] – to mould Marx as a celebrant of work. But, and this point is often obscured (no doubt with the help of some of Marx's texts themselves), this necessary relation to work in the production of the proletariat is *not an affirmation of work itself*. Marx is developing a politics immanent to the socio-historical composition of life – the social relations of the capitalist 'mode of production' – not to any transcendental categories or practices. It is the centrality of work to capitalism – both as a *transformative* and a *constraining* power – that necessitates this focus.

Marx's theory of capital is a theory of the composition of life as a complex and mutating social system – an 'organism' (Marx 1973a: 693) that assembles not distinct entities – say, workers, machines, and natural objects – but *relations* and *forces* across and within apparent entities. Social forces and relations are primary: it is the way a socius conjugates its forces and relations that determines the forms and identities that populate it. So, for example, Marx's 'theory of machines' – as I explore in Chapter 4 – is not a transhistorical definition of the properties and effects of the machine, but a situated analysis of the way the socius composes human and technical forces (cf. Caffentzis 1997). Marx thus presents machine-intensive production – when the machine comes into its own in what he calls 'real subsumption' – as a vast 'automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs' (Marx 1973a: 692), where the 'automaton' is the capitalist socius as a whole. The crucial point about the capitalist socius is that, unlike all previous modes of production which sought to *conserve* a set of relations and identities, it operates through *constant change* – 'Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions' – as it seeks to continuously maximize surplus value in a process of production for production's sake (Marx and Engels 1973: 36). Since work is the productive force of capital, the source of surplus value, it is the means by which the human being is incorporated in the supra-individual automaton of the capitalist socius. It is in work that identities are dissolved in manifold and expansive global relations, and it is precisely in these manifold relations – what, following Nietzsche (1968: §1066), we might call the becoming of the world – that the proletariat finds its milieu of composition.

Marx makes the importance of this complexity and becoming to the formation of the proletariat clear, negatively, in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* when he describes the smallholding peasant class. The problem is that the peasant condition, however massive (they are 'the most numerous class'), is not one of manifold relations:

> The small peasant proprietors form an immense mass, the members of which live in the same situation but *do not enter into manifold relationships* with each other. Their mode of operation isolates them instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse . . . [T]heir place of operation, the smallholding, permits no division of labour in its cultivation, no application of science and therefore no diversity of development, variety of talent, or wealth of social relationships.
>
> (Marx 1973b: 238, 239)

The smallholding peasant class, Marx (1973b: 239) tells us, then, is composed of 'the simple addition of isomorphous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes'.[24] In contradistinction, the proletariat is composed of manifold social, natural, and technical relations, as it exists in that system where 'All that is solid melts into air', and that covers 'the whole surface of the globe', 'establish[ing] connections everywhere' (Marx and Engels 1973: 37).

But if work is the way that the human being is deterritorialized as it is incorporated in the expansive and mutating social organism, it is simultaneously the mechanism of the reterritorializing and recoding forces of capital. It is the mechanism, that is, whereby manifold relations are turned into the molar form of 'worker' (with the attendant formal equalities and freedoms, fetishisms, alienations, and exploitations) so as to enable the extraction of surplus value, such that work is also the 'vampiric' mechanism of capitalism.[25] The capitalist and the worker are not, then, pre-given identities which face each other as distinct and opposing subjects, but are functions of capital, born, or, as Deleuze and Guattari (*AŒ*: 144) put it, 'miraculated' out of its body. Capital, that is, is an 'organic system . . . [which] creat[es] out of it[self] the organs which it . . . lacks': 'The capitalist functions only as *personified* capital, capital as a person, just as the worker is no more than *labour* personified' (Marx 1973a: 278, 1976: 989).[26]

Whilst the proletariat is constituted in the transformative manifold of capitalist relations, it cannot, then, be identified with 'the workers' as an autonomous and present identity, for this would be to base politics on an identity functional to the exploitation of capital.[27] Instead, the proletariat is the class of the overcoming of work and its identities: it is a mode of composition which seeks to actualize an 'absolute movement of becoming' *within* and *beyond* the manifold social, technical, and natural forces and relations and constraining identities created by the capitalist socius (Marx 1973a: 488). At the core of the proletarian mode of composition we thus see the strange return of a theme which was used as the basis for critique of *lumpenproletarian* practice – the refusal of work. The difference is that here the critique of work emerges not in an autonomous sphere outside of manifold capitalist relations, but as a politics immanent to them – immanent, that is, to the global class of workers.[28] Thus, as Gilles Dauvé (1997: 31) once put it, 'The proletariat is not the working class,[29] rather *the class of the critique of work*.' As one might guess from his critique of the lumpenproletariat, Marx rarely makes this point explicitly, but the essence of the proletariat *is* the abolition of work:

> It is one of the greatest misunderstandings to talk of free, human, social
> work, or work without private property. 'Work' is essentially the unfree,
> inhuman, unsocial activity, determined by private property and creating
> private property. The abolition of private property becomes a reality only
> when it is understood as the abolition of 'work'.
>
> (Marx, from 'Friedrich List's Book *Das Nationale System der Politischen
> Oekonomie*', cited in *Zerowork* 1975: back cover)

This 'critique of work' is, of course, a rather ambiguous political proposi-
tion. Marx declines to offer a coherent and timeless programme of the way that
the proletarian mode of composition should unfold: he neither describes the
outcome of the proletarian overcoming (famously balking at the idea of
writing 'recipes . . . for the cook-shops of the future'; Marx 1976: 99), nor does
he present a set of timeless proletarian practices (be they the formations of the
party, trade unions, or workers' councils, to name some of the more prominent
forms the workers' movement – and its degenerations – has taken).[30] To do so
would be to tie proletarian practice to a particular socio-historical form of
work, and as such would lead to an increasingly anachronistic political
practice, and, ultimately, to the formation of a 'proletarian' *identity* around a
set of sanctioned political forms and techniques (cf. Camatte 1995). In leaving
the question of practice at the general level of work and its critique, Marx
leaves the proletariat as something which must continually find its own forms
and invent its own techniques from the specific configuration of work – the
expansive flows, and the constraining, cramping, and vampiric practices and
identities that populate the socius – that it finds itself within at any one time.
Marx leaves the proletariat, that is, as an 'unnamable': it is not determined or
'named' in form or content, but is, rather, a compulsion to an ever renewed and
situated mode of composition in and against the manifolds of capital and its
identities as it seeks to magnify the becoming of the world against identity,
and so 'create its poetry from the future' (Marx 1973b: 149).[31]

If the first basis for the continual 'self-criticism', 'return', and 'interruption'
of proletarian politics was that the people are missing – and can only be
created through this process – the second basis is that the social relations that
are its milieu of composition (in a general sense, 'work') are ever changing. It is
only through an engagement with these fluid relations that the proletarian
mode of historical repetition – beyond the tragic and the comic – can emerge.
Against the comic lumpenproletarian repetition, the proletarian mode is
related to the tragic mode inasmuch as it uses the old names to 'exalt the new
struggles' (Marx 1973b: 148). Unlike the tragic mode, however, which is
ultimately based on the 'limited content' of bourgeois society, the third mode
of repetition interrogates, borrows, and criticizes the inherited conditions,
costumes, and identities to finally slough off 'all its superstitious regard for
the past': 'In order to arrive at its own content' the proletarian revolution 'must
let the dead bury their dead. Previously the phrase transcended the content;
here the content transcends the phrase' (Marx 1973b: 149). Thus, inasmuch as

the proletariat is a self-overcoming, 'beyond the comic and the tragic: the production of something new entails a dramatic repetition which excludes even the hero' (Deleuze 1994a: 92).

It is in this context that we can understand Deleuze and Guattari's (*ATP*: 472) proposition that the proletariat is the universal plane of minor politics. Once we follow Marx's injunction to base politics in an analysis of capital and its mutations – which can be seen as precisely Deleuze and Guattari's (*AŒ*, *ATP*) project in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* – we can enrich Marx's general sense of 'work' to include the wealth of relations, attributes, and affects of which contemporary global social production is composed. Immanent to these relations is a multiplicity of cramped 'minority' peoples – peoples with particular experiences, practices, and ways of being determined by these relations. Deleuze and Guattari's alignment of the minor and the proletariat is not a suggestion that these minorities should somehow amass as *groups* to form a larger group of the proletariat. It is, rather, that the global plane of the proletarian unnamable is at any one time populated by, or composed of, a multiplicity of cramped, complex, minor *sites of engagement* and *processes of political invention*. As minorities' intrigues, inventions, self-criticisms, polemics, and creations problematize, and seek to deterritorialize, the manifold social relations which traverse them, they actualize a proletarian *mode of composition* in capital.[32] It is in this sense that we should understand Deleuze and Guattari's (*AŒ*: 255) proposition that 'the problem of a proletarian class belongs first of all to praxis'.[33] In practice, this is of course complex, difficult, and uncertain work, and the tendency to fall back on identity, as orthodox Marxism well exemplifies, is always present. But, ironically – given the certainties of the orthodox Marxist narrative – it is perhaps one of Marx's greatest lessons that politics emerges not from the self-certainty of identity, but from cramped and impossible positions where the people are missing, and must remain so if the 'secret' (Marx 1975a: 256) of the proletariat – the movement of its own abolition – is to be actualized.

As an aside, before concluding this chapter, I want briefly to consider Guattari's comments about the lumpenproletariat. Guattari raises the problematic of the lumpenproletariat in two different ways – both of which are different from my presentation of its place in Marx's work. At one point Guattari (1995a: 42) situates the lumpenproletariat – alongside the petite bourgeoisie, the aristocratic bourgeoisie, the non-guaranteed elite, and so on – as problematizing 'interzones' of 'class' and 'class struggle', taken as categories that imply 'perfectly delineated sociological objects: bourgeoisie, proletariat, aristocracy'. Whilst Guattari is no doubt making this point in the context of orthodox understandings of class identity, he takes orthodox Marxist, even sociological, accounts of class at face value, where the proletariat and the lumpenproletariat exist as different *groups*, rather than *modes of practice*. The problem with this presentation has been the subject of this chapter. At another point he makes a more interesting intervention in the context of Leninist understandings of group formation. In the construction of the party

group ego (discussed in Chapter 2 as the dominant revolutionary model since the 'Leninist break'), Guattari argues that the category of the lumpen-proletariat is deployed to excise and condemn the part of the 'masses' that does not fall into place behind the party:

> One always finds the old schema: the detachment of a pseudo-avant-garde capable of bringing about synthesis, of forming a party as an embryo of state apparatus, of drawing out a well brought up, well educated working class; and the rest is a residue, a lumpen-proletariat one should always mistrust.
>
> (Guattari 1995a: 61)

This has certainly been the dominant mode of deployment of the category of the lumpenproletariat in Marxist politics, and Marx himself is not wholly innocent of the practice. In my presentation of the proletariat and lumpen-proletariat, however, I have sought to show how the plane of the proletarian unnamable is wholly different from 'the proletariat' of the Leninist party model.[34] Indeed, inasmuch as the proletariat is immanent to the manifold relations of capital in a practice of overcoming, we are likely to find that groups and practices condemned as lumpenproletarian by party formations are often more proletarian than those who utter the condemnation – for the Leninist party model is actually functional to the maintenance of *capitalist* models of identity.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the place of difference in Marx's politics through an exploration of his categories of the lumpenproletariat and the proletariat. I have argued that far from a simple set of class subjects or empirical peoples, these two categories describe particular *modes of political composition*. Despite the literary excess and the proliferation of names, Marx's lumpenproletariat describes a mode of composition – and, in relation to anarchism, a politics – oriented not toward *difference* and becoming, but toward *identity*. To use Deleuze and Guattari's terms, this is a 'molar' politics in that in relation to history (as a comic repetition of past identities), production (as a self-separation from social productive activity), and political action (as a vacillating spontaneity), the lumpenproletariat is a mode of practice that seeks not to engage with the manifold relations of the social toward its overcoming, but to turn inwards towards an affirmation of its own autonomous and present identity. From a contemporary perspective Marx's lumpenproletariat, then, is most interesting not because it is the moment of variation from class interest, the site of heterology in Marx's texts, or because it indicates his true polymorphous desire, but because it highlights the problem of a politics at the level of molar identity as abstracted from expansive social relations, *even as it looks like difference*.

The proliferation of historical names and attributes of the lumpen-proletariat was shown to be in contradistinction to the unnaming of the proletariat. Marx seems to play a *fort/da* game where at each moment – in relation to history, production, and politics – the lumpenproletarian tendency is cut off from the proletarian position. This does not, however, conform to a Freudian model of the *fort/da* game because it does not shore up the proletariat as an identity. For in each case the proletariat is left strangely absent: it is stripped down, seems to have no autonomous content, and is given hardly any positive empirical description. Instead, the continual severing of the lumpen-proletarian position is part of the opening of the space of the proletariat as a mode of composition – what I have called the proletarian unnamable – that seeks to *overcome* identity. Far from a weakness of Marx's position, the 'absence' of the proletariat is fundamental to Marx's minor politics – a politics premised on the propulsive condition that the people are missing. For, given the impossibility of delineating an autonomous and fully present identity in the cramped terrain of the capitalist socius, proletarian politics is compelled to an incessant process of polemic, critique, and intervention in social relations. (In this sense, Marx's critique of the lumpenproletariat – the discussion of which takes up much of the body of this chapter – is an exemplar of his *proletarian* practice.) The points of focus of this proletarian engagement are the manifold social, technical, and natural relations and cramping molar mechanisms of capitalist production – or 'work' – such that the proletariat is the class of the critique of work. As I have argued, in Marx's formulation the generality of 'work' and the 'critique of work' are necessarily maintained because the specific exploration and elaboration of these relations and practices is to be ever renewed through the most contemporary engagement. The very stripped-down nature of Marx's formulation of the proletarian unnamable is thus functional to its emergence in a multiplicity of different ways throughout the manifold social plane of production as it is configured in any one time and place. The practical elaboration of the proletarian mode of composition – its political techniques, styles, cultures, knowledges – in all its difficulty, uncertainty, and complexity is, hence, another story: something which Marx (1973b: 149) leaves open as a politics which 'can only create its poetry from the future'.

4 The social factory

Machines, work, control

> Capitalism is a system of relationships, which go from inside to out, from outside to in, from above to below, and from below to above. Everything is relative, everything is in chains. Capitalism is a condition both of the world and of the soul.
>
> (Kafka, in Janouch 1971: 151–2)

> If in its beginning the factory came out of the social body and tended to separate itself from it in order to elaborate its own rules of operation, it must now reincorporate this social body in order more than ever to dominate it.
>
> (de Gaudemar 1985: 285)

The injunction of Marx's proletarian unnamable is an ever renewed engagement with the social plane of capitalized life – a plane that is at once manifold and mutating, cramped and constraining. In Chapter 3 this plane of capital was presented in general terms. This chapter now turns to consider the specificity of the contemporary capitalist socius. It does this not through a general mapping of Deleuze's and Marx's position, but, following the methodological logic of the minor and the proletarian unnamable, by exploring one manifestation of a political critique of capital. It follows a thread through a particular current in Italian Marxist research and politics – a current known in the 1960s as *operaismo* ('workerism')[1] and in the '70s as *autonomia* ('autonomy'). This current can be seen as performing Kafka's 'double flux' (*K*: 41) inasmuch as it analysed capital as an open system which configures around lines of flight, and sought to take these lines elsewhere, whilst – as I explore in Chapter 5 – situating this politics in a cramped space without a delineated people. A central figure in the development of this current is Antonio Negri, and this chapter considers his work in some detail.

Negri's recent *Empire*, co-written with Michael Hardt, has been the subject of much intellectual and political interest, being described by Frederic Jameson as 'The first great new theoretical synthesis of the new millennium', and by Zizek as 'ring[ing] the death-bell not only for the complacent liberal advocates of the "end of history", but also for pseudo-radical Cultural Studies which avoid the full confrontation with today's capitalism' (Hardt and Negri

2000: hardback dust-jacket).[2] In the context of this book's argument Negri is a particularly interesting figure. Negri's later work plays heavily on the possibilities of a conjunction between Deleuze and Marx,[3] and Negri's emergence in the English-speaking academy has had, as Wright (2002: 2) points out, much to do with a certain Deleuzianism, following Deleuze and Guattari's own relation with Negri.[4] The work of Cleaver (1979), Dyer-Witheford (2000), Red Notes (1978, 1979, 1981), Ryan (1989), and Wright (2002) notwithstanding, Negri has recently come to prominence rather shorn of a critical sense of his relations to the movements, researchers, and theorists of *operaismo* and *autonomia*. This has been especially evident in the reception of *Empire*. *Operaismo* and *autonomia* are usually mentioned as a background to Negri's recent work, but this only seems to reinforce an idea that Negri has synthesized and transcended this current and, as such, is now most usefully discussed outside of this context. This is problematic not because a certain political current is not given its due, but because it masks both the complexity of *operaismo* and *autonomia*, and encourages a foreclosure on the possibility of a continued engagement with their insights. This problem is particularly important in the context of Negri because, despite the common alignment of *operaismo* and *autonomia* with his trajectory, his more recent work actually breaks with a number of the more important methodological and theoretical concerns of *operaismo* and *autonomia*.

Whilst Negri's engagement with Deleuze and Foucault marks this break in Negri's work, Negri's reading of Deleuze actually displays a number of problems. If we follow the minor imperative to consider an author as part of their minorities, and hence draw Negri back into relation to *operaismo* and *autonomia*, we actually find not only that *operaismo* and *autonomia* provide considerable insight into a minor theory and politics adequate to contemporary capital, but also that in a number of ways Deleuze's understanding of capital resonates more with *operaismo* and *autonomia* than it does with the apparently more Deleuzian Negri.[5] Whilst Negri develops the important analytic categories of 'socialized', 'affective', and 'immaterial' labour, this chapter argues that he breaks with *operaismo*'s and Deleuze's cramped and minor interrogation of the intricacies of capitalized production to develop a problematic understanding of an emerging autonomy-in-production. In this Negri makes a strange return to the orthodox Marxian and – in an inverted way – neo-Gramscian positions which *operaismo* had sought to undermine.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to *operaismo* and *autonomia* before outlining Marx's theory of machines and his 'real subsumption' thesis. The chapter then considers Raniero Panzieri's and Mario Tronti's elaboration of the real subsumption thesis and the 'social factory'. Through this I show how *operaismo* developed a very different position to both orthodox and neo-Gramscian Marxism, in that technical forces and social democracy were seen not as enabling lines of political mobility, but as creating a complex productive socius which left no room for an autonomous self-defined 'people' or even subject of politics. I suggest that it was the recognition of this very

cramped condition and the refusal to designate a coherent and autonomous people that was one of the core strengths of *operaismo*, as its cramped position compelled an intricate analysis of the new arrangements of production. The chapter then focuses on Marx's 'Fragment on Machines', a text which is of great importance to Negri and to contemporary understandings of work, and also has a place in Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of capital. I then show how Negri develops a problematic reading of the 'Fragment' in his understanding of socialized and affective labour and control. The chapter then moves to consider Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the capitalist *socius* through an exploration of the capitalist abstract machine, axiomatics, machinic surplus value, and post-disciplinary control. The discussion of Deleuze and Guattari shows how they overcome the limits of Negri's analysis in a fashion that is more in keeping with *operaismo*'s understanding of the social factory.[6] The chapter concludes with a sketch of the contemporary forms of machinic work and production.

Introduction to *operaismo* and *autonomia*

Italian Marxism has been known to Anglo-American cultural studies almost exclusively through Gramsci.[7] This is no doubt partly an effect of the central role neo-Gramscian thought played in the development of the discipline away from Marxism in general. Neo-Gramscian work on 'hegemony' marked the passage from apparently orthodox concerns with class, capital, and the economy, into a post-Marxist concern with the possibilities of agency, popular practices, and new social movements, in a struggle for inclusion in the 'chain of equivalences' of social democratic political space. Here was a politics adequate to the fluidity of postmodern culture which could exorcize determinist Marxism, and indeed much of Marx, 'without apologies' (cf. Laclau and Mouffe 1985). The historical support for this development was not unrelated to the Italian Communist Party's (PCI) formation of its own version of post-Marxism – 'eurocommunism' – where neo-Gramscian thought played a central role. As Abse (1985) has suggested, eurocommunism seemed for many on the British left (most notably around the influential *Marxism Today*) to mark the possibility of a popular radical social democracy which could overcome Marxian orthodoxy and the limits of labourism; the PCI was, after all, the biggest Communist Party in Europe, and was rapidly approaching a place in government.

Behind this formidable post-Marxist trajectory lay another current in Italian Marxism, known in the 1960s as *operaismo* and in the 1970s as *autonomia*. Though it emerged from some relation to the PCI and the PSI (Italian Socialist Party), and maintained a complex relation with the orthodox left at least until 1968,[8] *operaismo* and *autonomia* developed a profound critique of the PCI and the neo-Gramscian politics of hegemony. Contrary to the dominant leftist interpretation of the PCI found in Britain during the 1970s and 1980s, for *operaismo* and *autonomia* the PCI was not only an efficient

mechanism for curtailing radical energies and disrupting progressive political development as it sought to bind workers' struggle to the development of capital (Partridge 1996: 77), but was also, through its implementation of austerity measures, the agent of pernicious cuts in the standards of living of the Italian working class. In what may now appear as grim humour, the PCI general secretary, Enrico Berlinguer, even went so far as to put forward austerity as a communist moral ideal (cf. Abse 1985: 27). Aside from the critique of the PCI, however, and despite my tendency in this and the following chapter to group *operaismo* and *autonomia* together, the current, as Wright (2002) has shown, develops in a number of different directions, comprises many divergent perspectives, and was far from a coherent movement. *Operaismo* and *autonomia* were always characterized by small groups, schools, and magazines, and though there were national organizations, they never took the form of pervasive and strictly organized parties. There was not even coherence of position between key figures such as Panzieri, Tronti, Negri, and Piperno.[9] Though *Potere Operaio* (the group fantastically built up by the prosecutors of the '7 April' case as the origin and base of a mysterious 'O' which was seen to orchestrate *autonomia* and the Red Brigades) had considerable importance, it certainly never characterized more than a small aspect of the workers' movement, and relatively quickly dissolved into the emerging 'area of *autonomia*'.[10] As the area of *autonomia* developed in the 1970s, things got more complex. Though it has sometimes been described as a flowering of post-political potential, *autonomia* was comprised of such diverse political figures and perspectives (with organized autonomy or *autonomia operaia* – which never fully escapes a vanguardist and militarist understanding of politics – on one side, and the more countercultural *autonomia creativa* and aspects of the feminist movement on the other) that it would be problematic indeed to represent it as a coherent whole. Wright conveys the complexity well when he writes:

> Making sense of Autonomia as a whole is no simple matter. Ideologically heterogeneous, territorially dispersed, organisationally fluid, politically marginalised: Giorgio Bocca's . . . analogy of an archipelago is an apt one. Never a single national organisation, much less the mass wing of the armed groups, as certain judges would later charge, the 'Area' of autonomist organisations and collectives would begin to disintegrate almost as soon as it had attained hegemony within the Italian far left.
>
> (Wright 2002: 152)

And if *operaismo* and *autonomia* developed through the specific situation in Italy, the movement drew much from abroad: from Martin Glaberman, George Rawick and C. L. R. James to Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari; from the Industrial Workers of the World to Socialisme ou Barbarie and American counterculture. Marazzi thus writes:

> What can be considered as the most original theoretical contribution to

Italian workerism originated *abroad* . . . There is nothing 'Italian;' about the class warfare in Italy . . . To erect a monument to Italy is to play the game of the Italian State: to misrepresent as specific ('the production of certain intellectuals') what is in fact rooted in the worker's history, rooted, above all, in its international dimension.

(Marazzi, in *Semiotext(e)* 1980: 12–13)

One can, nevertheless, describe certain central theoretical and methodological tenets of this current. Emerging in the early 1960s in the writings of Raniero Panzieri, Mario Tronti, Romano Alquati, Sergio Bologna, and Antonio Negri amongst others, and in the journals *Quaderni Rossi* ('Red Notebooks' 1961–4), *Classe Operaia* ('Working Class' 1964–7), and later *Potere Operaio* ('Workers' Power' 1969–74), and *Primo Maggio* ('May Day', 1973–86), *operaismo* was based on a dual strategy of concrete interpretation of particular and new forms of work and new technological paradigms (following the dramatic changes of the Italian post-war 'economic miracle'), and emergent forms of struggle in tension with, or outside of, the organs of the official labour movement. It also involved an intensive rereading of Marx in a rather heretical focus on the *Grundrisse* and 'missing sixth chapter' of volume I (Marx 1976: 948–1084),[11] as well as volumes II and III of *Capital*. *Operaismo* and *autonomia* followed a methodological insistence on the primacy of (changing forms of) political antagonism – what Tronti called 'the reversal of perspective' – in a dynamic 'class composition', and brought everything from absenteeism and housework to developments in the petrochemical industry into consideration.[12] This approach was to remain central to the development and mutation of *autonomia*, and – whilst it was always in tension with a tendency, as Wright (2002) argues, to theoretical generalization and a certain political impatience – proved to be a practical, situated, and politically productive research paradigm.[13]

The next chapter will pursue the political configuration of the reversal of perspective further. Here I want to consider the reading of Marx. Surrounded by the disabling culture of orthodox, and then eurocommunist Marxism that permeated the Italian left, *operaismo* chose not to break with, but to *return* to Marx. Despairing of the social democratic trajectory of the orthodox left, but mindful of the dangers of factionalism, Panzieri was to say in 1960, 'I see all paths blocked, the "return to the private" leaves me cold, the possible fate of the small sect terrifies me' (cited in Wright 2002: 33). The re-engagement with Marx in the new journal *Quaderni Rossi* seems to have offered a 'way out'. A central concern was with the question of technology and social relations in what, in the 'missing sixth chapter' to *Capital*, Marx had called 'real subsumption'. Before considering Panzieri, it is useful to present Marx's argument.

Marx's theory of machines and the 'real subsumption' thesis

In the spectrum of apparent 'determinisms' with which Marx's work has been charged (economic determinism, labour essentialism, teleological historicism,

and so on), the charge of 'technological determinism' is not uncommon.[14] However, Marx's understanding of technical machines, as theorists like Panzieri (1976, 1980) and Rosenberg (1982) have argued, is actually rather sophisticated. I want to present it here in relation to Foucault's and Deleuze's understanding of the 'diagram' and 'abstract machine'. We can start with Foucault's (1991) now familiar analysis of Bentham's Panopticon.

The Panopticon is most visibly an architectural technology which uses the interplay of visibility and invisibility to produce internalized self-government. Each cell is arranged in a circle, with one side open to observation by a central tower with an overseer who remains unseen by the occupant of the cell. Not knowing whether s/he is being watched by another or not, the prisoner begins to check her own practice in a process of self-surveillance and self-control. But this architectural device does not stand alone, or emerge from the blue. It only functions effectively within the social environment (what Foucault calls the 'diagram', and Deleuze and Guattari call the 'abstract machine') of 'discipline' (a regime which seeks to both individualize and massify social groups in the pursuit of 'docility-utility'). The similarity of the Panopticon (which, in a strict sense, remained unbuilt) with actual prisons, schools, hospitals, barracks, and so on, is not in the detail of their physical forms as such, but in the way subjects and masses are assembled together or formed in similar fashion in each space. That is, the Panopticon's diagram of discipline is imma-nent to each space, even though in varying scales and degrees of intensity. It is not that the physical technology determines the practice, but that the technology is the solidification of a social practice.[15] As Deleuze puts it:

> the machines are social before being technical. Or, rather, there is a human technology which exists before a material technology. No doubt the latter develops its effects within the whole social field; but in order for it to be even possible, the tools or material machines have to be chosen by a diagram and taken up by the assemblages.
>
> (Deleuze 1988: 39)

Once manifested in concrete form, the technology of the Panopticon has great efficacy, but only in so far as it manifests the diagram of discipline. So, to the degree that 'sovereign' societies exist before disciplinary ones, and discipline might be breaking down in 'control' societies (see below), the concrete tech-nology of the prison, 'like a Cartesian diver', rises and falls in prominence and effect 'on a scale gauging the degree to which the disciplinary diagram [or abstract machine] [is] fulfilled' (Deleuze 1988: 41–2). In this schema, the particular technology is only ever a visible sign of a set of *social* relations, even as, or because, it has far-reaching effects and functions across social space. That is, the visible technical machine is part of, and selected by a more general or abstract machinic environment.

Marx's works are full of accounts of technical machines in a conceptual framework that resonates with those of Foucault and Deleuze. What in

Foucault and Deleuze is the diagram and abstract machine, in Marx is the 'mode of production'. Rather than the work of individual genius or autonomous scientific progress, Marx writes that:

> A critical history of technology would show how little any of the inventions of the eighteenth century were the work of a single individual . . . Technology reveals the active relation of man to nature, the direct process of the production of his life, and thereby it also *lays bare the process of the production of the social relations of his life*, and of the mental conceptions that flow from those relations.
>
> (Marx 1976: 493; emphasis added)

An example can make the case. In a footnote to *Capital* Marx reads a particular form of rather rudimentary plough as the visible technology of an abstract machine, or mode of production called slavery. The slave, bought wholesale rather than piecemeal by the hour, is treated, following his definition in antiquity, as little more than an animal, as a 'speaking implement' (who combines with a 'semi-mute implement' of the animal and a 'mute implement' of the plough) (Marx 1976: 303). In this assemblage the plough employed is of a most unsophisticated form, the 'rudest and heaviest [of] implements' which is 'difficult to damage owing to [its] very clumsiness' (303). As Marx says, 'In the slave states bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, down to the date of the Civil War, the only ploughs to be found were those constructed on the old Chinese model, which turned up the earth like a pig or a mole, instead of making furrows' (304). Marx's point is that the instrument's clumsiness is not due to a lack of technological development (it is 'rude' for its time), but rather it is a *selected characteristic* appropriate to this slave-based mode of production which lacks the intricate device of the wage and complex structuring and ordering machines to prevent the rough treatment, or resistance of the slave in his use of the plough.[16]

From this basic presentation of the relations between technical machines and social relations we can move to an analysis of machines within what Marx called 'real subsumption'. In the 'missing sixth chapter' to *Capital* and in a section of the *Grundrisse* known as the 'Fragment on Machines' Marx develops a thesis (more or less evident in parts of *Capital* itself, notably Ch. 15) that, with time, work loses any artisanal autonomy and worker control as it is 'subsumed' in an increasingly complex 'automaton' of human parts and concrete technical machines. In '*formal* subsumption' capitalist forms of valorization subsume the labour process as it finds it ('on the basis of the technical conditions within which labour has been carried on up to that point in history'; Marx 1976: 425) and extracts surplus value by extending the working day ('absolute surplus value'):

> The work may become more intensive, its duration may be extended, it may become more continuous or orderly under the eye of the interested

capitalist, but in themselves these changes do not affect the character of the actual labour process, the actual mode of working.

(Marx 1976: 1021)

This form of production has its problems, due both to the limited technical principle of handicraft and the insubordination of workers,[17] and hence over time labour becomes increasingly subdivided and mechanized, and concomitantly 'cooperative' (necessitating a form of overarching management and social plan; cf. 1976: Ch. 13; Panzieri 1976: 6–7).[18] This social process with its technical consolidation in machines develops into what Marx called the 'specifically capitalist mode of production' or 'real subsumption' where labour and social life itself become enmeshed or 'subsumed', and hence transformed, in the intricate processes of machinery in large-scale industry.[19] It is here that machinery comes into its own as a solution to the need of the social relations of capital to reorient the motive force and unity of production away from the labourer: 'It is machines that abolish the role of the handicraftsman as the regulating principle of social production' (Marx 1976: 491).[20] In fully developed machinery the unity of the labourer, already broken down in simple cooperation in manufacture, is radically disrupted and absorbed in a system driven by an 'automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so that the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages' (Marx 1973a: 692). In this 'automaton' – which Deleuze and Guattari would call a 'machinic' relation, in so far as technical, human, and social relations function as an integrated or machinic whole – the governing power or unity ceases to be the rhythms of labour, and becomes the *rhythm of capital itself*, under the temporality of the machine, which technically embodies the cooperation and socialization of labour and thus 'constitutes the power of the "master"' (Marx 1976: 549).[21]

Panzieri and capitalist machines

The result of *operaismo*'s return to the Marx of real subsumption – particularly in the work of Panzieri and Tronti – was a very different understanding of the contemporary socius, and resultant politics, from both orthodox Marxist understandings of a self-moving development of the 'forces of production' (which could be 'planned' by a socialist state) and neo-Gramscian understandings of the relative autonomy of the social (where a leftist democratic movement struggles over 'hegemony'). The first point can be considered through Panzieri.

Panzieri (1976, 1980) posed a direct challenge to the dominant orthodox, or what he called 'objectivist', Marxist positions that posited a technological 'rationality' – as a self-moving development of scientific innovation as part of politically neutral '*forces* of production' – distinct from capitalist '*relations* of production'. In the objectivist approach, politics is situated externally to the technical process, as a movement towards the eventual assumption of

technological processes as they are in a socialist 'planning'. This conjunction of objectivist and planning positions is amply evident in Lenin's 1919 speech *Scientific Management and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*:

> The possibility of socialism will be determined by our success in combining Soviet rule and Soviet organization or management with the latest progressive measures of capitalism. We must introduce in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and its systematic trial and adoption.
>
> (Lenin, cited in Bell 1956: 41)

For Panzieri, technical forces developed not in a logic of neutral scientific progress, but as a means of consolidating a particular form of the extraction of value. Technological rationality, or the 'machine' (and all the attendant organizational methods and techniques), was the direct manifestation, and naturalization, of capitalist power and control. The *forces* of production thus had capitalist *relations* immanent to them in a 'unity of "technical" and "despotic" moments' (1980: 57).

> The capitalist objectivity of the productive mechanism with respect to the workers finds its optimal basis in the technical principle of the machine: the technically given speed, the coordination of the various phases and the uninterrupted flow of production are imposed on the will of the workers as a 'scientific necessity' . . . The capitalist social relationship is concealed within the technical demands of machinery and the division of labour seems to be totally independent of the capitalist's will. Rather, it seems to be the simple and necessary results of the means of labour's 'nature'.
>
> (Panzieri 1976: 9)

Any socialist assumption or planning of the forces of production was therefore a misguided approach which failed to recognize (or, rather, actively disguised) the immanence of capitalist relations to technics. Thus, whether or not the Soviet state had abolished private property, the 'collective ownership' of production made no difference to the continued *capitalist* functioning of the machine:[22]

> Faced by capital's interweaving of technology and power, the prospect of an alternative (working-class) use of machinery can clearly not be based on a pure and simple overturning of the relations of production (property), where these are understood as a sheathing that is destined to fall away at a certain level of productive expansion simply because it has become too small. *The relations of production are within the productive forces*, and these have been 'moulded' by capital. It is this that enables capitalist development to perpetuate itself even after the expansion of the productive forces has attained its highest level.
>
> (Panzieri 1976: 12)

The social factory and the general interest of labour

If the real subsumption thesis shows how capitalist relations are immanent to the machine, it also shows how social relations as a whole become increasingly subordinated to capitalist regimes of production. As the compulsion of the machine replaces the need for a human master, the social itself emerges as a vast plane of capitalized activity in the development of what Mario Tronti called the 'Social Factory'. As Tronti put it in 1962:

> The more capitalist development advances, that is to say the more the production of relative surplus value penetrates everywhere, the more the circuit production – distribution – exchange – consumption inevitably develops; that is to say that the relationship between capitalist production and bourgeois society, between the factory and society, between society and the state, become [sic] more and more organic. At the highest level of capitalist development social relations become moments of the relations of production, and the whole society becomes an articulation of production. In short, all of society lives as a function of the factory and the factory extends its exclusive domination over all of society.
>
> <div align="right">(Tronti, in Quaderni Rossi no. 2, cited in Cleaver 1992: 137)</div>

The argument needs breaking down a little. The maintenance of circulation on a broad scale (total annual commodity-product) necessitates not the operability of individual capital, or of 'production', 'reproduction', and 'consumption' as distinct spheres, but the maintenance of capitalist relations *as a whole* across society, such that 'Capital's process of *socialization*' becomes 'the specific material base upon which [the process of development of capitalism] is founded' (Tronti 1973: 98; emphasis added). Though analysis at the level of individual moments may show the breakdown of one firm, or the composition of the particular exchange value of one commodity, at the level of social capital we see a continuity of circulation as the expansion and maintenance of value, where social capital operates like a 'ramified factory system'. This process is only possible, of course, in so far as tendencies toward competition are matched with a collective ownership, and hence both Panzieri (1976) and Tronti (1973) stress the importance of Marx's understanding of the socialization of ownership of capital in the development of aggregate 'total social capital' (through share holding and credit, as analysed in *Capital*, volumes II and III), such that profit will be a division of *total* social surplus value (not the surplus value the *individual* firm extracts – though it still seeks to extract above average surplus value; cf. Tronti 1973: 106).[23] Such collective ownership, Marx writes in a suggestive way, is 'the abolition of capital as private property within the framework of capitalist production itself' (1974a: 436), or, as he puts it elsewhere, a 'capitalist communism' (cited in Panzieri 1976: 23):

> Here social capital is not just the total capital of society: it is not the simple sum of individual capitals. It is the whole process of socialization

of capitalist production: it is capital itself that becomes uncovered, at a certain level of its development, as a *social power*.

(Tronti 1973: 105)

As this system develops, as I showed in Chapter 3, individual capitalists thus become less owners than managers, that is, *functions* of capital:

> capital comes to represent all capitalists, and the individual capitalist is reduced to an individual personification of this totality: the direct functionary, no longer of his own capital, but of the capitalist class . . . Thus capital raises itself to the level of a 'general social power', while the capitalist is reduced to the level of a simple agent, functionary, or 'emissary' of this power.[24]

(Tronti 1973: 105, 107)

If the 'objectivist' approach to technology was challenged by the thesis of the immanence of capitalist relations to machines, the social factory thesis posed a direct challenge to neo-Gramscian understandings of the relative autonomy of the political, so central to the PCI's eurocommunism and its 'Historic Compromise' (cf. Negri 1979a: 112). As Bologna (n.d.: n.p.) suggests, the social factory thesis 'eliminate[d] the very bases of the concept of hegemony', for, far from tending to *autonomy*, the social was seen to be increasingly *subordinated* to capitalist regimes of production: 'The process of composition of capitalist society as a unified whole . . . no longer tolerates the existence of a political terrain which is even formally independent of the network of social relations' (Tronti, cited in Bologna n.d.: n.p.). Indeed, for *operaismo*, one of the functions of social democracy, and specifically of socialism, was to naturalize the infusion of productive relations throughout the social, 'representing' – or even, affirming – an unproblematized labour in the social democratic political. For Negri writing in 1964 (in Hardt and Negri 1994), the socialist dreams of a 'society of labor' and a 'general social interest' (67) were seen to be actualized – as the very basis of *domination*.[25] Negri thus describes the centrality of labour to the post-war Italian Constitution[26] not as a capitalist ruse, but as the penetration of the 'fundamental ideological principles of socialism . . . [in]to the heart of the Constitution' (56–7).[27] This is indeed 'a long way from the idyllic image of a continual process of development from democracy to socialism' (80) in that socialism actually affirms the development of the social factory:

> The 'democracy of labor' and 'social democracy' . . . consist of the hypothesis of a form of labor-power that negates itself as the working class and autonomously manages itself within the structures of capitalist production as labor-power. At this point, capitalist social interest, which has already eliminated the privatistic and egotistic expressions of single capitalists, attempts to configure itself as a comprehensive, objective social

interest . . . The models of humanitarian socialism are assumed as emblems of reunification. The patriotism of common well-being in social production is the ultimate slogan of the capitalist effort at solidarity. Like soldiers, all producers are equally employed in the common sacrifice of production in order to win the battle of accumulation.

(Negri, in Hardt and Negri 1994: 62)

In the elaboration of the social factory thesis, *operaismo*'s political focus was on what they called the 'mass worker' (essentially the Fordist workers of the large industrial plants of the Italian North, notably FIAT, and including a large proportion of Southern migrant workers whose precarious conditions left them excluded from the PCI unions). But though the mass worker always stretched beyond the walls of the factory to include the community (inasmuch as Fordism was a *social* system), it is arguably not until the 1970s and the development of work and politics around the figure of the 'socialized worker' that the worker of the social factory proper is theorized. The term 'socialized worker' was coined by Alquati in 1974, but it is closely associated with Antonio Negri (from *Proletari e Stato* in 1975 onwards) (cf. Wright 1988: 306). In Negri's development of this figure, one twenty-page text – Marx's 'Fragment on Machines' – took on central importance.[28] Through the 'Fragment' one can discern both a radical enhancement of the social factory thesis and the basis of a number of problems in Negri's later work. It needs to be considered in some detail.

The 'Fragment on Machines'

Since its first publication in Italian in the same issue of *Quaderni Rossi* (no. 4, 1964) as Panzieri's (1976) essay 'Surplus value and planning', the interpretation of the 'Fragment on Machines',[29] as Paolo Virno (1996a) suggests, has been akin to biblical exegesis. Such exegesis has taken the form not of a replication of authorial truth, but of an iteration of the text in different socio-historical contexts as part of the composition of varying political forms:

We have referred back many times to these pages – written in 1858 in a moment of intense concentration – in order to make some sense out of the unprecedented quality of workers' strikes, of the introduction of robots into the assembly lines and computers into the offices, and of certain kinds of youth behavior. The history of the 'Fragment's' successive interpretations is a history of crises and of new beginnings.

(Virno 1996a: 265)

The 'Fragment' itself is a particularly complex and provocative text that raises a number of possibilities for understanding the trajectories of capitalist production – projecting, as it does, an *information* capital from the heart of

manufacture – and the possible processes and forms of communism that are rarely, if ever, so evident in Marx's work. The difficulty of the text, and its varied deployment make a general presentation of the thesis of the 'Fragment' difficult. I will start with the general argument, and then show two variations that it takes.

The complex reconfiguration of labour and machines in the machinism of real subsumption (the point made so far) is made especially clear in this famous passage from the 'Fragment':

> The production process has ceased to be a labour process in the sense of a process dominated by labour as its governing unity. Labour appears, rather, merely as a conscious organ, scattered among the individual living workers at numerous points in the mechanical system; subsumed under the total process of the machinery itself, as itself only a link of the system, whose unity exists not in the living workers, but rather in the living (active) machinery, which confronts his individual, insignificant doings as a mighty organism.
>
> (Marx 1973a: 693)

The radical thesis of the 'Fragment' is that in this machinic 'automaton' or 'organism' it is no longer the distinct individual entities of the productive workers that are useful for capitalist production, nor even their 'work' in a conventional sense of the word, but the whole ensemble of sciences, languages, knowledges, activities, and skills that circulate through society that Marx seeks to describe with the terms *general intellect* (706), *social brain* (694), and *social individual* (705). This is a Marx that points to a very different understanding of productive labour from Marxian orthodoxy, and indeed the thesis is challenging enough for Virno (1996a: 265) to suggest that it is 'not at all very "marxist"'. There are, however, two different ways of reading the thesis, which, if they are not wholly at variance in Marx's text, can certainly lead to very different interpretations. The following discussion of these two interpretations is based around two very similar citations (which I have called [A] and [B] to help references to these passages throughout this chapter and the next):

[A]
> But to the degree that large industry develops, the creation of real wealth comes to depend *less on labour time and on the amount of labour employed* than on the power of the agencies set in motion during labour time, whose 'powerful effectiveness' is itself in turn out of all proportion to the direct labour time spent on their production, but *depends rather on the general state of science and on the progress of technology*, or the application of this science to production.
>
> (Marx 1973a: 704–5; emphasis added)

[B]

> [The worker] steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor. In this transformation, it is *neither the direct human labour* [the worker] performs, *nor the time during which he works*, but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery of it by virtue of his presence as a social body – it is, in a word, the development of *the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production* and of wealth.
>
> (Marx 1973a: 705; emphasis added)

Both these citations make the 'Fragment's' general argument that labour time and direct labour diminish in importance in relation to a new force, but they offer slightly different inflections on this force. The first, [A], emphasizes the productive power of 'science' and 'technology', whilst the second, [B], proposes the 'social individual' as the new productive force. The resultant arguments need pursuing through Marx's text.

{A} Contradiction? General intellect outside of work, and the 'watchman'

As we know, Marx sees a narrative in the development of work toward ever greater simplification and abstraction, where the dissection of the division of labour 'gradually transforms the workers' operations into more and more mechanical ones, so that at a certain point a mechanism can step into their places' (1973a: 704). In the 'Fragment' this leads him to introduce something of a dichotomy between the worker on one side and general intellect and the machine on the other. The dichotomy is signalled in [A], but he also puts it more firmly: 'The accumulation of knowledge and of skill, of the general productive forces of the social brain, is thus absorbed into capital, as opposed to labour, and hence appears as an attribute of capital, and more specifically of *fixed capital*' (694). As the 'social brain' or 'general intellect' is absorbed into machines, 'the human being comes to relate more as a watchman and regulator to the production process itself' (705). Contrary to what we might think, this relegation to 'watchman' function is less important as a sign that work has become tedious and alienated than as a manifestation of a new and fatal contradiction for capital, and an indication of the possibilities for a communism without work. Inasmuch as the productive force comes from general intellect embodied in machines and not workers, productivity seems to bypass work, and hence the capitalist valuation of life in terms of work done becomes increasingly anachronistic: 'The *theft of alien labour time, on which the present wealth is based*, appears a miserable foundation in face of this new one, created by large-scale industry itself' (705). An explosive 'contradiction' arises (705–6) because capitalism continues to measure these forces in terms of (increasingly unproductive) labour and labour time, and the possibility emerges for the valuation and creation of life based on the needs of the 'social individual' and 'free time'. Thus we see in the forces of capital the potential for a communism where:

on one side, necessary labour time will be measured by the needs of the social individual, and, on the other, the development of the power of social production will grow so rapidly that, even though production is now calculated for the wealth of all, *disposable time* will grow for all.

(Marx 1973a: 708)

As such, the social individual will experience:

not the reduction of necessary labour time so as to posit surplus labour, but rather the *general reduction of the necessary labour of society to a minimum*, which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individuals in the time set free, and with the means created, for all of them.

(Marx 1973a: 706; emphasis added)

This 'contradiction' thesis has been common in interpretations of the 'Fragment'. Leaving Negri until later, it is worth mentioning a few examples. Montano (1975) cites these sections of the 'Fragment' to argue that 'we are witnessing . . . the abolition of productive work within the capitalist mode of production itself' (54) such that labour is no longer a form of production but of control (58). André Gorz similarly (though without a class struggle perspective) uses the 'Fragment' to argue that the majority of the population belong to a 'post-industrial neo-proletariat' whose precarious work 'will {in the not too distant future] be largely eliminated by automation' (1982: 69), that the 'micro-electronic revolution heralds the abolition of work' (1985: 32), and that already 'the amount of time spent working and the relatively high level of employment have been artificially maintained' (1982: 72) in a capital that has moved from production to domination (1985: 39). Even Jeremy Rifkin (1995: 16–17) uses the 'Fragment' – if rather superficially – to make his version of Gorz's 'end of work' thesis. Finally, Virno (1996b), whose interpretation of the realization of the 'Fragment's' emancipatory projections within *capitalism* is similar to the argument of this chapter, still writes of the 'vanishing of labour society'.

The contradiction thesis is in many ways a crucial moment in understanding Marx's politics, for it posits communism not on a militarization of work, or an unalienated work, but on the destruction of the category of work enabled through complex mechanical processes, and a life of expansive creativity, art, and science beyond the drudgery of repetitive manual labour, or, indeed, work at all. But inasmuch as Marx presents it as a 'contradiction' it is problematic.

{B} The social individual in real subsumption

Marx's potential communism of general intellect-rich production outside work has not materialized, even with a massive expansion in the use of machines and

the proliferation to a now axiomatic position of third-generation information machines.[30] We can point to other parts of the 'Fragment' which, in conjunction with the real subsumption thesis, explain why. As we have seen, the contradiction is based on a disjunction between work and general intellect/ machines, with an increasing diminution of the productive force of the former (both quantitatively and qualitatively (Marx 1973a: 700) – shrunk to mere 'watchman') vis-à-vis the latter. The contradiction only holds in so far as this disjunction holds: in so far as the new productive potential of general intellect lies *outside* of work in some kind of 'pure science'.[31] Given the movement towards the ever greater simplification of factory work that Marx was witnessing, the presentation of this disjunction is understandable. But it goes against the logic of the real subsumption thesis. As we have seen, the essence of real subsumption is that technical and social relations become enmeshed or subsumed within a machinic 'automaton'. As Panzieri and Tronti emphasized, this leaves no autonomous sphere of the technical or the social; everything is infused with capitalist relations. Rather than think of science or general intellect as an autonomous sphere of pure invention, the real subsumption thesis should thus encourage us to think of it as a product of human activity conditioned within, and functional to this social machinic system – something called forth by the automaton of capital.

The possibilities for exploring the interrelation of general intellect and work are more apparent when Marx writes of the 'social individual'. In section [B] Marx says not that science embodied in machinery is the productive force, but that 'the *social individual* appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth'. Marx uses general intellect and the social individual largely interchangeably, but when he talks of the social individual we see a much richer idea of *social* rather than *scientific* and *technological* productivity. The social individual still seems to free-float outside of work, but if we follow the real subsumption thesis we could imagine that the automaton that subsumes the manual worker would also subsume the social individual. Thus, the productivity of the social individual – which could include a wealth of knowledge-based and affective relations and attributes – would emerge always already in a work relation. When Marx writes in the 'Fragment' that the worker is 'regulated on all sides by the movement of the machinery' (1973a: 693) such that '*The most developed machinery thus forces the worker to work longer than the savage does, or that he himself did with the simplest, crudest tools*' (708–9), what we need to add is that this is not just because general intellect invents machines that are used to make more manual work, but that general intellect and the practices of the social individual emerge *as* work – as forces immanent to a social machinic system. The individual worker is still increasingly irrelevant (in her particularity as against the social whole she contributes to), but this time it is because general intellect signifies the extraction of surplus value not only from repetitive manual labour, but from all sorts of different, more complex forces in the social individual's 'combination of social activity' across society (not *just* within, but including work time). It is not, then, that a

pure science becomes productive, but that a whole series of capacities and knowledges are productive and exploitable; work is not emptied of content, but filled with different content.

The productivity of general intellect, then, signifies a process not towards an increased unproductivity and irrelevance of work, but to the greater expansion of the content of life that can count as work. We can thus understand Marx's (1976: 532) other, rather tragic conclusion concerning the 'paradox that the most powerful instrument for reducing labour-time suffers a dialectical inversion and becomes the most unfailing means for turning the whole life-time of the worker and his family into labour-time at capital's disposal for its own valorisation'.

Negri's socialized and affective workers

Both of these readings of the 'Fragment' – as well as a strange involution of the two – are evident in Negri's writings on the socialized worker (a term itself derived from the 'Fragment's' 'social individual').[32] I will trace his argument through two interrelated points: first, that the content of socialized work has a tendency to become increasingly 'communicational' and 'immaterial', and second, that this form of work tends towards autonomy, becoming almost a majoritarian communist collectivity. This discussion combines Negri's later sole authored work with his work with Michael Hardt (1994, 2000). There is no doubt that his most recent work, *Empire*, stretches to overcome some of the conceptual problems I will identify, but it does not really manage it. That Negri himself does not seem to see the account of the socialized workers of *Empire* as a break from his previous work is marked by his reluctance to include this work in his critique of the 'immaterial labour' theorists (Hardt and Negri 2000: 29).[33]

Before moving into the detail of the argument it is worth noting the historical points of emergence and the general framework of the category of the socialized worker. If the theory of the mass worker marked the emergence of a class of generalized abstract labour, the socialized worker thesis seeks to describe the class composition of fully socialized capital. Negri (1988b: 217) suggests that the mass worker was a stage in the movement of real subsumption between the skilled worker and the fully socialized worker. He links the emergence of the socialized worker with the struggles of 1968, and suggests that 'For a large part of Europe, *the mass worker had been conceptualized and had become a reality just when its period of existence was in fact about to end*' (Negri 1989: 75). Negri (1988b) argues that in the recomposition of capital away from the large factory-cities, the increasing diffusion of workers across social space, and the regime of austerity measures in the 1970s, the power of the mass worker to extend demands beyond the factory was effectively curtailed.[34] This necessitated an *expansion* of the content of class composition from the mass worker, and thus Negri argues the need for

the broadest definition of class unity, to modify and extend the concept of working-class productive labour, and to eliminate the theoretical isolation of the concept of mass worker (insofar as this concept had inevitably become tied to an empirical notion of the factory – a simplified factoryism – due to the impact of the bosses' counter-offensive, the corporatism of the unions, and the historical and theoretical limitations of the concept itself).

(Negri 1988b: 208)

The new class composition emerged as that of the fully diffuse proletariat – the younger generations in the factories who were less schooled in the traditions of the orthodox communist movement, but also the *emarginati* (youth, women, sexual minorities, the unemployed, countercultural groupings), whose productive centrality was related to the expansion of casual, part-time, and non-guaranteed work and the underground economy, as well as housework and non-remunerated work. For the PCI this was the terrain of the non-disciplined class, almost the lumpenproletariat (as I show in Chapter 5, 'plague bearers' and 'parasitic strata'), but for Negri and *autonomia*, this diffuse proletariat was a new central force of production. Thus he suggests that this class composition might be better seen not so much as a 'working class', but as 'social labour-power', to reflect 'the potentiality of a new working class now extended throughout the entire span of production and reproduction – a conception more adequate to the wider and more searching dimensions of capitalist control over society and social labour as a whole' (Negri 1988b: 209).

Communication and affective labour

From this general background we can move to consider the detail and subsequent development of the socialized worker thesis. The core of Negri's thesis follows the essence of the 'Fragment's' projections that socialized work is extremely rich in techno-scientific knowledge, becoming the living collective of general intellect. Thus, in *The Politics of Subversion*, Negri (1989: 116) writes that the 'raw material on which the very high level of productivity of the socialized worker is based . . . is *science, communication and the communication of knowledge*'. Communication becomes central because it is the form of cooperation of the social whole: 'intellectual work reveals the mechanism of *interaction for all social labour* . . . it produces a specific social constitution – that of cooperation, or rather, that of *intellectual cooperation*, i.e. *communication* – a basis without which society is no longer conceivable' (Negri 1989: 51). Negri (1989: 117) thus employs Habermas's theory of 'communicative action' to say that 'It is on the basis of the interaction of communicative acts that the horizon of reality comes to be constituted.' Two contradictory arguments seem to develop from this, and are no more apparent than in *Empire*.

On one side Negri recognizes that this communicative labour is not just a 'linguistic' but also a 'subjective', and later a 'biopolitical' and 'affective',

interrelation (Hardt and Negri 2000), which, following Haraway, Hardt and Negri (1994, 2000) describe as a 'cyborg' condition of a complex assemblage of technical, organic, material, and immaterial processes.[35] Hardt and Negri even pose a critique of the post-*autonomia* immaterial labour theorists (such as those collected in Virno and Hardt 1996), for presenting the new forces of production in 'angelic' fashion, 'almost exclusively on the horizon of language and communication' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 30, 29). *Empire* suggests that this immaterial and affective labour is not a distinct plane of production (though there are new forms of labour which involve the manipulation of information, code, and sign), but is immanent to the various regimes of production as a whole. Manufacture, for example, does not vanish, but is 'informationalized', as it is increasingly orchestrated through information technologies (Hardt and Negri 2000: 293). Further, largely following my argument in the discussion of section [B] of the 'Fragment', as Hardt and Negri's emphasis on biopower and the cyborg would necessitate, communicative and affective labour is seen as enmeshed in capitalist regimes of control, such that 'constant capital tends to be constituted and represented within variable capital, in the brains, bodies, and cooperation of productive subjects' (2000: 385).

This updating of the social factory thesis to explore the capitalization of affective production and general intellect is one of the most important aspects of Negri's work. But it does not emerge unproblematically; there is another side to the argument. At one level, Negri continues at times to conflate affective biopolitical processes with communication, suggesting, for example, that 'communication has increasingly become the fabric of production' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 404). But, more radically, Negri suggests that affective and immaterial labour tend towards increasing *autonomy* outside of capitalist relations.

Autonomous production and the communist multitude

Apparently ignoring the radical divergence between Foucauldian frameworks (where language is always enmeshed in power/knowledge regimes, and is hence never 'autonomous') and Habermassian autonomous communicative action, Negri seems to equate a tendency toward the productivity of communication with an emerging freedom – as if the more fluid and immaterial production becomes, the more it escapes control[36] – and perceives a rather pure linguistic 'activity' coming to the fore in 'communicational society' (1992: 105).[37] Even when in *Empire* a more biopolitical slant is offered, biopolitical and immaterial labour still tend toward autonomy. Thus, in direct opposition to their comment about variable capital cited above, Hardt and Negri make a strange return to the orthodox dichotomy between forces and relations of production, and write – in the same work – that biopolitical labour

> calls into question the old notion . . . by which labor power is conceived as 'variable capital', that is, a force that is activated and made coherent only

by capital, because the cooperative powers of labor power (particularly immaterial labor power) afford labor the possibility of valorizing itself.

(Hardt and Negri 2000: 294)

The reasons Negri tends to see an emerging autonomy of immaterial labour, even as he uses Foucauldian and Deleuzian conceptions of the immanence of power to all social relations, are not unrelated to Marx's desire in the 'Fragment' to witness an emerging contradiction and the basis for communist sociality. Just as Marx proposed that the new content of productive activity (general intellect) would emerge outside of work, and hence tends toward communism and the abolition of work, Negri similarly sees this increasingly autonomous plane of immaterial, communicative, and affective labour as a communist essence – what *Empire* calls the 'multitude'. Thus, in one reading of the 'Fragment' (Negri 1988c: 115–16), he uses the section noted [A] above to argue that the quantitative contradiction (mass socialized production measured in individual terms) is 'brought to a head', as labour time is indeed a 'dissolving factor', and science is 'immediately incorporated into production'. However, unlike Montano's and Gorz's interpretations of the 'Fragment', as Negri's work develops he tends not to follow Marx in seeing this going on *outside work*, in a pure productive science. Rather, as the last comment about variable capital suggests, he sees *socialized work itself* as tending toward autonomy: increasingly operating not in terms dominated by numeration, equivalence, and the value-form ('work' determined by capital), but in terms of 'free individualities' labouring in a self-determined fashion and driven by their own needs ('activities').[38] Negri writes that:

> The exchange of labour-power is no longer something that occurs, in determinate quantity and specific quality, within the process of capital; rather, an interchange of activities *determined by social needs and goals* is now the precondition, the premise of social production . . . *Work is now an immediate participation in the world of social wealth*.
>
> (Negri 1988c: 117–18; emphasis added)

Opening the terrain for the politics of the multitude, Negri argues that this 'interchange of activities' tends to autonomous self-organization where 'cooperation is posed *prior* to the capitalist machine, as a condition independent of industry', such that 'the entrepreneurial power of productive labor is henceforth completely in the hands of the post-Fordist proletariat', and 'The socialized worker is a kind of actualization of communism, its developed condition. The boss, by contrast, is no longer even a necessary condition for capitalism' (Negri 1992: 78; 1996: 216; 1989: 81; cf. also Hardt and Negri 2000: 294).[39]

We can see now how Negri at once continues, and radically departs from, *operaismo*'s project. Panzieri and Tronti removed the possibility of thinking the relative autonomy of technical, social, or political spheres, and instead

described a universal plane of capitalized production throughout the social factory. Negri continues *operaismo*'s concern with a universal plane of production, and is not shy of showing his disdain for the neo-Gramscian thesis of the relative autonomy of the *socio-political* (cf. Hardt and Negri 2000: 451). At the same time, however, the essence of the social factory thesis – the immanence of capital to all social relations – seems to vanish, as Negri both reintroduces the orthodox separation between forces and relations of production which Panzieri had been so keen to undermine, and begins to produce a strange inversion of the neo-Gramscian thesis whereby it is the realm of *production* which becomes autonomous. Thus, though Negri oscillates between seeing the communist multitude in forms of work and in forms of resistance, essentially the resistance becomes not so much a refusal of work (for 'work' has in a sense been overcome), but an affirmation of the collective embodiment of immaterial and affective labour: 'In effect, by *working*, the multitude produces itself as singularity' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 395; emphasis added).[40] At his extremes Negri (1989: 79) even favours labour-market deregulation (as if 'deregulation' was not always a process of intricate regulation) to enable the development of this potential, and turns away from the refusal of work in a variant of the old council communist theme of 'self-management' (cf. Hardt 1994: 227), as a 'reappropriation of the social essence of production . . . to ensure an ever-richer reproduction of accumulated immaterial labor' (Negri 1996: 221).[41]

This is not to say that Negri dismisses the category of exploitation. He writes that this socialized work is 'inextricably and emotionally linked to the principle characteristics (exclusion, selection, hierarchy) of the labour market' (1989: 47), and that this 'does not mean mocking the reality of exploitation' (Negri 1994: 235).[42] But in so far as the multitude tends toward autonomy, exploitation becomes increasingly 'external' and 'empty' (238): 'capitalist power dramatically controls the new configurations of living labor, but it can only control them *from the outside* because it is not allowed to invade them in a disciplinary way' (235). It thus becomes increasingly unclear what exactly exploitation is.

The minor as majority

This problem of an autonomous multitude working its way to communism is highlighted most starkly in Negri's approach to Deleuze and Guattari's figure of the minor. In conversation with Deleuze (*N*: 169–76), Negri asks if in 'communication society'[43] the communism of the 'Fragment' as the 'trans-versal organization of free individuals built on a technology that makes it possible' is 'less utopian than it used to be' (174). He also raises the possibility that, though domination becomes more perfect, perhaps 'any man, any minority, any singularity, is more than ever before potentially able to speak out and thereby recover a greater degree of freedom' (in *N*: 174). Though posed as a question, this is clearly a presentation of Negri's general argument.

Deleuze responds, however, by making a very different point. He suggests that instant communication is less concomitant with communism than with the intricate feedback mechanisms of the open spaces of 'control' (see below), and says that speech and communication are 'thoroughly permeated by money – and not by accident but by their very nature' (175), such that 'The quest for "universals of communication" ought to make us shudder'.

Despite this rather stark difference in position, Negri (1998: n.p.) elsewhere suggests that the politics of the socialized worker is related to Deleuze's understanding of the minor. But whilst in Deleuze the minor is premised on cramped, impossible, minority positions where social forces constrain movement, Negri reads it as a figure of plenitude and majority. Perhaps recognizing the difference in their interpretations, Negri (1998: n.p.) says that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the minor was a *recognition* of the socialized worker and the multitude, but that 'from the point of view of phenomenological analysis' the 'sociopolitical definition given in *A Thousand Plateaus* does not really go much further than this'.[44] Then, taking the minor in a very different direction to Deleuze, he suggests that it contributed to a 'new concept of the majority' of the autonomous multitude. And, most strangely, in another essay Negri links this multitude to Deleuze's (and Foucault's) typologies of abstract machines and diagrams as a seemingly inevitable mode of communist democracy arising out of post-disciplinary control society:

> According to Foucault and Deleuze, around this final paradigm [control/ communication] there is determined a qualitative leap which allows thinking a new, radically new, order of possibility: communism. If in the society of sovereignty democracy is republican, if in the disciplinary society democracy is socialist, then in the society of communication democracy cannot but be communist. Historically, the passage which is determined between disciplinary society and the society of communication is the final possible dialectical passage. Afterwards, the ontological constitution cannot but be the product of the multitude of free individuals.
>
> (Negri 1992: 105)

Abstract machines and the capitalist BwO

I showed in Chapters 2 and 3 how Deleuze's minor politics operates in a very different way to Negri's presentation. Now I want to turn to consider how Deleuze's understanding of capital presents a different plane of production to Negri and his understanding of autonomy-in-production. For Deleuze and Guattari, the capitalist socius operates as an ever mutating 'abstract machine', 'megamachine', or 'Body without Organs' (BwO). *Anti-Oedipus* provides a 'universal history' of three types of abstract social machine: primitive/savage territorial, barbarian despotic, and civilized capitalist. What defines each social

machine is its mode of composition through three syntheses (connective, disjunctive, and conjunctive) (cf. Ch. 2 note 12) by which the whole and its parts operate as a socius (*AŒ*: 33). The question, following Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, is one of the territories and codes by which each social machine engineers its material flows in specific relations to fashion a 'memory' (though 'memory' does not have to be particularly 'deep'; cf. Ansell Pearson 1999: 217–18) of corporeal, incorporeal, technical relations for the human:

> The social machine is literally a machine, irrespective of any metaphor, inasmuch as it exhibits an immobile motor and undertakes a variety of interventions: flows are set apart, elements are detached from a chain, and portions of the task to be performed are distributed.
>
> (*AŒ*: 141)

Despite the clear intonations of linearity, Deleuze and Guattari's universal history describes abstract social machines not by their *temporality*, but by their mode of *operation*. That is, they 'define social formations by *machinic processes* and not by modes of production (these on the contrary depend on the processes)' (*ATP*: 435), where 'modes of production' are dated concrete configurations (though I would suggest that this should be seen as an addition to, rather than negation of, Marx's method, which is equally more concerned with modes of composition than dated histories). And further, each concrete form is always a *composite* of different abstract social machines – the abstract machines are coexistent 'extrinsically' (they all interrelate – even the primitive socius, following Clastres (1989), has to 'ward off' the state) and 'intrinsically' (each machine can be taken up into another machinic form, like, for example, the return of the despotic *Urstaat* or 'empire' in the capitalist socius) (cf. *ATP*: 435–7, 460). Thus, in a sense, the abstract comes before the concrete, and within the concrete we can always find a coextensive functioning of different abstract machines.[45]

The capitalist abstract social machine is fundamentally different from the 'primitive' and 'despotic' abstract social machines in that it functions not *by* codes (coding and overcoding material flows) but *on* codes (decoding and deterritorialization) – this is its 'most characteristic' and 'most important tendency' (*AŒ*: 34). The two principal flows that are brought into conjunction are the deterritorialized and unqualified worker 'free' to sell his labour capacity (no longer coded as slave or serf), and decoded and unqualified money (no longer determined as merchant or landed wealth) capable of buying labour power. But this in itself is not sufficient a description. After all, all social machines operate some form of decoding and deterritorialization. There are two marked differences with the capitalist socius. First, it is characterized by a *generalized* and *continuous* process of decoding and deterritorialization. '[C]apitalism has a very particular character: its lines of escape are not just difficulties that arise' – as they are in other social machines – 'they are the conditions of its own production' (Deleuze, in Guattari 1995a: 66–7).[46] This

is because there is no particular structural regime, authority, or configuration of life to maintain, but a single objective of 'production for production's sake'. The 'essence of wealth' is no longer a concrete objective thing, but '*the activity of production in general*' (*AŒ*: 270).[47] Second, concomitant with this deterritorialization and decoding is a simultaneous and continuously reconfiguring process of reterritorialization and recoding, for 'production in general' does have a purpose – the self-expansion of capital, the maximization of 'surplus value' from the expansive potential of life.[48] For the creation and realization of value (utilization of existing capital, commodity consumption, reinvestment in new capital, and profit), there needs to be a form of control, measurement, and organization that determines and creates particular forms (such as 'the worker', 'the capitalist', 'the consumer') immanent to this abstract production. As I showed in Chapter 3, the capitalist socius is thus necessarily populated by, or it 'miraculates' (*AŒ*: 144) at every moment, particular determined forms or identities. We could call these identities 'codes', as in previous social machines, except that through the continual process of de/reterritorialization and de/recoding they are forever changing and only exist immanently to their function (they have no 'coded' objective predetermination). Instead, they are the product of a new means of drawing relations as 'conjunctions' or 'axioms'. In the axiomatic process, intrinsic (more 'internalized') codes are replaced by a plethora of immanent (more 'surface') abstract relations and resonances which traverse the socius, but which have no essence, rules, or meaning beyond their immediate relation, and what is functional to them: 'the axiomatic deals directly with purely functional elements and relations whose nature is not specified, and which are immediately realized in highly varied domains simultaneously' (*ATP*: 454). The capitalist social machine, then, unlike the other abstract social machines,

> is constituted by a generalized decoding of all flux, fluctuations of wealth, fluctuations of work, fluctuations of language, fluctuations of art, etc. It did not create any code, it has set up a sort of accountability, an axiomatic of decoded fluxes as the basis of its economy. It ligatures the points of escape and leaps forward.
>
> (Deleuze, in Guattari 1995a: 67)

This axiomatic process is enabled through the transformation of particular wealth-creating practices, forces, and forms into an abstract or universal form of wealth – 'abstract labour' – through the medium of money.[49] Money is the general equivalent that enables the commensurability of all activity, and, because it can be accumulated, the potentiality of boundless surplus and production beyond that immediately necessary (*AŒ*: 258–9). Any flow of labour (as an abstract quality) can then conjoin in an axiomatic 'cash nexus' in any relation with a flow of capital in ever new ways and always beget money in a fashion that is not determined by its current concrete form and is independent of any formal rules beyond simply the begetting of wealth (cf. *ATP*: 453).

The axiomatic process is the application or creation of ever changing 'images', 'organs', or determinate relations across the capitalist socius, which in itself is a wholly virtual and imageless Body without Organs.[50] As such, it is both the means to conjugate an infinite series of relations, *and* to formalize these relations at each instant so as to extract a surplus. This is how the process is 'directly economic':

> The socius as full body has become directly economic as capital-money; it does not tolerate any other preconditions. What is inscribed or marked is no longer the producers or non-producers, but the forces and means of production as abstract quantities that become effectively concrete in their becoming related or their conjunction.
>
> (*AŒ*: 263)

Following Marx, Deleuze and Guattari argue that money-as-general equivalent enables not only the commensurability of all activity, but also the extraction of surplus value because it operates on two intersecting planes. 'The true economic force', the full body of capital, is the total *social* productivity of this process (where surplus value emerges), as money begets money in the realm of financing. The other plane is the reterritorialization in (at any one time) axiomatized subjects that receive 'impotent' money as payment for work done in an *individualized* quantitative valuation. The two planes necessarily function in tandem because capital needs to exceed itself in a continual maximization of surplus value, *and* realize itself at any given moment in the maintenance of existing value. To realize itself, everybody must be invested in the system, receiving some form of 'wage' (impotent money) and concomitant identity from their contribution to the total process (be this from work done in a field or factory, from managing a substation of a business, from share ownership, or from 'indirect wages' – state benefits, 'family wages', and so on). Given the way all are formed by, and invested in, the socius, Deleuze and Guattari (*AŒ*: 253) argue that there are not two classes which face each other, but 'only one class, a class with a universalist vocation' (a class they name the 'bourgeoisie',[51] but it is easier to think of it as a generalized capitalist class):

> there are no longer even any masters, but only slaves commanding other slaves; there is no longer any need to burden the animal from the outside, it shoulders its own burden. Not that man is ever the slave of technical machines; he is rather the slave of the social machine . . . [T]here is only one machine, that of the great mutant decoded flow – cut off from goods – and one class of servants, the decoding bourgeoisie, the class that decodes the castes and the statuses, and that draws from the machine an undivided flow of income convertible into consumer and production goods, a flow on which profits and wages are based.
>
> (*AŒ*: 254–5)[52]

'Class', then, signifies the decoding and deterritorialization of castes and status groups in a fashion that is functional to capitalist expansion (cf. also *AŒ*: 344). Inasmuch as capitalism functions across the social whole, it continually breaks down any fixed identity or group: 'the very notion of class, insofar as it designates the "negative" of codes . . . implies that there is only one class' (255). Deleuze and Guattari are, of course, not saying that we are all equal. It is not difficult to demarcate groups of people on a global scale in terms of how they accrue money for their practices, with super-exploitative and poverty wages (or no wages) on one side and profit derived from surplus value on the other. Indeed, a fundamental of capitalist axiomatization and accumulation is the intimate striation and segmentation of social groups – a process that the ever smoother flow of global capital serves, by intent, to proliferate and maximize (cf. *ATP*: plateaus 13 and 14). Essentially, however, all are axiomatized manifestations of the abstract process (and hence politics, as I argued in Chapters 2 and 3, emerges with minority problematizations rather than distinct groups, and the proletariat is a mode of composition immanent to, and against, capitalist configurations, rather than a subject which 'faces' the bourgeoisie).

Inasmuch as all are miraculated from the plane of the cash nexus and are, hence, invested in the project of the maximization of surplus value, capital has no need for an overall belief system, or, to use Marxian terms, 'ideology' – the capitalist socius is strictly amoral (*AŒ*: 250; cf. Holland 1999: 21, 80). It is not a question of how the populace is tricked at the level of the superstructure into investing their interests in the system, but how they are composed, axiomatized, or inscribed in the system as a whole.[53] This is not to say that the capitalist socius does not produce ideas which mystify its workings (Deleuze 1994a: 208), that the functional integration of markets, geopolitical governance, exploitation and death does not tend to be 'hidden' from view (cf. Bordiga 2001), or that it is not populated by the most inane and oppressive systems of belief. The point is, rather, that the generalized functioning of the system, with its naked and open cash nexus is without secrets: 'nothing is secret, at least in principle and according to the code (this is why capitalism is "democratic" and can "publicize" itself, even in a juridical sense)' (Deleuze, in Guattari 1995a: 55).

To say that the capitalist axiomatic system operates on the level of abstract quantities and is composed of one class is not to say that it does not produce subjects. Deleuze and Guattari distinguish two subjective forms, both of which operate simultaneously in the capitalist axiomatic – *machinic enslavement* and *social subjection*. Machinic enslavement produces an integrated machine of human, animal, and tool subject to a higher unity (the despotic state-form is the first example, but Marx's productive 'automaton' could be another), whereas social subjection isolates the human from the machine to become itself the higher unity ('The human being is no longer a component of the machine but a worker, a user. He or she is subjected *to* the machine and no longer enslaved *by* the machine'; *ATP*: 457). In the capitalist socius, the

functioning of the axiomatic through abstract quanta (turning a force into a determined comparable conjunction) is the element of machinic enslavement, and the production of the molar aggregate out of this (the personified capitalist, the worker) is the social subjection. But at each moment one simultaneously experiences subjection and enslavement. An adaptation of Deleuze and Guattari's (*ATP*: 458) example of television can exemplify this. The worker is *subjected* inasmuch as s/he is subject to the statements 'you must work . . . to survive/for the good of your soul/to display your working class nobility/to contribute to society' (where the statement is a material compulsion) and enfolds this as a subjective core with the enunciation 'I *am* a worker and it *is* good for me.' And the worker is *enslaved* inasmuch as s/he is a series of component quanta reconfiguring in the machinic automaton of capital. Spivak (1996: 122) illustrates the co-functioning of these two forms when she writes: 'It is a paradox that capitalist humanism does indeed tacitly make its plans by the "materialist" predication of Value' – what I am describing as the machinic enslavement of labour power – 'even as its official ideology offers the discourse of humanism as such.'

Societies of control

If this is the general axiomatic process, in 'Postscript on control societies' (*N*: 177–82) Deleuze makes some specific comments about the operation of contemporary axiomatic processes in the time of real subsumption, or what Deleuze calls – following William Burroughs[54] – 'control'.[55] Deleuze argues that we are witness to the breakdown of the relatively distinct spaces of Foucault's (1991) disciplinary enclosure.[56] Discipline is based on the double figure of individual and mass, where each site of disciplinary enclosure both disciplines and maximizes collective energies and produces individual identities appropriate to that enclosure. Though discipline has a general consistency, each confinement has its own type of mass and individuality. The subject traverses different sites of enclosure, being a subject of the function of worker, prisoner, patient, student, and so on, in series. With the emergence of control, there is a movement away from this thermodynamic model of the ordered dispensation of energy in discrete spaces of enclosure – family, school, army, factory – to a more general cybernetic model of what Massumi (1998: 56) calls 'unleashed production', with a varying overlay of each disciplinary technique across social space.[57] Rather than discrete 'moulds' (in each enclosure), there is a continuous variation or 'modulation' of activity. Discrete and coherent analogical individuals and masses are thus replaced with much more fluid and digital 'dividuals' which are in a 'superposition', caught in overlapping series of different 'self-transforming' and metastable configurations, and subject simultaneously and in varying ways to a multiplicity of controlling and productive mechanisms, such that, as Joseph K testified in Kafka's (1953) *The Trial*, one is never 'done' with anything. The expression 'dividual' is important in emphasizing that the self-autonomy of the individual (the

'subjection' of discipline) is breaking down into a subdivided series of changing capacities, possibilities, and limits in each modulation ('enslavement'). At any one moment, of course, there are precise mechanisms of dividualized 'identity'. In these metastable configurations, the contours of the dividual are modulated through continuous absorption and feedback of information across 'data banks' – including agencies such as police, social work, and psychiatry, as well as consumer profiling, and credit assessment processes (cf. Rose 1999a: 260).

For Deleuze, control is both an extension of discipline, a kind of permeation – Massumi (1998: 56) describes it is a 'release' of discipline across the social – and also something new that is directly related to a post-Second World War 'mutation of capitalism' (*N*: 180). Rose (1999a: 234) has warned against reading control in epochal terms since, like all Deleuze's abstract machines, it is a mode of 'configuration' rather than a specific spatio-temporal system, and hence always operates in conjunction with other configurations. Indeed, Deleuze sees Kafka's work, at the turn of the twentieth century, as straddling discipline and control (hence the superpositions of *The Trial* – the self-transforming labyrinths that emerge within apparently distinct disciplinary territories such as the court-house, and the endless postponement of the verdict – are control experiences).[58] Nevertheless, Deleuze does also specifically link control to some pervasive features of post-war capitalism: the end of the gold standard and the emergence of floating exchange rates (*N*: 180), and a form of capital based not on production and proprietorship, but on businesses, services, administrators, and computers. In many ways 'business' becomes the societal-wide technology, much as the Panopticon was the visible technology of the abstract machine of discipline. Deleuze is suggesting not so much a 'social factory', but a 'social business'.[59] 'Capitalism in its present form' is

> essentially dispersive, with factories giving way to businesses. Family, school, army, and factory are no longer so many analogous but different sites converging in an owner, whether the state or some private power, but transmutable or transformable coded configurations of a single business where the only people left are administrators.
>
> (*N*: 181)

Machinic surplus value

I will return to the 'social business' below, but first I want to consider the nature of the labour and 'value' of control. I have shown how Marx raised the question of a different content of activity as the general intellect and the social individual, and how Negri tried to see it as the near actualization of communism within the regimes of an affective and biopolitical labour that had escaped the law of value. Deleuze and Guattari explicitly address this question around what they call 'machinic surplus value' but, unlike Negri, they firmly situate it within the capitalist framework of axiomatics and control.

In a fashion that at times seems to tie in with Negri's thesis that we are heading beyond the labour theory of value, Deleuze and Guattari write that the capitalist socius depends increasingly less on the extraction of a surplus of labour time and quantity than on a 'complex *qualitative* process' (*ATP*: 492; emphasis added). On closer inspection, however, they are more 'Marxist'. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari suggest, much like section [A] of the 'Fragment' (and they reference the text at this point), that alongside conventional 'human' surplus value, machine-rich production sees the emergence of a 'machinic surplus value' of constant capital (*AŒ*: 232) that is the product of an 'intellectual labor distinct from the manual labor of the worker' (233). But this is a mistake in their own terms, in that it seems to present machines and humans as distinct entities rather than, as they always insist, products of a social machinic process, and it makes a split between intellectual labour ('machinic surplus value') and manual labour ('human surplus value') that makes little conceptual sense, in that it seems to exclude intellectual labour from the realm of the human.[60] This, however, is not fundamental to Deleuze and Guattari's argument, and it is later rectified. The fundamental point of *Anti-Oedipus*'s discussion of surplus value is that the *aggregate* of the two surplus values is a 'surplus value of flux'. In *A Thousand Plateaus* surplus value of flux is replaced with 'machinic surplus value' (this time defining the product of the machinic whole rather than just constant capital and intellectual labour), where it has two (fully interrelated) senses. First, it signifies not the differential between the value the worker accrues for her work and the value created by labour capacity, but the break between the two planes of capital – the flow of the full BwO and the axiomatized identities that are its reterritorialization. Thus, the 'exploitation' of machinic surplus value is, in part, the very *formation* of axiomatized subjects (though, of course, immanent to this formation is the continual extraction of surplus from labour).[61] Second, machinic surplus value signifies the societal-wide production of the complex, qualitative, affective, and machinic processes that the socialized worker thesis sought to describe, and the very diffuse and unlocatable nature of value in this system (*ATP*: 458, 491–2).[62]

I will consider this second point (having developed the first in the explanation of axiomatics). Guattari's (1996a) essay 'Capital as the integral of power formations' is a useful point of focus, for it is in many ways a reading of the 'Fragment's' general intellect and social individual as categories of *capitalist* productivity.[63] The explicit aim of the essay is to use the concept of machinic surplus value to 'lift' Marx's 'collective worker' from a category based on average labour with a generalized dispensation of energy (which can be quantitatively calculated) to one based on the qualitative intensity and variation of work. The essay has a few problems,[64] but it emphasizes the important point that a qualitative variation exists in the content of value-productive activity beyond a simple definition of work and work time. Guattari argues that 'it is complex arrangements – training, innovation, internal structures, union relations etc. – which circumscribe the magnitude of capitalist zones of profit, and not

simply a levy on work-time' (1996a: 205), and that capitalism actualizes productive socio-economic forms in varied desires, aesthetics, ecologies, and so on (1995b: 55). Unlike Negri, who sees this increasingly complex and varied activity as tending towards an autonomy from capital, Guattari argues that capital still operates as the universal plane – the 'integral' – of these different 'universes of value'. That is, each of the different universes of value is subsumed in capitalist general equivalence (Guattari 1995b: 54–5) and valorized through a 'machinic phylum which traverses, bypasses, disperses, miniaturizes, and coopts all human activities' (Guattari 1996a: 207). Guattari does detect a move towards a tremendous multiplication of activities, but, if subsumed in the integral of general equivalence, these activities and their machinic surplus value are not produced autonomously in society. Rather, machinic surplus value is 'miraculated', or created by the socius as it is needed (*AŒ*: 144), becoming a 'required' machinic surplus value (cf. Guattari 1996a: 208). There is no play of autonomous creativity and capitalist recuperation (cf. *AŒ*: 337–8). Instead, as Massumi (1998: 57) puts it, 'Control involves the assimilation of powers of existence, at the moment of their emergence', and at each stage there is the axiomatic normalization of each new form, where '"Normal" is now free-standing.' As Camatte (1995: 43) argues, capitalized human activity has escaped any fixed base value such that 'human beings are fixed to its movement, which can take off from the normal or abnormal, moral or immoral human being'. Capital is thus dependent on an increasing degree of differentiation, innovation, and variation in social practice. Dividuals are not just 'normalized', but maintained with a certain degree of what we could call functional difference such that the thresholds of knowledge and practice are rather radically open, and are always being reconfigured (cf. Rose 1999a). The lines of flight, which might be experienced as entropy in disciplinary space, here become the driving force of production. New aspects of social productivity might escape for a little while. Indeed the capitalist socius has many little lines of flight, even autonomous zones where creation is allowed to operate outside of capitalist relations of productivity (*Anti-Oedipus* offers an image of the mad scientist creating on the fringes and, we could add, at a different level, new milieux of subcultural and countercultural innovation, and social and political 'danger' as examples)[65] before they are generalized as a new productive activity; but such spaces (or lines of flight) enrich rather than contradict capital – at least in normal functioning.

Again the 'business' is the archetype. Deleuze writes that in disciplinary production discrete amounts of energy were extracted in the factory and costs were reduced, but in control we see a buying of 'activities' and a 'fixing of rates'. Deleuze thus writes that

> the factory was a body of men whose internal forces reached an equilibrium between possible production and the lowest possible wages; but in a control society businesses take over from factories, and a business is a soul, a gas. There were of course bonus systems in factories, but businesses

strive to introduce a deeper level of modulation into wages, bringing them into a state of constant metastability punctuated by ludicrous challenges, competitions, and seminars.

(*N*: 179)

'Marketing' lies at the centre of the business's 'soul'.[66] But Deleuze is not proposing that marketing is a distinct practice circumscribed in a single social group. Rather, marketing is a sign of the business's free floating ability to discern and require a wealth of activities through its permeation and intimate control of social life, and its understanding of the variation and potential of activity that its 'data banks' provide. Inasmuch as we all become part of the business, marketing can also be seen to be a generalized feature of social activity – a necessary attribute of the 'dividual'. Making this case Lazzarato (1996: 142) writes that what he calls 'communication' (marketing, production of cultural content such as fashion and taste, consumer feedback mechanisms, public opinion) is enmeshed in 'the post-industrial commodity' such that it 'is the result of a creative process that involves both the producer and the consumer'. Capital still operates through the enforced splitting, or axiomatization, of producers and consumers (134), but the flows and relations of production are continually enriched through processes outside of the immediate sphere of work: 'the product is enriched through the intervention of the consumer, and is therefore in permanent evolution' (142). This 'communication', Lazzarato argues, emerges in a condition of intimate axiomatization where 'one *has to* express oneself, one *has to* speak, communicate, cooperate, and so forth' (135) and hence leads to a situation where every aspect of subjectivity – as it is expressed in frameworks which must be 'clear and free of ambiguity' (135) – becomes productive of value (143). But this is not only a 'subjective' phenomenon. As Massumi (1996) and Morris (1998) have indicated, this process of 'communication' or 'work' also occurs in a subhuman fashion, as the communication and axiomatization of 'affect' or intensity immanent to particular machinic environments (witness the use of bio-feedback mechanisms in focus-group research).[67]

Contemporary machinic work

To draw this chapter to a close I want to return to the question of machine/human relations in a brief sketch of the general plane of contemporary forms of work. If we follow Marx's emphasis on the 'organism' and 'automaton' of the capitalist socius upon which technical and human parts are engineered (rather than the dichotomy he presents in section [A] of the 'Fragment' between machines and humans), we can conceive the process of production in terms of a series of machinic assemblages which traverse global social space and the, increasingly fluid, division of 'work time' and 'free time'. Each would be composed of varying quantities of technical *and* human parts, where in each instance the societal-wide competences, languages, knowledges, physical forces,

affects, interactions, skills, expertises are present in different degrees in the worker and the technical machine, and where each would maintain a 'social' productivity, regardless of whether they immediately contribute to what we conventionally call work. As Guattari (1996a: 209) puts it, in this framework fixed capital, variable capital, and free time are interlaced in particular 'machinic environments', where the whole ensemble of forces, relations, and affects in each environment are axiomatized and produce a machinic surplus value: 'exploitation concerns machinic arrangements at first – man and his faculties having become an integral part of these arrangements.'[68] And even when 'Machines in the factory seem to be working all by themselves . . . in fact it is the whole of society which is adjacent to them' (212). Lazzarato thus proposes that production under the general intellect functions not as a machine-based automated system but more as a societal-wide machinic system, ever coming into being, and dispersing again:

> This immaterial labor constitutes itself in forms that are immediately collective, and we might say that it exists in the form of networks and flows. The organization of the cycle of production of immaterial labor . . . is not obviously apparent to the eye, because it is not defined by the four walls of the factory. The location in which it operates is outside in the society at large . . . The cycle of production comes into operation only when it is required by the capitalist; once the job has been done, the cycle dissolves back into the networks and flows that make possible the reproduction and enrichment of its productive capacities.
>
> (Lazzarato 1996:137)

This framework has the advantage of accounting for the great mutability and flexibility of the plane of contemporary work. We can envisage examples of these contemporary machinic work regimes (of the most modern and traditional kinds), from a fully automated car plant at one end, fitting well with Marx's 'watchman' thesis, to an advertising industry brain-storming session, an Export Processing Zone garment-making sweatshop, the key-tap-regulated keyboard, the hourly labour contract, the zero-hours contract, the Research Assessment Exercise and 'vocationalism' in higher education, work-place drug tests, office telephone call-time monitoring and e-mail regulation software, housework, 'jobseeking', career opportunity maximization, work-based self-actualization workshops, neo-Puritan ethics, sheer poverty-driven overwork, to, indeed, consumer-feedback mechanisms and correctly competent fashion-conscious consumption. Rather than one general portfolio of skills that may be employed in the narrative of a single career or job over a lifetime, these myriad machinic work regimes would pick up, incorporate, and manifest a whole series of *different* competences and attributes at different times. In these regimes, one's lifestyles, ethics, even rebellious identities, and one's consumption and reproduction patterns become directly productive as *generalized potential*, actualized in varying *specific enactments* of work. And

within work time, or the *quantitative* basis for a wage, vastly different, varying, and expansive *qualitative* skills, knowledges, competences, relations, interactions, disciplines, languages, and skills may be actualized. Here, it matters as much that workers work on themselves (optimize their skills, and deploy and feedback their knowledges and capacities in each axiomatized work relation) to enable the productivity of vastly complex assemblages, as they 'put in their time'[69] (even though labour time retains a continued role as the – albeit modulating rather than fixed – measurement of the ('impotent') 'value' of the system that the worker accrues to herself). Such work thus requires a population to be perpetually able to reskill, self-scrutinize, and modulate its demeanour, skill, aptitude, and competence. As an example, this process is particularly evident in the emphasis on training and pursuit of jobs for the British unemployed, now receiving their 'Jobseekers Allowance' and their 'New Deal' on the basis that they are always ready, prepared, and preparing to be propelled into productive arrangements.[70]

We should not infer from all this that we have left behind the extremes of workplace enclosure and control. Whilst, as Guattari and Alliez (in Guattari 1984: 286) argue, the 'management of productive space now becomes the arrangement of its optimal fluidity', in the age of multinational subcontracting and outsourcing the extremes of 'post-industrial' infotech employment and the nineteenth-century sweatshop are fully interfaced – often in one and the same 'subject' (cf. Caffentzis 1997; Lazzarato 1996: 137; Ross 1997). It is the relative *stability* of enclosure that is seen to be disappearing in a more fluid, axiomatic, and socialized model of work that is characterized by 'Precariousness, hyperexploitation, mobility, and hierarchy' (Lazzarato 1996: 137). At the same time – and in the midst of the increasing pervasiveness of the discourse of 'pleasure in work' (Donzelot 1991; cf. Leadbeater 2000; Reeves 2001) – the compulsion to varied and self-optimizing activity in the 'basin' of contemporary labour, and the, for many, chronic lack of access to a regular and sufficient wage, induces affective conditions of anxiety and competitiveness in what Bifo (n.d.) has described as the contemporary 'factory of unhappiness'.

Conclusion

Taking the model of production that emerges in *operaismo* and *autonomia* as its focus, this chapter has explored the operation of the capitalist socius as it is developed in Marx, Panzieri, Tronti, Negri, and Deleuze and Guattari. I started by showing Marx's machinic understanding of the relation between technical machines and humans in his 'real subsumption' thesis – a position that is central to the work of Panzieri and Tronti. The chapter then showed that against orthodox Marxist understanding of a neutral force of production and the neo-Gramscian presentation of the relative autonomy of the sociopolitical, *operaismo* developed a rather cramped, minor knowledge of the plane of production in that it allowed no space for a coherent and autonomous people

that could exist within the models of socialist planning or social democracy, but compelled an intensive investigation of the productive forces of the social factory. I then explored Marx's 'Fragment on Machines' – a text of great import in the development of *operaismo* and *autonomia* – and showed how it stretched to understand the development of production into the realm of 'general intellect' and the 'social individual'. At one level this is a Marx that points to an increasingly complex machinic form of production that helps extend the social factory thesis to include general intellect-rich production, and, to use Foucault's and Deleuze's figures, seems – in the midst of *disciplinary* society – to discern the coming diabolical powers of the society of *control*. On the other hand, perhaps evidencing some of the constraints of thinking beyond one's own social regime, Marx suggests – in a fashion which actually goes against his analysis of the tendencies of real subsumption – that the powers of general intellect may emerge outside of work in a productive autonomy that presents a fatal contradiction for capital. In Negri's analysis of the 'Fragment' and his development of the socialized worker thesis this tension remains. On one side there is a concern with the intricacies of a capitalized affective and immaterial labour, such that the politics of hegemony is still dismissed as a misrecognition of capitalist regimes of control. But, on the other, Negri breaks with *operaismo*'s, Marx's, and Deleuze's understanding of the immanence of controlling regimes to productive forces in a certain inversion of the neo-Gramscian thesis whereby it is the realm of *production* which tends toward autonomy. In this 'self-determined production' Negri is right to return to the question of the centrality of work and production, and he is careful to elaborate a potential 'multitude' rather than a present people, but this does not prevent him from discerning an emerging communist subject which has overcome the law of value, and seems to produce its singularity through its work, in an almost inevitable process which 'cannot help revealing a telos, a material affirmation of liberation' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 395).

The problematic aspect of Negri's thesis was seen to be particularly apparent in his interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the minor, which was presented not as a cramped and complex mode of engagement, but as an emerging plenitude. The chapter then used Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the capitalist socius, axiomatics, class, control, and machinic surplus value to see how one can understand the socialized worker and the new attributes and networks of production as emerging *within* capitalist relations, and being intricately controlled by them. Contrary to Hardt and Negri's (2000: 28, 368) proposition that *Empire* has overcome the last vestiges of metaphysical thinking in Deleuze, Guattari, and Foucault, this section has sought to show that Deleuze offers a complex and productive conception of contemporary capital, control, and production, and one that actually resonates more with the conceptual constellation of *operaismo* and Marx than it does with Negri's tendencies to present an emerging autonomy-in-production.

5 The refusal of work

> More than any other single watchword of the communist movement, the *refusal of work* has been continually and violently outlawed, suppressed and mystified by the traditions and the ideology of socialism. If you want to provoke a socialist to rage, or deflate his flights of demagogy, provoke him on the question of the refusal of work!
>
> (Negri 1979a: 124)

> To struggle against capital, the working class must fight against itself insofar as it is capital.
>
> (Tronti, cited in *ATP*: 571)

In Chapter 4 I identified a point of contrast between Negri's and Deleuze's understandings of minor politics and its relations with capitalist dynamics. When Negri proposed that Marx's 'Fragment on Machines' raised the possibility of a communism of the 'transversal organization of free individuals built on a technology that makes it possible' (in *N*: 174), Deleuze responded with a 'shudder', suggesting that the new mechanisms, technologies, and arrangements of production were less concomitant with communism than with advanced regimes of control. For Deleuze, that is, there was no tendency in productive processes towards an emerging communist autonomy – politics was to continue to reside in cramped minority positions in the midst of capitalist social relations. In Chapter 4 I showed how *operaismo* developed a framework for the analysis of contemporary production which resonated with Deleuze's understanding of capital and control. Now I want to return to *operaismo* and *autonomia* to see how they developed a politics adequate to this cramped space of the social factory. In a general sense, this chapter is a discussion of the socialized worker that draws back from Hardt and Negri's (2000) emerging autonomous multitude to see how it can be seen as a minor political figure.

Following the framework of minor composition laid out in Chapter 2, this chapter takes off from the cramped condition identified by Tronti and Panzieri that the social factory operates as a generalized plane of production,

such that politics, as Tronti argues, begins with the refusal of the model of the people. The chapter then shows how the politics of 'the refusal of work' operates in this cramped space to ward off any plenitude in, or political subject of, work. The chapter then turns to the understanding of 'class composition' and the 'reversal of perspective' as *operaismo*'s mode of political composition, before considering the problematic of 'autovalorization'. The chapter then considers three aspects of *autonomia*'s practical activity – the complex of work, the refusal of work, and counterculture in the '*emarginati*', the question of the social wage in the Wages for Housework campaign and 'autoreduction', and the techniques of cultural creation in the Metropolitan Indians and Radio Alice. Before developing the argument I want to make a couple of preliminary points about this engagement with *operaismo* and *autonomia*.

The chapter draws upon materials from a complex and relatively long period in Italian political history: it starts with the conceptual constellation of *operaismo* that circulated around the figure of the mass worker, and moves to the practices of *autonomia* and the *emarginati* and socialized worker. There is a very real danger here of a false subsumption of very different forms and styles of politics in an overarching schema. As I indicated in the introduction to Chapter 4, *operaismo* and *autonomia* were diffuse and extremely varied configurations, and it would be wholly misguided to try and neatly subsume this complexity in one coherent movement. Further, *autonomia* emerges as the power of the mass worker was becoming curtailed through the closure of the large Northern factories, the decentralization of production, mass unemployment, and a wealth of austerity measures. As such, much changed between the 1960s and the late '70s such that the Movement of '77 was a very different political configuration from the Hot Autumn of '69.[1] However, rather than posit a neat break in productive regimes, it is more useful to see *autonomia* as existing amidst an emerging productive regime, in a movement from the mass worker *towards* the social factory and the socialized worker proper. The movements of *autonomia* can be seen, that is, as a most contemporary engagement with social lines of flight – something that existed immanently to pervasive social change – and expressing a 'double flux' between the movement of the extra-parliamentary left and the new regimes of production. If we frame *autonomia* in this way, it becomes possible to see it as an extension and proliferation of the techniques and modes of composition of *operaismo* into new areas, following Bologna's characterization of the Movement of '77 as 'a kind of both synthesis and transcendence of three generations of movements' (in Cuninghame 2001).

In making this case the chapter focuses on a vein in *autonomia* that can be seen as lying amidst the more molar forms of orthodox workerism, the vanguardist aspects of *autonomia operaia*, and the small 'militarized' groups and the 'diffuse violence' of the P.38 phenomenon that emerged in the late 1970s (cf. anonymous 1980), which, though largely a response to the repression, ended up in their effects being not *wholly* different from the Red Brigades, particularly when the violence moved from being 'diffuse' to

'clandestine'. Because of the considerable complexity of the 'area of *autonomia*', these different aspects and forms were often interlaced – each aspect being 'crossed by a multiplicity of tendencies' (Albertani 1981: n.p.).[2] As I mark in the argument, *operaismo* and *autonomia* (as any assemblage) had both minor and molar tendencies. The chapter is attentive to this tension, but aims to draw out the minor and proletarian aspects of this current. It also draws on movements and concepts from other communist currents as appropriate as sites for contrast or elaboration. As such, this chapter should not be seen as an attempt at a history of *operaismo* and *autonomia*. It is, rather, an analysis of some of the modes of composition of this current, as an attempt to show how the politics of the socialized worker can be conceptualized in a minor fashion.

The cramped space of *operaismo*

Operaismo's analysis of real subsumption and its social factory thesis, as explored in Chapter 5, left *operaismo* in a rather 'cramped' position, for neither technological and productive forces (and the politics of orthodox Marxism), nor the development of social democracy (and the PCI's politics of 'hegemony') offered means of escape from capitalist relations. Indeed, inasmuch as both models were premised on the coming to presence of a people – either as the amassing of proletarian forces in technologically rich production or as the development of an expansive space of counter-hegemony in social democracy – they were seen as *functional* to the naturalization of capitalist relations. Against these models, *operaismo*'s politics thus begins with the affirmation of the minor condition that the people are missing. The point is made starkly by Tronti:

> [T]he real generalization of the workers' conditions can introduce the appearance of its formal extinction. It is on this basis that the *specific* concept of labor's power is immediately absorbed in the *generic* concept of popular sovereignty: the political mediation here serves to allow the explosive content of labor's productive force to function *peacefully* within the beautiful forms of the modern relation of capitalist production. Because of this, at this level, when the *working class* politically refuses to become *people*, it does not close, but opens the most direct way to the socialist revolution.
>
> (Tronti 1973: 115–16)

As I showed in Chapter 2, Deleuze and Guattari argue that this cramped condition, where 'the people are missing', is not the announcement of a political dead-end. Deleuze and Guattari argue that cramped, impossible conditions *compel* politics, for if the most personal individual intrigue is always traversed by a wealth of determining social relations, then these social relations must be engaged with, disrupted, and politicized, if anything is to be actively lived. The milieu of such an engagement is never able to settle, or soar onto the self-actualizing grandeur of a people and its representatives, master

authors. Instead, it is an 'incessant bustle' charged with a vitality, with polemic, and with constant reinterpretation, where the often dry and obsessive work of intimate interrogation and particular intrigue – what may be called the 'cellar' of major literature – becomes itself the site of a collectively produced 'minor' literature.

This mode of creation is amply evident in *operaismo*. In commentary on *operaismo*, the dry, terse, and obsessive nature of their work is often remarked upon; indeed, for Moulier (1989: 5), 'the aridity or the obscurity of this form of Marxism . . . is like no other manifestation we have known'. The incessant engagement with, and reworking of Marx – a little of which I showed in Chapter 4 in relation to the real subsumption thesis – was driven less by a sense of an autonomous tradition, a 'revolutionary history', than by a need to put his work to use, to rework it in particular circumstances in an engagement with determining social relations. The Marx that they focused on – *Capital* volumes II and III, and the *Grundrisse* – was often obscure and difficult; for its dense complexity Guido Baldi (1985: 33) describes the *Grundrisse* as Marx's *Finnegan's Wake*. It also produced unusual reinterpretations; Moulier (1989: 35) reports that *operaismo*'s Marx was heretical enough to be said by its opponents to be a fabrication, and that indeed there was a joke that Enzo Grillo's translation of the *Grundrisse* was better than the original.

Central to these reinterpretations of Marx was an intensive mode of theoretical and linguistic creation that resonates with the minor mode of deterritorialization of language. Moulier (1989) suggests that the rather complex and arcane terminology of *operaismo* was a necessary aspect of its emergence through the PCI- and PSI-dominated left milieux. The complex and cramped relations of emerging *operaismo* with the historic left, and the way this necessitated a deterritorialized – rather than an open and autonomous – mode of formation of new perspectives is clear, for example, in the development of Panzieri's work. Wright (2002: 15–21) describes Panzieri's critique of the historic left's formation of the party and his emphasis on the 'economic sphere' against the left's social democratic trajectory – posed as it was from *within* the PSI – as emerging in terms 'to which few in the historic left would then have objected', but which 'came to assume connotations quite different to those shared by the majority of Communists and Socialists' (17). He thus writes:

> without ever registering an explicit break in his thinking, Panzieri's pursuit of workers' control led him further and further away from the historic left's prevalent themes of class alliance and the constitutional road to socialism. As such, Panzieri's work of the period represents one of the first clear, if unspoken, ruptures with Togliatti's perspectives from within the labour movement itself.
>
> (Wright 2002: 19)

Presenting the point more generally, Moulier writes:

> [D]oubtless by the same token that Althusser ventured into the French Communist Party under cover of scientific Marxism and Spinoza, the adherents of *operaismo* proceeded to use formulae that would not have shocked the old Stalinist communists. One could even say that part of the strange character of *operaismo* in the years 1964 to 1971 lies in this paradoxical way of saying in the very language of the Communist Party things which are so contrary to its whole theoretical foundation as to imitate its internal rupture.[3]
>
> (Moulier 1989: 20–1)

Thus, if the complex terminology had a cloaking function, it also reflected the considerable creativity of the movement. Though *operaismo* and *autonomia* used received Marxian terminology, they also coined many new terms, from 'class composition' to 'autovalorization' and 'autoreduction', each seeking to describe particular phenomena and maintain an 'operationality' for their milieux. The complexity and creativity of operaist and autonomist language is raised by Negri (from the isolation wing in Rebibbia prison in 1979) in response to a question about the difficulty of his language (and the consequent difficulty of rank and file militants using it), and it is worth citing at length:

> Certainly, the language is occasionally obscure. But it was far more obscure 20 years ago. At that time we had to find ways of inserting Marxist and revolutionary debates into the official labour movement, and since at the same time we had to avoid being expelled and marginalised, we found a hermetic style of language. The bureaucrats did not understand it, and underestimated the power of what we were saying. But since then things have changed a lot. Nowadays revolutionary students are far more able to understand the language that I and my friends use, rather than the 'clear and distinct' language of the ideological falsifications of the official parties.
>   Our language is difficult, but distinct. It speaks of things. Theirs is clear, but not distinct: they speak of nothing. Our language is difficult: but our comrades study it, as they study the classics of Marxism, the critique of political economy and many other things.
>
> (Negri, in Red Notes 1979: 206)

This sense of the relation to the major languages of orthodoxy and the practicality of conceptual production is crucial to an understanding of Negri's work. Negri's works – at least until *Empire* – have become notorious as 'difficult' texts. The difficulty of Negri's prose was marked, for example, by the English translators (who are well schooled in the milieu) of the, in Italy, best-selling pamphlet 'Capitalist domination and working class sabotage' (Negri 1979a) when they chose to omit some sections of the manuscript because, as they put it, 'In translating, we found the first two pages of this section almost incomprehensible' (116). Rather than consider Negri's prose in isolation, one is best able to understand it if one sees it in the context of its

milieu of composition. This point is made by Michael Hardt (1990b) in his review of Negri's (1988) Red Notes essay collection *Revolution Retrieved*. Hardt (1990b: 173–4) suggests that the sometimes arcane and uneven nature of Negri's prose is often attributable to the political immediacy and the complex dynamics of much of its production. Though in this piece Hardt is constrained by the introductory form of the book review – and one that concerns an author who was then relatively unknown in the Anglo-American political and academic world – there is a sense in which he sees the contingencies of struggle that were immanent to its production as obscuring the primary interest of the book, 'its lucid formulation of some of the central problematics facing Marxism today' (173). Viano (in Negri 1991a: xxxviii–ix) offers a more engaged take on the complexity of Negri's work. Arguing that it is a bourgeois fallacy (rooted in the image of a fully present universal humanity) that assumes that a book should be consumed similarly by the spectrum of social subjects, Viano suggests that Negri's language is a 'homage to difference' rooted in a cultural milieu opposed to the repetition of the regular refrains and meanings of 'normal' discourse. He implies that the language of *autonomia* is more akin to atonal music, is self-consciously positioned at the margins of the system of symbolic reproduction, and is comprised of many different parallel and divergent expressions. Whilst this can sound a little like a romanticism of difference, and it cannot be an excuse for incoherent writing (when traversing and developing extremely complex Marxian figures, such language is not without its problems), it does raise the question of the affective and productive nature of language in a context – Marxian political discourse – where such concerns are rarely evident. In the specific case of Negri – whose *Empire* is currently in danger of becoming seen as an autonomous, or 'major' theoretical work – it also encourages the reader to maintain a sense of the contextuality and productivity of his work, and to see it as expressing a mode of composition which emerges not in autonomous authors, but amidst the situated engagement, polemic, intrigue, and contestation that is the characteristic style of minor literature.

The refusal of work

We can now turn to the conceptual and political tools or modes of composition that emerged from this cramped space and Tronti's 'refusal to become people'. At the centre of *operaismo*'s and *autonomia*'s political configuration is the principle of the 'refusal of work'. As I showed in Chapter 4 and above, for Tronti, the generalization of work across the social factory subsumes the workers in a 'general interest' of labour. I have already considered the 'planning' and 'hegemony' responses to this situation. A third response is the affirmation of a working-class particularity through the reclamation of work in a council communist or anarchosyndicalist community of workers, or 'self-management'. Because of its influence in radical milieux and its return in Hardt and Negri (2000: 411), and so as to distinguish the position of the refusal of work, self-management needs to be considered in some detail.

Self-management or 'councilism' – as it developed through the critique of Leninism in the Dutch and German communist left, and groups such as Socialisme ou Barbarie and the Situationist International – has maintained quite a degree of prominence in the communist movement.[4] The introduction to Barrot (1987: 7) suggests that councilism 'dominated virtually the entire theoretical corpus of the revolutionary minorities between 1945 and 1970' – though it should be said that some currents, notably those that emerged through a relation to Bordiga and the Italian communist left, maintained a critique of self-management as a form of 'producer consciousness' from as early as 1918.[5] Though devised as a means of organization immanent to the workers themselves (as against the abstracted party form), 'self-management' tends to be founded on variations of essentialist conceptions of human nature or presence, which, if left to 'self-organize', will fully realize a communist essence.[6] Here, a form of organization is seen to display revolutionary content almost in and of itself,[7] and as such tends to function as an irreproachable form where 'the workers' or 'the oppressed' speaking out and organizing *themselves* cannot be wrong.[8] Camatte thus argues:

> The illusion [to 'participation' that breaks passivity and dependence in self-management] is very great with those who, in thinking that they have superseded Marx, say that the economy is no longer determinant, if it ever was. [T]hey add, only the struggle counts, that man is always there in fact, present in the social and economic frame and in everyday acts and facts etc., and that there would always be an immediate and continuous possibility of emancipation, which occurs with self-management.
>
> (Camatte 1995: 161)

For Tronti (1979a), in similar fashion, the self-management thesis is simply another version of the socialist affirmation of work. The thesis assumes that there is an autonomous labour that the workers could manage for themselves, extracted from capital, as if classes in capitalism are simply two separate groups, one of which is already communist in content. This perspective mistakes the problem of 'work' for that of 'management', and hence fails to take into account the way that work is always already capital; in real subsumption, work is not an autonomous activity sold to capital, but human activity called forth and immanently structured by capital. As Marx put it:

> [The workers'] co-operation only begins with the labour process, but by then they have ceased to belong to themselves. On entering the labour process they are incorporated into capital. As co-operators, *as members of a working organism, they merely form a particular mode of existence of capital.* Hence the productive power developed by the worker socially is the productive power of capital.
>
> (Marx 1976: 451; emphasis added)

Tronti thus argues:

> The anarcho-syndicalist 'general strike', which was supposed to provoke
> the collapse of capitalist society, is a romantic naivete from the word go.
> It already contains within it a demand which it appears to oppose – that
> is, the Lassallian demand for a 'fair share of the fruits of labour' – in other
> words, a fairer participation in the profit of capital . . . [This is the
> incorrect] idea that it is 'working people' who are the true 'givers of
> labour', and that it is the concern of workpeople to defend the dignity of
> this thing which they provide, against all those who would seek to
> debase it.
>
> (Tronti 1979a: 9)

The form 'work' (as a relation between fixed and variable capital), then, has the
class relation immanent to it: 'the worker *provides* capital, not only insofar as
he sells labour power, but also insofar as he *embodies* the class relation . . . From
the outset, the *conditions of labour* are in the hands of the capitalist' (Tronti
1979a: 9).

The problems of the theory of workers' self-management come to the fore
when considered in the context of its practical application, where it can prove
to be not only a weak political figure, but an efficient mechanism for *capitalist*
productivity. Following Bordiga's assertion that 'Socialism resides entirely in
the revolutionary negation of the ENTERPRISE, not in granting the enterprise to
the factory workers' (cited in *Négation* 1975: 81), the journal *Négation* presents
a fascinating critique of self-management in the case of the 1973 Lip watch-
factory occupation in Besançon – something of a *cause célèbre* of the post-'68
French left at the time. Following the threat of closure on the grounds of the
factory's uncompetitiveness, the Lip factory workers occupied and proceeded
to run the factory in self-managed fashion, maintaining production and, with
considerable support from the left, marketing their own watches.[9] Far from
the emergence of proletarian power, *Négation* analyses this self-management as
a moment of the self-harnessing of the workers to capitalist production in the
period of real subsumption.[10] Mistaking the individual capitalist (who, in real
subsumption disappears into the collective body of share ownership on one
side, and hired management on the other) rather than the enterprise as the
problem, *Négation* argues that the workers themselves became a collective
capitalist, taking on responsibility for the exploitation of their own labour.[11]
Thus, far from breaking with 'work', *Négation* points out that the workers
maintained the practice of clocking-in, continued to organize themselves and
the community around the needs of the factory, paid themselves from profits
arising from the sale of watches, maintained determined relations between
individual work done and wage, and continued to wear their work shirts
throughout the process ('It is perhaps this small detail that best reveals the
producer consciousness which characterized the Lip conflict'; 58).

Returning to *operaismo*, if work is always already a capitalist relation, then

there is no simple subject of the working class. Everything about work 'cramps' workers' possibility such that it offers no space for autonomous, politically progressive subjectivity. As such, Tronti (1973: 117) proposes that to be alienated from work, its form, function and subject, becomes the founding condition of revolutionary politics. Politics is hence not a reclamation of work against an 'external' control, but a *refusal* of work and the very subject of worker:

> No worker today is disposed to recognize the existence of labor outside capital. Labor equals exploitation: This is the logical prerequisite and historical result of capitalist civilization. From here there is no point of return. Workers have no time for the dignity of labor . . . Today, the working class need only look at itself to understand capital. It need only combat itself in order to destroy capital. It has to recognize itself as political power, deny itself as a productive force. For proof, we need only look at the moment of struggle itself: During the strike, the 'producer' is immediately identified with the class enemy. The working class confronts its own labor as capital, as a hostile force, as an enemy – this is the point of departure not only for the antagonism, but for the organization of the antagonism.
>
> (Tronti 1972a: 22)

The refusal of work – which, as I argued, is central to Marx's proletarian unnamable – should not, then, be understood simply as a *set of practices*, but as a mechanism for the refusal of any plenitude or subject in work, and a continuous engagement against work and its identities. Alongside the operaist refusal to affirm the model of the people, the refusal of work can thus be seen as a mechanism for the continual deferral of identity and a propulsive force toward inventive practice within and against the productive regimes of the social factory. As such, it is not an abstract programme, but a mode of proletarian composition, and needs to be seen in its particular practice. Nevertheless, given the lack of familiarity with the critique of work in modern political culture, before considering the development of this politics in *operaismo* and *autonomia* it is useful to present a brief overview of the place of the critique of work in radical milieux.

Few of the social, political, and economic forecasts of the twentieth century can have been more off-beam than those which foresaw the immanent demise of work, where either 'mass unemployment' or 'leisure society' was to be caused by the substitution of machines for humans.[12] As I argued in Chapter 4, we perform work which has over-spilled the old boundaries of the working day and the workplace with a plethora of regulatory and productive techniques in a fashion that shows not a demise, but an intensification of work (cf. Kamunist Kranti 1997).[13] Work, as Britain's New Labour government is keen to assert at every step, has increasingly become 'the territory of the social' (Donzelot 1991: 253), as its simultaneously diffuse and integrated plane breaks down

the old social sites of social security, moral education, retirement, social exclusion, cultural innovation, and so on (cf. Gray 1998; McRobbie 2002). Yet, whilst this intensification has not gone without opposition, there has been relatively little critique, or workplace politics that has seriously problematized the social arrangement of 'work' itself. Certainly in Britain, the central drive of Blairite social policy of 'social inclusion' through work has been easily naturalized.[14] Though a critique of work was an important aspect of the early workers' movement (cf. Hunnicutt 1988), it would seem that as modern political culture developed, work became a rather unproblematic category. This trajectory is evident in Bordiga's comment about the evolution of socialism:

> The classical socialist goal is the abolition of wage labor. Only the abolition of wage labor can bring about the abolition of capitalism. But not having been able to abolish wage labor in the sense that the workers see the absurdity and backwardness of selling their labor power, the socialist movement has, since it began, aimed at *the abolition of the market economy*.
>
> (Bordiga, cited in *Négation* 1975: 51)

Even Marxist politics, where work is a central site of problematization, has so often served less to problematize than to glorify work, in, as Benjamin (1992: 250–1) puts it, a kind of resurrection of the old Protestant work ethic. This is amply evident in the demands for the 'right to work', 'full employment', or Lenin's advocacy of Taylorism, Trotsky's 'militarization of labour', and Stalin's 'Stakhanovite' workers.[15]

A critique of work has, however, not been wholly absent from modern radical currents. In 1883 Paul Lafargue, Cuban-born Marxist and son-in-law to Marx, wrote a communist polemic, *The Right to be Lazy*, which can be seen as the start of the critique of work within the modern communist movement.[16] Lafargue's argument has a simple premise:

> A strange delusion possesses the working classes of the nations where capitalist civilization holds sway. This delusion drags in its train the individual and social woes which for two centuries have tortured sad humanity. This delusion is the love of work, the furious passion for work, pushed even to the exhaustion of the individual and his progeny. Instead of opposing this mental aberration, the priests, the economists and the moralists have cast a sacred halo over work.
>
> (Lafargue 1989: 21)

Lafargue was careful not to situate the cause of this furious passion solely in the hands of the bourgeoisie and its 'anaemic Rights of Man'. For the tragic irony is that those most subject to 'the most terrible scourge' have sought to make it the basis of their 'revolutionary principle' – the 'Right to Work': 'if the

miseries of compulsory work and the tortures of hunger have descended upon the proletariat more in number than the locusts of the Bible, it is because the proletariat itself invited them' (28). Though this is not the place to assess Lafargue's argument, it is worth noting that, against the 'right to work' he presents communism as a movement which, through the pressure for shorter hours and higher wages, can force technological development toward a society with a minimum possible of work time, such that 'The end of revolution is not the triumph of justice, morality and liberty . . . but to work the least possible and to enjoy oneself intellectually and physically the most possible' (cited in Cohn 1972: 160).

At the same time as Lafargue was writing his Marxist polemic, Nietzsche was saying something not wholly different:

> *The impossible class*. – Poor, happy and independent! – these things can go together; poor, happy and a slave! – these things can also go together – and I can think of no better news I could give to our factory slaves: provided, that is, they do not feel it to be in general a *disgrace* to be thus used, and *used up*, as a part of a machine and as it were a stopgap to fill a hole in human inventiveness! . . . If . . . you have always in your ears the flutings of the Socialist pied-pipers whose design is to enflame you with wild hopes? which bid you *to be prepared* and nothing further, prepared day upon day, so that you wait and wait for something to happen from outside and in all respects go on living as you have always lived . . . This would be the right attitude of mind: the workers of Europe ought henceforth to declare themselves *as a class* a human impossibility.
>
> (Nietzsche 1982: §206)

The sense of the critique of work that Lafargue and Nietzsche manifest develops, in diverse – and sometimes contradictory – ways in an anti-work tangent that, to mention only US and European cases, resides in a number of twentieth-century communist and countercultural currents, movements, and events.[17] Aside from *operaismo* and *autonomia*, the most prominent of these include the Industrial Workers of the World, Dada and aspects of Surrealism, the Situationist International, the Yippies, the Black Panther Party, US and UK base-committees in the automobile sector in the late 1960s and early '70s, tendencies in 1970s punk, aspects of Rastafari and other elements of black expressive culture and politics, as well as, in Britain, aspects of the unemployed workers' movement in the 1920s, elements of the Claimants' Union movement and, more recently, claimants' movements against the Jobseeker's Allowance and the New Deal.[18] The refusal of work has also emerged in a number of journals, where the sense of the 1953 St Germain des Prés graffiti '*Ne Travaillez Jamais*' has developed in many different ways (cf. *Fatuous Times* n.d., and *Aufheben*, *Midnight Notes*, *Processed World* and *Zerowork* generally).[19]

Class composition and the reversal of perspective

From the foundational cramping techniques of the refusal of the model of the people and the refusal of work, I will now turn to consider the modes of political composition of *operaismo* and *autonomia*, starting with *operaismo*'s model of class. The operaist figure of 'class composition' is two-sided and dynamic, incorporating both structural and political factors. As Negri explains, it is first a more conventional composition in terms of the development of capitalist production and stratification, and then an antagonistic, 'political' composition:

> By class composition, I mean that combination of political and material characteristics – both historical and physical – which makes up: (a) on the one hand, the historically given structure of labour-power, in all its manifestations, as produced by a given level of productive forces and relations; and (b) on the other hand, the working class as a determinate level of solidification of needs and desires, as a dynamic subject, an antagonistic force, tending towards its own independent identity in historical-political terms.
>
> (Negri 1988b: 209)

The problematic position of 'independent identity' emerges here again, but leaving this aside for the moment, the important point is that the emphasis is placed on structural and political variation. Class is 'framed in terms of [its] *historical transformability*' (Negri 1988b: 209). Or, as Moulier (1989: 14) puts it, class is a 'quality linked to dynamics and a field of force'. Rather than a Leninist distinction between the class 'in itself' and 'for itself' (where political 'consciousness' is injected from the outside into an already structurally formed class) or a sociological understanding of class as a socially stratified group, class composition is the effect of a more machinic co-functioning and variation of social, economic, technical, political, and cultural processes. Crucially, then, class composition signifies not a thing, but, as was elaborated under the sign of the proletariat in Chapter 3, a process or a mode of composition.

The theory of class composition places particular emphasis on the *political* forms, variations, and creations of the composition. Class composition is to be understood through an immersion in struggle, in a 'hot investigation' able to detect changing forms of practice, new needs, desires, and differences within the composition and relations between minorities in the class, and contribute to their development. This emphasis on political practice arose from *operaismo*'s central principle that working-class struggle has a determining place in the dynamics of capitalism – as the motor of its development. This is the principle of *operaismo*'s 'reversal of perspective' – what for Moulier (1989: 15) is, alongside the social factory thesis, one of the two 'essential discoveries' of *operaismo*. In his foundational text 'Lenin in England', Tronti puts it thus:

> We too have worked with a concept that puts capitalist development first, and workers second. This is a mistake. And now we have to turn the

problem on its head, reverse the polarity, and start again from the beginning: and the beginning is the class struggle of the working class. At the level of socially developed capital, capitalist development becomes subordinated to working class struggles; it follows behind them, and they set the pace to which the political mechanisms of capital's own reproduction must be tuned.[20]

(Tronti 1979b: 1)

In the reversal of perspective thesis, workers' struggles against work compel capital to reconfigure in order to constrain and capture that which escapes or disrupts the smooth functioning of production. Capital proceeds from the imposition of machines to structure and control workers (cf. Marx 1976: 563) towards an ever increasing socialization (real subsumption) in so far as each stage of development has its refusal, its unproductive entropy which compels capital to new technological paradigms in the 'decomposition' of each new 'class composition'.[21] As such, struggle is a primary inventive force in any arrangement, and revolutionary force is gauged by the degree to which capital has trouble reconfiguring around working-class composition.

This model of class composition and the reversal of perspective has the benefits of breaking any objectivist understanding of capitalist dynamics and politics by placing instability at the heart of the system, and emphasizing the need to continually find mechanisms and sites of political invention, alliance, and resistance, without presenting these as timeless proletarian practices. It is a proletarian conception of composition in so far as struggle is seen to emerge through engagement with contemporary capitalist axiomatics and dynamics and processes of their deterritorialization. The reversal of perspective, does, however, raise some problems.

Despite Tronti's insistence that work is always already capital, such that there is no independent subject of the working class, there is a tendency in the reversal of perspective to present a bi-polar war game between two distinct subjects – if not between 'capital and the working class', then between 'capital and workers-in-struggle'. Struggle, that is, seems to take on a certain autonomy or independence from capital, and can be presented in a rather universal or flat fashion, as it is elevated to *the* principle of creativity in capitalist arrangements. Some of Negri's work enables this point to be illustrated at the extreme. The reversal of perspective is central to *Empire*'s formulation of historical change.[22] In a fashion similar to Tronti, Hardt and Negri (2000: 268, 208, 268) argue, for example, that 'The history of capitalist forms is always necessarily a *reactive* history', that 'it is always the initiatives of organized labor power that determine the figure of capitalist development', and that 'The proletariat actually invents the social and productive forms that capital will be forced to adopt in the future.' But Negri adds another level to the argument. In *The Politics of Subversion* he appears to break with the reversal of perspective, calling it 'the rotten dialectic of workerism': 'that connection which saw proletarian struggles continuously induce restructuration of the

forms of capitalist control – and which was confronted by a new subjective outline of class (*and all that indefinitely*) has been definitively broken' (1989: 87–8; emphasis added). However, Negri's problem seems to be not with this understanding of cycles of struggle and capture per se, but with the 'indefinite' – we could say, non-teleological – nature of the process as he sees it formulated in *operaismo*. Bearing in mind that the reversal of perspective is central to *Empire*, it would seem that for Negri the cycle is not just one of autonomy-in-struggle and capture, but one where each cycle of class composition and decomposition tends to produce an ever more autonomous mode of social production. Struggle, that is, is presented not only as a site of autonomy, but as forcing the movement to autonomous production (cf. Chapter 4).

Rather than see resistance and capital in a neat dichotomy – or, as with Negri, see resistance induce a move toward productive autonomy – we need to see how the reversal of perspective can be posed in more minor and proletarian terms. To this end, Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the 'line of flight' and its tension with Foucault's 'resistance' is helpful. As I showed in Chapter 2, Deleuze argues that Foucault's model of 'resistance' is a rather weak and under-theorized reaction to power, rather than something in its own right. In its place – following Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on the primacy of desiring production – Deleuze proposes a fuller principle of the 'line of flight'. The line of flight is not so much a flight *from* an assemblage, as it is the inventive force upon which each assemblage seeks to configure (though, of course, as it configures around the line of flight, each assemblage mutates and may break down, developing into a different arrangement). At one level, the argument is not so different from Foucault (1982) since, for him, configurations of power equally engage with – and are, in a sense, driven by – resistance. For Deleuze, however, the line of flight has a more ambiguous nature than the term 'resistance' conveys. As we saw in Chapter 4, the capitalist socius operates directly on its lines of flight, and comes to do so increasingly in control societies. It reconfigures not solely as a result of struggle and resistance, but as a result of the wealth of attributes of life – or, to use Marxian terms, labour – and its manifold lines of flight, including its variable productivity, breakdowns, inventions, and desires, as much as its unproductive entropy and resistance.[23] If we think of the reversal of perspective in terms of the line of flight, political practice does not need to look for and affirm a pure space – an autonomy from capital – or propose a unified force of resistance. Rather, it should engage with the wealth of practices, desires, inventions, and needs throughout the social, following their lines of flight and seeking to deterritorialize the regimes of work and equivalence immanent to them.[24] This approach still gives ontological and epistemological primacy to the processes of escape, but it requires close attention both to workers' politics – some of which, even if apparently a 'resistance', may not be so progressive – and to more varied and diffuse aspects of social life, and groups historically excluded from the workers' movement – some of which may express a politics even if it is not framed in overt terms, or is not immediately apparent as political.

Lumley (1980: 129) argues that Tronti's work is a 'new ideologism' and the emphasis on the primacy of struggle is 'a theoretical and political regression'. It is true that when read as a proposition of a dichotomous model of capital and struggle the reversal of perspective can prove highly problematic. However, in its richer sense as an engagement with lines of flight and an effort to draw out and maximize moments of struggle and invention, this is a conservative judgement. For Moulier (1989: 20), the reversal of perspective is 'an almost unbelievably simple level of explanation'. For him, however, this is not a problem. Once presented in its richer sense, the apparently naive simplicity of the reversal of perspective becomes not an assertion of an all-encompassing historical narrative, but a first premise that needs to be considered in its ramifications and proliferations in political composition. As Moulier (1989: 23) writes, 'it is futile to point to its reductionist character independently of its results, and what it enables us to understand'. The crucial test of the thesis resides, then, not so much in its meta-dimensions as a totalizing explanation of historical change, but in the way that it encourages hot investigation into, and active engagement with, the specificity and detail of forms of class composition and struggle. This was one of the great strengths of *operaismo*, with its detailed studies of the FIAT plants (cf. Wright 2002: Chs 2 and 8), with Gambino's (1976) study of Ford in Britain, and with its specific engagements with workers' struggle and new social desires and forms of politics. At the same time, as Wright has argued, such intensive analysis tended to be sacrificed at each moment of upswing in the struggle:

> at each crucial stage of its development – from the break with Panzieri, or the unexpected outcome of the Hot Autumn, to the Movement of '77 – many of *operaismo*'s exponents seemed prepared to sacrifice their previous commitment to the study of the problem of class composition for a chance 'to seize the moment'.
>
> (Wright 2002: 225)

This tendency, that Wright describes as a certain 'political impatience', can be seen as arising directly out of the weak conception of the reversal of perspective, where the apparently autonomous nature of struggle induces, at each moment of its emergence, an uncritical affirmation.

Autovalorization

Taken together, the principles of the refusal of work, class composition, and the reversal of perspective can be seen as the basis for a cramped and continuously engaged minor politics. If the refusal of work wards off any plenitude of 'the workers' – since work is always already capital, politics is necessarily a refusal of work and its subjects – the reversal of perspective emphasizes the processes of political innovation and variation in any class composition. As these figures were developed in *operaismo*, the locus of their practice was still

the mass worker of the large factories. Whilst the concept of the mass worker stretched beyond the walls of the factory, it is not until the development of *autonomia* and the 'socialized worker' that the potential of this politics to pervade the social factory really took off. At this point a third conceptual configuration emerges – 'autovalorization'. Autovalorization, or 'self-valorization', is at once one of the more evocative and potentially useful conceptual developments of *autonomia*, and one of the least coherently defined. The ambiguity of the concept resides, as was the case with the reversal of perspective, in that it can tip either way as a complex, situated creativity in a minor fashion that develops in association with the refusal of work, or as an account of a coming to presence of a more 'autonomous' subject, as it tends to do in the later Negri.

The concept of autovalorization is closely associated with Negri, from his 1977 *La forma stato* (where he takes up Romano Alquati's use of the expression) up to his most recent work (cf. Wright 1988: 322). Alquati presents autovalorization in terms of 'the possibility that the working class can use the productive forces for valorizing itself against capital, as an antagonistic class. If an alternative use of highly developed productive forces is possible' (cited in Hardt and Negri 1994: 200). It is a question of opposing capitalist relations and processes of valorization through work, but with a composition that seeks to make use of the forces that are created in capitalism. In many ways the concept of autovalorization follows Panzieri's problematization of orthodox Marxist conceptions of the socialist assumption of already existing 'forces of production'. But it develops from Panzieri's critique in seeking to explore new and different forms of radical class composition with the forces of capitalist life (and hence 'forces' in Alquati's words should be read in a broad sense as 'potential' and, in Deleuze's terms, 'objective lines of flight', rather than as the 'forces of production' of orthodox Marxism). It is the play between forces actualized in capital, forces in and against capital, and forces 'independent' of capital that the concept of autovalorization seeks to comprehend. I will discuss this in two parts: the proliferation of differences and the problem of independence, and the relation between difference, needs, and the wage.

Difference and independence

Negri's most sustained accounts of autovalorization emerge in 'Domination and sabotage' (1979a) – a text that sought to engage with the new forms of struggle and invention manifested in the Movement of '77 – and *Marx beyond Marx* (1991a). As Negri argues in 'Domination and sabotage', in so far as capitalism is a social mode of production, autovalorization is concerned with the totality of capitalist forces and relations. It is conceived by Negri as the site of the 'power' of working-class composition, and comprises two elements: the 'destructuration' of capital (essentially the practices of the refusal of work), and a movement toward 'independence' (1979a: 96). It is the question of

'independence' that needs elaborating. Negri (1979a: 97) presents 'proletarian self-valorisation as *alternative* to, and radically *different* from, the totality of the processes of capitalist production and reproduction'. He describes this 'alternative' site (which he calls an 'intensive condition' and a 'productive being'; 97–8) with three methodological criteria. First, autovalorization presents an 'otherness' to the orthodox workers' movement, and, as such, it is an injunction to continual *diversity and discontinuity* in the forms and practices of what Karl Heinz Roth called the 'other workers' movement'. Second, following the reversal of perspective, the relationship to capitalist development is one of separateness, seen as a relation of *destructuration and recomposition* rather than linear development. Third, and as a direct consequence, the forms, practices, and languages of autovalorization are to be *deliberately divergent from those of normative capitalist culture*: 'there is *no homology*, no possible immediate translatability of languages, of logics, of signs, between the reality of the movement . . . and the overall framework of capitalist development, with its contents and objectives' (98–9).

This definition of autovalorization has clear importance as a promotion of innovative and continuously varying political composition, and clearly reflects the diversity, variability, and productivity of the Movement of '77 (a little of which is explored below). It does, however, also indicate some of the problems that develop in Negri's later work. Though the proletariat is presented as a process of innovation and discontinuity, and indeed as continually 'destructuring' capitalist relations, the content of activity appears to tend towards an 'independence' from capital as a liberated subjectivity where autovalorization becomes an affirmation of the independent ontology of the working class. In more recent work from Negri and this current, this independence takes two interrelated forms. At one level, autovalorization is presented as the site of the independent needs, desires, and cultures that were a prominent feature of the Movement of '77, such as pirate radio and squatted social centres for collective experiments in new forms of communal living and cultural creation. The definition of self-valorization in the glossary to Virno and Hardt (1996) conveys this rather clearly:

> [S]elf-valorization . . . refers to an alternative social structure of value that is founded not on the production of surplus value but on the collective needs and desires of the producing community. In Italy, this concept has been deployed to describe the practices of local and community-based forms of social organization and welfare that are relatively independent of capitalist relations of production and state control.
>
> (Virno and Hardt 1996: 264)

At another level, as Hardt and Negri propose in *Labor of Dionysus* and *Empire*, autovalorization is linked to the argument (considered in Chapter 4) that social labour tends toward productive autonomy such that work becomes an increasingly independent and self-directed form:

> The new era of the organization of capitalist production and reproduction
> of society is dominated by the emergence of the laboring subjectivity that
> claims its mass autonomy, its own independent capacity of collective
> valorization, that is, its self-valorization with respect to capital.
>
> (Hardt and Negri 1994: 280)

Autovalorization, that is, is presented either as experiments in marginal living
relatively outside of capitalist relations in, as Virno (1980: 113) critiques
aspects of the movement, a kind of 'pure socialization' (and as such it echoes
councilist self-management), or as the basis of the new regime of biopolitical
and affective production. We can perhaps see the movement from the former to
the latter as reflecting the problem that arises when increasing areas of counter-
cultural invention become subsumed in capitalist regimes of production.
Realizing the increased difficulty of an autonomous culture of the margins –
as state oppression of *autonomia* induced a self-defeating increasingly mili-
tarized defence of marginal spaces – it is as if Negri flips over to see the social
itself – the counterculture subsumed – as the site of autonomous creativity.
There are, however, other ways to read autovalorization in a more minor
fashion, where Negri's *Marx beyond Marx* is more useful.

Difference, needs, and the wage

To move away from thinking autovalorization as the self-affirmation of an
autonomous subject we can situate it in the context of Marx's understanding
of 'valorization' and 'needs'. In Marx, valorization is the process whereby
surplus labour is produced in work, and actualized in circulation as surplus
value. It is a term that applies both to the specific production and actual-
ization of surplus value, and the whole capitalist social milieu that supports
this. Central to the process of valorization is the category of 'needs'. Workers
work in order to gain a monetary wage that they exchange in consumption to
meet their needs. In general, the process leaves the workers with enough wage
to meet their 'necessary labour' – their current form of being, or historically
accumulated needs. For Marx, needs are necessarily variable over time and
place. This is his fundamental proposition about the nature of human
composition. At a basic level, capitalism is only an expression (albeit at a
rather exponential rate) of what Marx saw as the ratchet system of human
composition around an expansion of needs in a conception of the human –
against any essentialist understanding – as an expansive assemblage operating
in productive interrelation with Nature: a conception that Marx (1976: 285)
proposes 'in spite of the Bible'.[25] In this formulation, 'values' (ethics, lifestyles,
desires, competences, and so on) are as central to the production and control of
the human as the apparently more structural forms of 'work', for needs are to
be met through capitalist practices, ways of being, or ethics, alone. That is,
valorization occurs only in so far as needs are formed and met in terms of
capitalist identities, commodities, and money (working for a wage,

maximizing capacities to increase a wage, the equation of desire with consumption), since needs are only to be met indirectly (through consumption following the sale of one's labour for money).

Because needs, then, are the 'form of life' and are intimately enmeshed in capitalist relations and values, they are a crucial site of politics. The politics of autovalorization thus extends beyond a delimited space of work to cover the whole plane of socialization. But rather than thinking of autonomous, independent needs outside of capital, we can think of autovalorization operating in the machinic environments of capitalism – across the multiplicity of sites of the production of 'machinic surplus value' – at the meeting points of the expansion of needs and their axiomatization. Autovalorization can, then, be seen as a process of the proliferation of the former and the disruption of the latter. There was much talk in the '70s of affirming and expanding the particular needs, values, and styles of the various elements and minorities of the class composition. Whilst aspects of these practices and needs were concerned with cleaving off autonomous spaces for self-production relatively independent from direct capitalist relations (such as in self-managed squatted social centres), they were also concerned with strengthening the collection of needs of the class as a whole. Since, in the community of capitalism, money is the means to satisfy needs, the proliferation of needs and values was also part of a politics of the wage. Rather than autovalorization being an arrangement of difference, invention, and autonomy from capital (either in terms of counter-culture or biopolitical production), it can instead be seen as one of difference, invention, and the maximization of the wage.

At first sight this might seem to be problematic, since, as I argued in Chapter 4, the valuation of activity in terms of the general equivalent of money is the means for the capitalist axiomatization – or moulding and controlling – of life. However, for Negri (1991a) – building on his analysis of Marx's projected volume of *Capital* on the wage – money is a *political* site, which, whilst expressing the essence of capitalist axiomatization, is simultaneously a site of subversion. In seeking to have the proliferation of needs met by a wage, autovalorization can be seen as part of a demand and set of practices – as was central to *operaismo* and the mass worker – for 'more pay and less work' and 'we want everything' in a kind of 'reclamation' of surplus value against any mechanism which sought to tie the wage to productivity and capitalist ethics. If the mass worker fought on the terrain of the wage (according to Bifo (1980: 150) in 1969 alone, wage rises increased labour costs by more than 20 per cent), and extended this beyond the factory walls to cover the costs of transportation, housing, and so on, as the socialized worker thesis developed to consider the productivity of the social whole, the 'wage' would be expanded to encompass a 'social wage'. Negri reads Marx's assertion that, with the development of abstract labour and social capital, the workers' movement comes to demand a *proportion* of total profit, rather than an individual wage (Negri 1988c: 114–15; Marx 1973a: 597), as an argument for the extension of wage demands not merely within the 'working day', but over the entire 'life

span' (Negri 1988b: 219). The politics of the wage (as I consider below) thus extended to include sectors previously excluded from wage payment, and social services and consumption. This became particularly important since it was on the terrain of the social wage that capital was seeking to recoup the gains of the mass worker through austerity packages and inflation (Negri 1979b).[26]

If we draw together the aspects of autovalorization developed in 'Domination and sabotage' – the compulsion to political innovation and the variation and expansion of needs and political styles – with the emphasis on the expansion of the social wage, autovalorization can be seen as a proletarian minor practice. It is a kind of bordering which connects the 'little intrigues' of the various minorities of the class composition to the social whole (for it is through money and the wage that the social axiomatic operates as a metastable whole). It is concerned with developing new needs and styles that emerge through the particular experiences of minorities (what Guattari (1995b: 55) calls new 'universes of value'). It situates these not as 'independent' or 'real' needs, but as immanent to the capitalist socius (as they emerge from the machinic processes of the social factory and seek to be supported by a wage). And it seeks to deterritorialize the axioms of identity upon which capitalist valorization is premised (not least by breaking the link between productivity and the wage, and seeking a wage for a wealth of 'non-work' practices). Anything which attempts to settle this expansion of needs and styles in equivalence is to be rejected, and hence autovalorization can be conceived as a site of the continual problematization of received subjectivity, of coherent languages, or normative values and ethics, and as producing, not an independent subjectivity, but a form of practice. The expansive and continuous nature of this project is well expressed in 'Lia's' complication of the mass workers' formula 'we want everything': 'I do not refuse anything, I want everything. But I do not want what exists already' (in Magale 1980: 140). It is put on firmer conceptual ground by Virno when he describes the development of the Movement of '77 as a practice of disrupting the identities and equivalence of work and value, not with a new identity, but with a qualitative and varied 'doing':

> The practices and the languages adopted by the Movement seem to suggest an alternate type of socialization, different than that based on the exchange of equivalent values . . . What counts is the qualitative consistency, profoundly varied, of their 'doing'. To understand this proliferation of the *concrete* and the *different* within socialized labor requires a constellation of materialistic concepts which are totally detached from that *universality* characteristic of the 'general equivalent' and which are not used as the bases or synthesizing elements for the actual processes of liberation.
>
> (Virno 1980: 112)

Margins at the centre

If, as Tronti (1973: 115–16) argued, the social factory and the politics of hegemony created a plane of the people shorn of the antagonistic tensions of workers' struggle, then politics – to use Deleuze's terms – was necessarily to emerge in the cramped spaces of minorities who refused this model. And, indeed, 'minority' formations were central in the development of *autonomia*; Guattari's (1980b) characterization of *autonomia* as a 'proliferation of margins' is apt. One can think of minorities in *autonomia* as sites for the problematization and politicization of aspects of the class composition within the social factory: as sites where particular forms of the refusal of work, of political and cultural invention, and of autovalorization emerge. An emphasis on minorities takes us away from thinking of the socialized worker as a unified and coherent class, and presents it – along the lines of the proletarian unnamable – as a complex field of engagement and practice existing in the midst of socialized labour. Crucial to this understanding of minorities and socialized labour is an understanding of their *interaction*. Inasmuch as minorities operate within a class composition, they form inclusive disjunctions, both through their complexity of social relations, and through processes of interrogation, intrigue, and engagement across the milieu. The rest of this chapter explores three aspects of minority inclusive disjunction in *autonomia*. In each section the emphasis is placed on a particular site and mode of engagement arising out of a minority concern, and the way these problematizations were interrelated through the common project of the refusal of work. First I consider the general problematic of the *emarginati* and the way counterculture emerged in conjunction with an understanding of diffuse labour and the refusal of work. Then I consider the place of the social wage in the Wages for Housework campaign and 'autoreduction', and last I look at the particular site of cultural creation, language, and the alternate use of technical forms among the Metropolitan Indians and in Radio Alice. Before this, however, it is useful to contextualize *autonomia*'s minorities with a sketch of the place of Southern migrant minorities in the configuration of the mass worker and the culture of the refusal of work.

The Southern migrant worker in the industrial Northern 'factory-cities' was of central importance to the struggles in the 1960s and the emergence of *operaismo*. The migrant workers, who had a huge presence in the Northern factories, were said to be 'squeezed like a lemon in the factory and marginalized in the city' (Lumley 1990: 210).[27] Without the networks and cultural security of the established Northern working class, migrant workers had traditionally acted as a brake on union pressures (Bifo 1980: 150), but in the struggles of the 1969 Hot Autumn they played a central role. The Italian factory had maintained a strong disciplinary coherence since the Second World War,[28] and the 'dignity of labour' had been strongly embedded in PCI ethics.[29] The traditional PCI party and union structures, however, had little influence in the immigrant ghettos, and had little understanding of the broader concerns of immigrant workers – concerns that extended beyond the

workplace to questions of housing, discrimination, and welfare (Lumley 1990: 28). Further, as Partridge (1996) argues, the Southern workers brought with them a collective experience of struggle from their peasant milieu that was unconditioned by PCI models. Partridge (1996) argues that Southern peasant forms of organization and struggle embodied a striking extra-parliamentary and extra-legalistic aspect. When they brought these experiences to the Northern industrial plants – and it is estimated that 60 to 70 per cent of new workers at FIAT Mirafiori in the 1960s had direct experience of Southern struggles (Partridge 1996: 81) – their values and practices presented a number of innovative features that were to become central to the new forms of struggle. Indeed, the early break with union structures marked by the expression 'autonomy at the base', was coined by these workers. Partridge summarizes the migrants' political concerns as favouring

> a new disregard for the legal and disciplined practices of modern trade unionism, a deep suspicion of hierarchy manifested through a decentralisation of bargaining and preference for delegation over representation, an egalitarian trend in wage negotiations that loosened the supposed connections between skill and wage and undermined the factory hierarchy, and an extension of the struggles from the factory to the city.
>
> (Partridge 1996: 85)

As these forms of struggle developed, the critique of the intensity of factory work took on central importance. By the 1969 Hot Autumn the PCI model of the dignity of labour was in trouble, as was evident in the graffiti running along the external walls of the FIAT Mirafiori plant: 'The only music the bosses can hear is the sound of shut-down machinery', and 'We want the sun in Turin too' (Partridge n.d.a: 1). The struggles of the mass worker can be seen as an intensification of the relations of work that matched the intricacies of Taylorist production with techniques of refusal. Under a general demand of 'we want everything',[30] the refusal of work was characterized by high levels of absenteeism, wildcat strikes, 'internal marches', sabotage, demands for pay equalization and pay increases regardless of productivity, and the abolition of differential grading (cf. Bologna 1980b; Negri 1988b). The strikes of this period were not formal, union-run events, but spontaneous wildcats within the factories and during the production process. Each strike manifested itself differently according to the particular forms of production, skill, and local experience, and took different names: hiccups, snakes, chains, chequer-boards (cf. Big Flame 1971; Lumley 1990: 227–8). Snakes were processions or marches around the factory, growing in number as each work-station joined in. In chequer-boards the factory was divided up into sections which would take it in turns to stop work, sometimes organized by work-station, or shift, or by sections of the alphabet corresponding to workers' names.[31] At the same time, leaflets were put up on the walls of the factory, and thousands of leaflets, often produced twice daily, were distributed inside the factories and at the

gates (cf. Red Notes 1978: 183–91). The factories' resources were also used; as Viale (cited in Lumley 1990: 222) reports, 'in many factories they are using the foremen's telephones to communicate and organize struggles'.

The emarginati *and counterculture*

By the time of the Movement of '77, the problematic of 'minorities' and the refusal of work developed through a new figure – the *emarginati*. The *emarginati* were all those active in the Movement of '77 who did not conform to the conventional model of the mass worker. A partial list would include proletarian youth, cultural workers, off-the-books and precarious workers, students, sexual minorities, temporary workers, houseworkers, feminists, the unemployed, service workers, and young workers of the small factories.[32] The figure of the *emarginati* is closely related to Negri's socialized worker, and to the concern amongst other theorists of the movement such as Bologna and Alquati to analyse the new sectors of technical and intellectual labour and their techniques of refusal (cf. Wright 2002: 163). At the same time, the *emarginati* marked the emergence of countercultural styles and concerns into the terrain of class composition. It is the intersection and co-functioning of these elements and concerns that I want to explore here.

   In the 1970s the refusal of work by the mass worker developed into a widespread disaffection with work across the board. Hilary Partridge (n.d.a: 1) suggests that by the late 1970s there was a popular consensus that 'the "honest worker" has been transformed into long-haired beatniks making love in empty car-bodies and displaying complete contempt for work, for the trade unions, and for the Party'. And the young workers said something similar: 'we young ones go into the factory . . . with a different kind of experience, a less serious way of seeing things; a bit of the outside world comes into the factory with us'. 'Look at me, look at me well: My gym-shoes mean discotheque, my shirt says "extremist", I've got the hair of a pop-singer, and an ear-ring like a homosexual. Nothing about me says "worker"!' (cited in Partridge n.d.b: 4). One account of relations with the foremen from a young worker at FIAT Mirafiori captures the sense of the 'ungovernable factory' well:

> On the line there are people who can quote Foucault (a psychologist)[33] and the creeps explode with rage because they haven't even heard of him. Then there are the gays. They blow kisses and write 'Long Live Renato Zero' (a pop singer) on the walls. Others roll a joint and laugh like they're crazy-high. The feminists too, giggle every time a man tries to give them orders. The FIAT foremen have never seen the workers laughing, and they get really angry.
>
> (cited in Partridge n.d.a: 4)

It is against this background of the disaffection with work that the emergence of the *emarginati* needs to be understood. The nature of the 'marginality' of the

emarginati is complex, as it relates to questions of political marginalization, counterculture, and economic productivity. The term was used in part because – in an amalgam of ridicule, condemnation, and excision – a normative conception of 'the marginal' was employed by dominant political and cultural groups to split the new active sectors from 'the workers' (cf. Massumi 1987; Morris 1978). Collective A/traverso describe the process thus:

> This new repressive alliance, with its tentacles spreading out in all directions, is trying by every means it can to keep the economic and political struggles of the workers separate from all possible faces of autonomy. Its aim is to get the work of controlling and subjugating the masses done by the masses themselves, and to ensure that a majority conservative consensus is established among them against all the minorities of every kind – though in fact all those minorities together would add up to far more than any such majority!
>
> (in Guattari 1984: 240)

Operating very much as the avant-garde of this procedure, the PCI characterized the *emarginati* in lumpenproletarian terms as 'parasitical strata' (cf. Red Notes 1978: 47). The PCI journal *Vie Nuove* wrote of those involved in the '77 Bologna occupations that they were 'just common delinquents, organised Fascists, and misled youth' (cited in Red Notes 1978: 7), and after the Rome university occupation of February '77 a PCI sociology lecturer is reported to have said that 'there weren't any real students in there, only hippies, queers and people from the slum-districts' (in Red Notes 1978: 54). The most famous of these attempts at naming the disease of the *emarginati* was made by the PCI's general secretary Enrico Berlinguer, who said 'It won't be a few plague-bearers [*untorelli*] who will uproot Bologna' (cited in Morris 1978: 67).[34]

The *emarginati* did not, however, affirm a lumpenproletarian status. They did not, that is, present their critique of work as an autonomous space of non-work outside of capitalist relations of production. Indeed, a number of the theorists of the movement proposed that the *emarginati* embodied a *productive centrality*. Sergio Bologna (1980b), for example, sought firmly to situate the movement amongst the diffuse workers that emerged with the 1970s restructuring and break-up of the large factories, and the workers of the service sector. Following the logic of the social factory thesis, Bologna (1980b: 54) argued that Italy was experiencing an 'infinite decentralization of production' that allowed a profoundly 'mixed' labour force to become enmeshed in the wage relation. In making this case, Bologna at times seems to exclude the countercultural elements, arguing in another essay that the refusal of work had broken from a relation to the working class as it became a question of 'individual subjectivity – everything from absenteeism to the liberation of personal desires, from the worker who comes out as gay, to the worker who sits and smokes dope' (Bologna 1978: 121). This assessment appears to have come from a certain sense of 'defeat' in the later ears of *autonomia* – and no doubt

there was some truth in it.[35] This demarcation should not, however, be seen as an essential characteristic of the *emarginati*, for the diffuse workers and those that raised these questions of 'individual subjectivity' did not fall into distinct groupings, but were often enmeshed in each other. Indeed, a central characteristic of the *emarginati* was the combinatorial or inclusive disjunctive interrelation of its elements. One can consider the university student as a case in point. The combination of the liberalization of access to the universities since 1969 and the '150-Hours' scheme of workers' paid study-leave from 1972 (which may well have been intended to encourage social integration through upward social mobility; Bologna 1980b: 39) produced a university composition that was no longer a privileged stratum (Bologna 1978: 98), but more one of what Bologna (1978, 1980b) calls 'worker-students'.[36] Thus, the 1977 Rome and Bologna university occupations included all sorts of different proletarianized social groups (including many who had been politicized in the factory and high school movements), not so much because 'outside elements' infiltrated the university, but because of the complex relations of the 'students' themselves. One account describes the 'strange figure' of the student thus:

> There is a dense network of connections and overlaps between the students' movement and sectors of the proletariat . . . the 'strange' figure of the student crops up in the disputes involving door-to-door booksellers, squats of empty property, and in the shape of the unemployed intellectuals going to the labour exchange . . . s/he appears equally as the 'strange' worker with the diploma, or the organized unemployed, who study in the 150-Hours Scheme, or go to evening classes.
>
> (Manconi and Sinibaldi, cited in Lumley 1990: 299)

Thus, whilst many of those active in the Movement of '77 sought to compose ways of life outside of work altogether, or with a minimum of necessary work, *opting* for temporary, flexible, impermanent, and non-guaranteed work (such that Bifo (1980: 155) wrote of a 'self-declared marginal living'), the refusal of work, even as it became a countercultural question, was rarely seen as independent from the questions of work and income. Even those who withdrew from work, inasmuch as they were part of a movement, cannot be unproblematically seen as opting out of capitalist relations.[37] Thus, rather than seeing the *emarginati* operating, as one might conventionally characterize such groupings, as a 'youth movement' or a distinct 'counterculture', they preferred to see themselves as 'young proletarians' (Lumley 1990: 299). Bologna (1980b: 55) himself made this case when he argued that the questions of 'personal life', 'new needs', and 'youth culture' were not the prerogatives of 'an American-style "movement" – ghettoised and self-sufficient' but were part of a generalized working-class composition which drew on the history of the mass workers' demand 'we want everything', and reflected a certain '*homogeneity*, not a separation, between the behaviour of the young people, the women and the workers'.

The expression '*emarginati*' thus continued to be useful for elements of the

movement as a means of drawing relations between class politics and counter-culture. That is, the term *emarginati* – even *untorelli* – enabled both discussion of the political practices of diffuse workers (those who were no longer amassed in the factories, but were constituted in marginal, diffuse ways across the plane of the social factory), and marginal, minority, or countercultural questions within the framework of productive relations and class composition.[38] If the political and structural position of the *emarginati* could be characterized with the expression 'margins at the centre' – the centre of production and of politics (cf. Alliez 1980: 118) – this is not, then, because they were simply the new *exclusive* site of politics and production, but because they (and their sometimes rather 'marginal' countercultural practices) raised and developed a series of political questions, techniques, styles, and knowledges across the plane of the social factory in a complexification of class composition. It was, arguably, precisely this emergence of a counterculture in conjunction with, rather than in negation of, a proletarian politics – and this in the midst of the social relations of an emerging regime of diffuse production – that made the political stakes of the *emarginati* and *autonomia*, for the movement and for the state, so high. Making this case, Virno has argued that 'Post-Fordism in Italy was given its baptism by the so-called movement of '77'.

> In those struggles, a working population characterized by its mobility, low job security, and high student participation, and animated by a hatred for the 'ethic of work', frontally attacked the tradition and culture of the historic Left and marked a clean break with respect to the assembly line worker.
>
> (Virno 1996c: 243)

If Virno is right, the political battle lines were drawn, then, around the possibility of turning the breakdown of the terrain of the mass worker into a movement of the abolition of work, or into a new regime of decentralized, flexible production. The 'masterpiece' of the Italian 'counter-revolution', as Virno argues – and this was only possible through the dominant culture's marginalization, condemnation, and political suppression of *autonomia* – was in

> transform[ing] these collective tendencies, which in the movement of '77 were manifested as intransigent antagonism, into professional pre-requisites, ingredients of the production of surplus value, and leavening for a new cycle of capitalist development. The Italian neoliberalism of the 1980s was a sort of inverted 1977.[39]
>
> (Virno 1996c: 243)

Wages for Housework and autoreduction

Perhaps precisely because of its problematic relationship to the extra-parliamentary left (not least because of the prevalent Catholic morality of

Italian culture), the feminist movement was strongly influential in the development of *autonomia*. Its importance, as women broke from being the 'girl-friends of the militants' and 'Florence Nightingales of the duplicator' (Red Notes 1978: 114), is marked by Negri *et al.* in their balance-sheet of the movement written in prison in 1983:

> The feminist movement, with its practices of communalism and separatism, its critique of politics and the social articulations of power, its deep distrust of any form of 'general representation' of needs and desires, its love of *differences*, must be seen as the clearest archetypal form of this new [post-1974] phase of the movement.
>
> (Negri *et al.* 1988: 236)

It was the very cramped, problematic, and varied situation of women in the social factory (expressed well by the decision of the Roman collectives, during a discussion of the 'many types of woman's time' to place a score by Schöenberg on the cover of their magazine *Differences*[40]) that brought in many of the novel aspects of *autonomia*. Whilst *operaismo* theorized the social factory and engaged in the movement away from factoryist models, the centrality of wage workers still predominated. It was the feminist movement which brought to centrality the question of the non-waged, the critique of the ethical form of 'the militant' as the separation of politics and life, and the politicization of needs (cf. Bologna 1980b: 49). After the feminist intervention it became less easy to subsume the political within the frameworks of 'workers' centrality', and to prioritize the factory, or even paid work at all, over unpaid, socialized work, and activity in the sphere of 'reproduction'. (It also becomes difficult to periodize 'socialized' labour in a simple fashion, as the factory is revealed to have never been the exclusive site of the production of value.) As one feminist put it in the late 1970s:

> we have fought to establish the fact that our daily life is *political* – we are autonomous political agents. We have challenged the holy myth of the 'centrality' of the industrial working class. We have stressed that *social life* has a primary political importance, especially as far as women are concerned, as part and parcel of the new restructuring of Italian capitalism along the lines of the 'diffused factory'.
>
> (in Red Notes 1978: 114)

A central aspect of the feminist elements of *autonomia* was the Wages for Housework campaign.[41] Wages for Housework is consistently misrepresented as a simple campaign for the wage. Gorz (1982: 40), as one example among many, uses this campaign as an example of a workerist politics that seeks not the abolition of work, but the translation of all activity into market relations, and as such sees it as the 'height of alienation'. The campaign, in fact, is a rather sophisticated engagement with the politics of particularity – the

condition of women in the home, and the problematic status of the global unwaged generally (cf. James 1975) – in conjunction with a class composition framework. As such, Wages for Housework is best conceived, as Federici (1982) argues, as wages *against* housework, and against work in general.

The foundational text for this perspective is Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James's (1972) *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*. Dalla Costa and James develop an analysis of unwaged 'housework' as a historically structured practice that creates the subject of woman as 'housewife'. They argue that the division of the home and workplace, and the valorization of the latter via the wage, is the basis for the estrangement of women from socialized – and, hence, political – activity. Far from a 'natural' autonomous sphere, the housework economy and the family are integral to capitalist production, both in 'liberating' the labourer from the sphere of reproduction to sell his labour, and in reproducing that labour and capitalist relations generally – in a process which, despite, or rather because of, the discourses of 'nature' is actually intimately socially structured and controlled (cf. also Fortunati 1995). By analysing women's subordination in housework as integral to capital (rather than an injustice or a decontextualized patriarchy independent of capital) this perspective enables an understanding of the way women are as equally exploited by, and as entwined within, capitalist relations as working men.[42] Indeed, 'housework' is seen to be doubly subordinated, first by capital as work without a wage, and second, by the left itself which, because of the traditional emphasis on 'production' (taken as the conventional space of wage labour), excluded women as a 'non-productive' category from the realm of 'real' politics. The politics of the wage, then, is not a striving to raise all into full equality in exploitation (Dalla Costa and James 1972: 35), but to traverse the distinctions between the unwaged and the waged, and form a milieu that generalizes the refusal of work by including the wealth of 'women's work' – and, importantly, other forms of unwaged labour – in the category of capitalist work. As Federici (1982: 221) puts it, wages for housework 'is the demand by which our nature ends and our struggle begins because just to want wages for housework means to refuse that work as the expression of our nature'. Simultaneously, because of the 'peculiar combination of physical, emotional and sexual services' that are involved in 'housework', all sorts of previously 'hidden' – or cramped and marginal – relations and questions concerning the nature and attributes of work and social production become politicized (Federici 1982: 220). This foregrounding of the complexities of housework was thus an important point of departure in *autonomia* for the consideration and politicization of a wealth of attributes that constitute the production of the social factory as a whole.[43]

If interpreted narrowly in terms of the demand for remuneration, the campaign raises a number of problems. For example, how exactly could a wage be calculated, given the lack of instruments for the measurement of the work day? How could a housework 'strike' overcome the necessary aspects of community support for struggle in other sectors of the class composition?

However, when seen in the broader context of a generalized refusal of work, such difficulties become less limitations than sites of productive problematization and politicization. In foregrounding the wage as the diffuse axiomatizing network that conjoins needs and control in the production of differentially structured social groups, Wages for Housework opened a space for other cramped minority groups to raise their own particularity *and* find a basis for community on the plane of the wage (bearing in mind that the wage, here, is the social wage). And, indeed, at least in the formulations of *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, Wages for Housework presented its politics as a kind of inclusive disjunction with other minorities. Taking neither a distinct feminist, nor a distinct class position – 'Rejecting on the one hand class subordinated to feminism and on the other feminism subordinated to class' (Dalla Costa and James 1972: 9) – Wages for Housework enabled the exploration of particularity without settling into a marginal identity ghettoized against other minority concerns. *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* is thus littered with notes and comments about the nature of demands and practices as contextual and limited, representing perspectives and temporary points of struggle rather than distinct and timeless 'positions'. Dalla Costa and James (1972: 54) thus write: 'the demand for a wage for housework is only a basis, a perspective, from which to start . . . The practical, continuous translation of this perspective is the task the movement is facing in Italy and elsewhere.' This is not just an abstract position, but translates into specific strategic questions. Hence, the question of separatism is framed in terms of uncertainty as to 'how long these tendencies will continue to drive the movement forward and when they will turn into their opposite' (53), whilst the particular politics of child support, equal pay, and access to abortion services, are presented as necessarily embedded in broader feminist and class frameworks. Seen in this context, the struggle for the wage for housework is not as impossible a position as it might at first appear. And indeed, Caffentzis (1992) has argued that in the US the refusal of the naturalized space of reproduction functioned in accord with other aspects of struggle in the unwaged sector – in the strange community of 'blackpowerlonghaireddope-smokingflagrantqueerhousewifelesbians' (230) – to force an increase in social spending that played a central role in pushing the US Keynesian model of accumulation into crisis.

If the wage was to be expanded, the costs of consumption were to be reduced. This was particularly important at a time of mass austerity (cf. note 26). One innovative practical development here was the practice of 'autoreduction', or self-reduction. Autoreduction had its origins in the early 1970s in the practice in the large housing estates of collective reduction in the payment of rents, but it quickly spread to other areas of social consumption such as public transport and utilities. In 1974 when commuters between Pinerolo and Turin found that their bus fares had increased by 30 per cent, they refused to pay, and instead substituted their own fare-reduced tickets and forced a formal reduction (Ramirez 1975: 144; cf. also Cherki and Wieviorka

1980). This sparked a series of factory and community-based autoreduction committees which effectively instituted reduction on a wealth of utility bills – in a practice that was often aided by workers in the state-controlled electricity corporation who refused to disconnect supply.[44] As the Movement of '77 developed, this practice extended to include the realms of popular culture, with 'proletarian youth circles' and Metropolitan Indians refusing to pay at the cinema or expensive restaurants, and venturing on 'autonomous price-setting' (shoplifting) expeditions (cf. Bifo 1980: 154–5).

The Metropolitan Indians and Radio Alice

The third aspect of minority invention in *autonomia* I want to consider is that of the specific countercultural and technical configurations of the Metropolitan Indians and Collective A/traverso and their Radio Alice. As I suggested at the start of this chapter, *operaismo* and *autonomia* performed something of a deterritorialization of political language. In the Metropolitan Indians and Radio Alice the deterritorialization of language is extended beyond orthodox Marxism into dominant cultural forms and the culture of the social movements themselves. Placing great stay in parody and irony (in *conjunction* with the political and economic concerns of the movement as a whole), the Metropolitan Indians painted their faces, went on collective 'autonomous price-setting' expeditions, parodied PCI demonstrations (by, for example, bowing down to the speakers and chanting such things as: 'We are hooligans and provocateurs. The only true communists are Lama and Cossiga'[45]), and called demonstrations where they did not appear, or where, instead of marching, they had open discussion and distributed contraband, drugs, and irreverent leaflets against the 'pale faces' of the PCI.[46] But the Metropolitan Indians did this not to forge a new formalized identity. Torealta (1980) suggests that the mainstream media sought to focus on their painted faces as signs of a distinct identity, and so conceal their relations with the movement as a whole, or the 'transversal' nature of their practices. He argues that the painted faces tactic should not be seen as the mark of a coherent autonomous counterculture, but as 'an arbitrary characterization of a future people' who 'appropriates in an exhaustive way all possible terms and treats language as a science of imaginary solutions' (102). One can think of the Metropolitan Indians as a form of autovalorization which sought directly to engage with what Deleuze presents as the modulating 'dividuality' of the social factory and societies of control (cf. Chapter 4). Torealta argues that the condition of socialized work had disrupted clearly demarcated matrices of value such that the political subject of this process must do other than retreat to forms of equivalence and identity. He writes:

> For a social subject . . . that is diffuse and forced into a relation with fluctuating and indeterminate wages (and the question of wages, by definition, is the general referent of all signs), the 'pangs of conscience'

and discourses on 'political economy' are completely useless; one can not struggle against transience and dispersion with the blows of purpose and conscience.

Thus the social conditions of simulation and of the arbitrary come into being: there arises a social subject that is not reducible to one precise identity.

(Torealta 1980: 103)

Thus, following the 1977 Rome university occupation, Torealta (1980: 104) writes that 'from that day will gush rivers of speeches on the new needs of the youthful strata of the population; on that day hundreds of self-critical and remorseful discourses will be made, yet only the Metropolitan Indians will remain silent'. They would remain silent because, at least in Torealta's presentation, their manner was of provocation and creation, an exercise of difference that sought to open needs and possibilities, rather than settle on any in particular.

To give an example, when Luciano Lama (secretary of the General Confederation of Workers) entered the occupied Rome campus, spearheading the PCI call 'to defend the University which is occupied by fascists', he entered a space daubed with graffiti warning that capitalists and revisionists would be 'buried by a burst of laughter' signed by Godere Operaio and Godimento Studentesco ('Workers' Joy' and 'Students' Enjoyment' – puns on the formal workers' organizations) (in Red Notes 1978: 52). In the courtyard where Lama was to speak there was another platform with a replica dummy of himself, complete with a Valentine's heart and the words '*Nessuno L'Ama*' ('Lama nobody', or 'Nobody loves him'). As Lama began to speak a crowd of Metropolitan Indians took to chanting 'Sacrifices, sacrifices, we want sacrifices!', 'Build us more churches and fewer houses', and 'We demand to work harder and earn less!' (53). This event characteristically descended into a riot, but it offered no programme or even direct assault on the speaker, at least not at first, and no one took the podium. Rather, it was an event intended to undermine the regime of negotiation ('leave now and we shall see what can be done for your situation') by utilizing and returning the expressions of austerity and work that were deployed against the *emarginati*.

The second of the more prominent countercultural groups – and one of the most interesting compositions of *autonomia creativa* – was Collective A/traverso and their Radio Alice. A/traverso was a configuration of operaist and autonomist understandings of general intellect and qualitative work (a number of those who ran Radio Alice had been in Potere Operaio; cf. Collectif A/traverso 1977: 104–9), dadaist approaches to language, the historical avant-garde project of breaking the separation of art and everyday life, and US pop and counterculture. In A/traverso's more theoretical texts, Marx's general intellect thesis is rehearsed to explore a 'techno-scientific' intellectual labour that is enmeshed in capitalist relations through the simplification, mathematicization, and codification of language (Collectif A/traverso 1977:

104). But unlike Negri's more recent tendencies towards Habermassian communicative action, A/traverso considered general intellect and language to be fully implicated in the general relations of capitalist identity and equivalence:

> The system of production which is based upon the reduction of all aspects of human life to abstract work, exchangeable against wages, could not separate itself from the logic of language. Human language had to be reduced by capitalism to a simple instrument of production, and thus first codified, confined within the canons of comprehensibility, and it therefore had to root out all contradiction, and – given that contradiction lay in the existence of the subject/class – root out the subject.
>
> (Collectif A/traverso 1977: 109–10; my translation)

Building on an already developed form of political slang known as *sinistrese* (cf. Lumley 1990: 90), A/traverso explored dadaist nonsense to disrupt conventional modes of political expression, whilst they sought to locate this practice in the terrain of the movement and the socialized worker rather than in literature or art. They called this practice 'mao-dadaism' (Collectif A/traverso 1977: 115), and Morris (1978), following Macciocchi (1978), describes it as a 'semiological delinquency'.[47] The refusal of work was central to the project, and in a sense was the connective, or what Collective A/traverso, following Guattari, called the 'transversal' link across the various aspects of their practice:

> The guerrilla war of information, the organized disruption of the circulation of news, the break in the relationship between broadcasting and the making known of facts . . . is to be found within the general struggle against the organization and domination of work.
>   The interruption and subversion of the fluxes of production and the transmission of the signs given by authority represent a field of direct action.[48]
>
> (Collective A/traverso, in Guattari 1984: 236–7)

A/traverso's project was most effectively developed in their Radio Alice, one of the more prominent of the free radios that proliferated after the deregulation of broadcasting in 1976 (cf. Downing 1980).[49] As well as 'mao-dadaism', Radio Alice also used the composite 'Guattareuze' to characterize their practice (Collectif A/traverso 1977: 71). Indeed, as Umberto Eco (1977a) made much of, the name Alice was taken from Deleuze's (1990) discussion of *Through the Looking Glass*.[50] Following Deleuze (1990), Radio Alice's adventures sought to open up not an 'underground' as such, but a world of surfaces, nonsense, and events. With the 'circles of proletarian youth' as its particular focus,[51] Radio Alice sought to open the cramped spaces of home, work, the family, sexism, and individualizing relationships, to make language intensive, 'unproductive', tactile, and 'political', and to draw out, as they put

it, the 'unstated' and the 'uncanny' (Collective A/traverso 1980: 133).[52] Alice's transmission was a complex of music (the broadcast transcript in Collectif A/traverso (1977) includes Frank Zappa, the Rolling Stones, Don Cherry, Bob Dylan, Monteverdi, Jimi Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane and the Beatles), discussion programmes, phone-ins, and poetry: 'Stop the blackmail of poverty. Value of desire – value in use – labour value. Working-class aristocracy and *Lumpenproletariat* . . . What poverty? What work? Time must be reappropriated. It is our right to forget what time it is' (Collective A/traverso, in Guattari 1984: 237). But Radio Alice's Guattareuze was not limited to language and radio content within the framework of the conventional broadcast. Influenced as they were by Brecht's (1993) theories of radio's socialist potential, Radio Alice was specifically concerned with developing the productive potential of relations between producer and audience that they saw as curtailed by the dominant arrangement of radio technology. As such, Radio Alice presented the technology of the radio as a point within a broad milieu of interaction and communication. As Guattari (1996a: 75), writing about Alice, put it: 'radio constitutes but one central element of a whole range of communication means, from informal encounters in the Piazza Maggiore to the daily newspaper – via billboards, mural paintings, posters, leaflets, meetings, community activities, festivals etc.'[53]

The kind of machinic communication and actualization of collectivities developed by Radio Alice presented a very different model of organization to the more centralized forms of *autonomia operaio* and the emerging clandestine bands and, as such, Moulier (1989: 42) has argued that it 'profoundly modified the terms of debate about organization and brought down one of the main arguments in favour of centralization'.[54] It is a mode of organization that is clearly evident in Alice's involvement in the Bologna '77 Spring. Opening its airwaves to telephone-booth callers in the midst of demonstrations and occupations, Radio Alice enabled an ongoing communication and coordination of the events by those involved themselves, as they reported on the action, relayed the positions of the police and activists, and suggested possible actions and points of the city to avoid. This was a common structural feature of the free radios that Eco (1994) described as the mode of 'token reporter' where calls from public telephone booths were immediately relayed on air without mediation. A/traverso saw this as breaking down the 'crossword' approach of conventional phone-ins, based as they are on limited and structured responses (Downing 1980: 207). In Alice's case, such arrangements were the pretext for its closure by armed police, under the charge of 'military coordination'. The closure itself was transmitted live with hidden microphones, and makes an unusual read, with the last words broadcast: 'Police: Hands up there! B: We've got our hands up. They're telling us that this is a "hive of subversive activity"' (Red Notes 1978: 33).[55] Albertani (1981: n.p.) reports – and it makes a nice image – that some members of the collective escaped over the roof-tops and continued broadcasting from a car driving through the Bologna streets.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered some of the modes and styles of the minor composition of *operaismo* and *autonomia*. I have argued that, for *operaismo* and *autonomia*, work was the central site of what was an apparently stripped-down politics. Following the social factory thesis, workers were conceptualized as a generalized plane of socialized labour. This gives 'mass', then 'socialized' workers productive centrality, as a wealth of attributes and practices become subsumed in capitalist regimes of production and valorization. However, it does not give them a political *identity*, for, as Tronti argued, the identities formed within work are capitalist 'worker' identities. I have thus presented a series of *operaismo*'s 'cramping' manoeuvres which served to ward off the identities of work and compelled political composition: the 'refusal of work', 'class composition', and the 'reversal of perspective'. The political project that followed these configurations resided in forms of collective composition that disrupted work and the subject of worker, and, with the development of *autonomia*, practices of 'autovalorization'.

Autovalorization was presented as a process of expanding and changing 'needs' (as forms and styles of life) in the class composition, against any naturalization of needs determined by austerity measures or essentialist understandings of the human. In this expansion of needs, autovalorization was also a mechanism for warding off tendencies to identity in *autonomia* itself, for every minority of the movement – inasmuch as they conceived themselves as part of the class composition – was to assert and develop its particular needs, desires, and new forms of practice, and distribute these across the movement through engagement, contestation, alliance, and struggle. But autovalorization was also linked to the question of the social wage. It was through the social wage that autovalorization connected what we could call, following the framework of minor politics, the 'little intrigues' of *autonomia* to the social whole. The social wage became the site of a certain 'reclamation of surplus value', and required a continual process of struggle for a wage de-linked from work done, following the mass workers' struggle for more pay and less work. In practice, political innovation and the struggle to increase the social wage tended to be simultaneous, as was seen in the practices of 'autonomous price-setting' and 'autoreduction'.

With the emergence of the Movement of '77 the project of composition circulated around the figure of the *emarginati*. These 'marginals' – just like the houseworkers theorized by Wages for Housework – were not 'outside' of capitalist relations; they were central to the productivity of the social factory. They also tended to a composite, inclusive disjunctive form where each 'particular' minority concern elaborated its own needs and points of struggle in conjunction with other minority concerns with which it was interlaced. In their practices of the refusal of work and autovalorization I have argued that there was a tendency toward the enfolding and distribution of various identities, needs, and cultures across the plane of the movement, in a politics

which sought not an independent outside, but an expansion and deterritorialization of collective composition within the social factory.

In discussing the techniques and modes of composition of *operaismo* and *autonomia* and the specific cases of minority composition, the chapter has focused on the techniques that induced a refusal of any subjective plenitude, and encouraged particular minority engagement. As I have pointed out, this approach was always in tension with a tendency in *operaismo* and *autonomia* to an over-generalization and a simplified assertion of an emerging autonomous collectivity, in, as Wright (2002: 224) puts it, a 'penchant for all-embracing categories that, in seeking to explain everything, too often would clarify little'. Wright (2002: 224) suggests that the most damaging aspect of this tendency was the theory of the socialized worker – a category which alongside auto-valorization, as he cites Battaggia, 'was a very elegant instrument for synthesizing a plurality of social behaviours, but which, precisely for its excessive synthetic aspect, flattened them, negating their specificity'. This is an important point, and since the socialized worker has, in different ways, been the concern of Chapters 4 and 5, I want to engage a little with this critique.

As I argued in Chapter 4, it is indeed true that in the way the socialized worker is developed in Negri – as it extends problematic aspects of the reversal of perspective and class composition – one can detect a synthesis that tends to flatten the specificity and complexity of class composition in favour of an overly generalized plane of production and theory of the multitude. The real problem here is not the lack of detailed exploration of the specific contours and experience of the socialized worker and multitude as such – and Hardt and Negri have been happy to admit that in *Empire* the multitude is not yet fully elaborated and exists in the text in a rather poetic and unfleshed-out fashion (cf. Hardt *et al*. 2002: 185). It is, rather, that the way the socialized worker is seen to compose itself autonomously from regimes of control arises from a problematic foundational conception of the ontology of globalized and metastable production. It is not enough to say that the multitude is not a stable collective whole but an open multiplicity (cf. Hardt and Negri 2000: 103) when it is also seen as a collective field of autonomy from capitalist relations. For the latter proposition leaves the open multiplicity without concrete points for engagement, struggle and composition. This becomes most apparent when Negri returns to consider the contemporary viability of the refusal of work. Whilst in his earlier work he proposed that 'The only essence of labour which approximates to the concreteness of capital is the refusal of work' (1988b: 226; cf. also the citation at the start of this chapter), he now argues that, in the context of biopolitical production, this political model is redundant:

> There is no longer the possibility of classic sabotage, or of a Luddite refusal, because we are right inside it. Nowadays workers carry their instruments of labour inside their own heads – so how is one to refuse

work, or sabotage work? Should one commit suicide? Work is our dignity. The refusal of work was imaginable in a Fordist society, but today it becomes increasingly less thinkable. There is the refusal of command over work, but that is quite another thing.[56]

(Negri n.d.: n.p.)

Negri's development of the socialized worker does not mean, however, that the socialized worker is an unhelpful political figure. If in Chapter 4 I argued that the plane of the socialized worker could be seen as a set of relations, or a mode of production immanent to capitalist processes of axiomatization and control, in this chapter I have sought to show that the politics of the socialized worker can be considered in a minor, proletarian manner. As such, the concept does not require a false synthesis, but, rather, necessitates engagement with the complexity of political configuration in specific circumstances. Inasmuch as this engagement – at least in the case of *operaismo* and *autonomia* – draws in questions of needs, styles, the wage, alternative values, productivity outside the direct sphere of work, the creativity of struggle, the relation between counterculture and class, and the possibility for the deterritorialization of technical arrangements, it is, I would suggest, still a useful political figure. *Operaismo* and *autonomia* only offer one moment, one experimentation with the regimes of socialized work and emerging control societies. However, as one of the first moments of a proletarian politics of control, I would suggest that this current maintains a certain vitality to be critically explored from contemporary cramped spaces towards the development of political composition – perhaps, following Virno's (1996c: 243) characterization, even offering something of a 'future at our backs'.

6 Conclusion

The strange joy of politics

a kind of broadly pervasive democratic consensus seems to make us forget that 'democracy', more and more frequently, serves only to assure a play of economic and technical forces that no politics today subjects to any end other than its own expansion.

(Nancy 1991: xxxvii)

It is no disproof of one's presentiment of an ultimate liberation if the next day one's imprisonment continues on unchanged, or is even made straighter, or if it is even expressly stated that it will never end.

(Kafka 1999: 391)

Paolo Virno (1996d: 189) expresses a common sentiment about the state of current political thought and practice when he writes, 'If nobody asks me what political action is, I seem to know; but if I have to explain it to somebody who asks, this presumed knowledge evaporates into incoherence.' This is a problem, but it is not a wholly new one. Indeed, inasmuch as it is in the nature of politics to have an openness to virtuality, to potential, and to undetermined worlds, a certain amount of uncertainty, if not 'incoherence', is one of its central features. Nevertheless, politics is necessarily subject to a form of ordering – a stratification of forms and potential around the question 'what is to be done?' – since it is an attempt to call forth other worlds through concrete engagement with the intricacies of the present. At the other pole to that of 'incoherence', the problem is that such ordering and engagement has so often occurred through regimes of truth and certainty that it has been characterized as much by dogma and *ressentiment* as by experimentation and creation. It would be wrong to say that Marxism was the only vehicle of this form of stratification; the effacement of political virtuality in social democratic consensus is at least as effective, and certainly more pervasive. Nevertheless, orthodox Marxism and the Leninist model did such a good job of curtailing the innovation of politics that most serious attempts, certainly within the academy, to conceptualize politics and open its potential have, since the 1970s, worked at a degree of remove from Marxism, and even ventured a

certain 'post-politics' or a 'cultural politics' to get away from its perceived anaemic territory. Deleuze's work is in many ways attributable to a similar desire to radically rethink politics away from orthodoxy and dogma, and to address, in his own particular way, the question of 'what is to be done?' Yet, rather than sever links with Marxism, Deleuze worked through a rather nuanced relation with it: a relation that has enough importance to his work that up to his death Deleuze would continue to describe himself as Marxist.

Deleuze himself only came to Marx in the 1960s. He says that he read Marx and Nietzsche together (Deleuze 1995a: 51), and it is interesting to consider how these two thinkers – both of whom have been implicated in some of the worst horrors of the twentieth century – have faired in poststructuralist-influenced thought. The reterritorialization of Marx's and Nietzsche's 'untimely' thought (for a 'people to come') in the most oppressive of national socialisms and fully present historical peoples is such that the need to read Marx and Nietzsche against their dominant image is apparent long before one discusses the details of Deleuze's philosophical method.[1] Arguably, however, post-war French thought has largely managed to de-link Nietzsche's philosophy from National Socialism. One can hence see Deleuze as Nietzschean without offending too many sensibilities. Yet, to see Deleuze as Marxist appears to be more problematic, as if the identity of Marxism is still too much of a molar attractor. A sense of the danger of Marxist identity is even marked by Deleuze himself, who at least once presents Marx as a figure of oppressive molar thought (cf. Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 14). In following Deleuze's *relations* with Marx we are, hence, simultaneously compelled to maintain a certain *separation*. I would not want to suggest anything else. The focus of this book should be seen as an attempt to add to, rather than circumscribe understandings of Deleuze's politics; to consider a Deleuze–Marx resonance is not to reduce Deleuze to a circumscribed Marxism. What such a resonance should do, rather, is to explore the points of connection and complication between Deleuze and Marx. But, in doing this, one finds that Deleuze's relation with Marx is marked by no vague nod in Marx's direction. On the contrary, a little like the way *operaismo* sought to overcome the identity of Marxism by *returning* to Marx, Deleuze's Marxism is best seen as a return (with difference, of course) to core Marxian problematics.

To draw this book to a close I want to summarize some of its argument about the Marxian problematics in Deleuze's engagement with Marx through a brief consideration of the communist critique of democracy. This will help situate Deleuze's politics in a wider context of more dominant understandings of politics. The chapter then concludes with a consideration of the affective condition that arises from this political standpoint outside the nurturing social space of democratic politics. Taking off from Hardt and Negri's invocation of the 'lightness and joy' of communist politics, it considers Deleuze's reading of the peculiar joy and humour of Kafka and Foucault.

Communism, minor politics, and the critique of democracy

When, in his critique of modes of being constituted as an essence, an identity, or a 'work', Nancy (1991: 31) writes that community 'is the unworking of work that is social, economic, technical, and institutional', he excludes the political so as to suggest that this unworking *is* the practice of politics (158). It is for similar reasons, as I argued in Chapter 1 against Badiou's critique, that Deleuze and Guattari omit the field of 'politics' from *What is Philosophy?* For Deleuze, politics is immanent to life, across the realms of art, science, and philosophy and has no autonomous properties. It is *the* process of invention and creation, at least inasmuch as invention is the process that flees molar stratified forms of identity and relation and calls forth a 'new earth'. As such, politics is simultaneously a problematization of forms of identity and equivalence, and a process of invention, creation, and becoming across the social. As this book has sought to show, this characterization of politics as invention and difference is, however, only a starting point, and in itself it is not enough. Indeed, the danger of a superficial reading of Deleuze's politics is that it becomes an apology for capital, since capital is increasingly operating as a machine of (a certain kind of) difference. As Hardt and Negri argue:

> hybrid identities or multiculturalism can seem like liberatory projects when one assumes that the power being confronted rests on pure notions of identity and stark oppositions of self and other. But when the sovereign power no longer resides on pure identities but rather works through hybridization and multicultural formations, as we claim it does in *Empire*, then those projects lose any necessary relation to liberation or even contestation. In fact, they could be complicit with imperial power itself.
>
> (in Hardt *et al*. 2002: 182)

Deleuze himself was fully aware of this danger, and when he highlights the problem (albeit at a more abstract level) in *Difference and Repetition*, it is important that he uses Marx as a sign of his very different intention. In his discussion of Marx's forwarding of capital as a process of 'differenciation', against Hegelian opposition and contradiction, Deleuze writes:

> Clearly, at this point the philosophy of difference must be wary of turning into the discourse of beautiful souls: differences, nothing but differences, in a peaceful coexistence in the Idea of social places and functions . . . but the name of Marx is sufficient to save it from this danger.
>
> (Deleuze 1994a: 207)

Rather than a simple affirmation of difference, then, Deleuze proposes that political thought must begin from an engagement with the dynamics of the capitalist socius, and it is because of this proposition that he says he and

Guattari were Marxists (*N*: 171). This book has considered this politics through the figure of minor politics – as an intensive and creative engagement with the cramped conditions of life on the condition that 'the people are missing' (Deleuze 1989: 216) – and the problematic of the proletariat – as a plane of composition immanent to, and against the flows and axioms of capitalist production. Through the conjunction of these figures I have argued that Deleuze's politics is not only 'Marxist' in its focus on capitalist dynamics, but also 'communist', where communism is an immanent engagement with the regimes, relations, and forces of life as it is configured in capital towards their overcoming. To present Deleuze's relation with Marx through the figure of communism is to situate his politics in a very different trajectory to the dominant neo-Gramscian post-Marxist model of the staged shift from the 'economic' to the 'cultural' and the realm of social democratic politics, as against the plane of production. Through my consideration of the figure of the proletariat and the configurations of work, machines, capital, and the refusal of work in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I hope to have made the focus and some of the concerns of this trajectory clear. It is worth, however, marking a little more explicitly how this politics presents a critique of democracy, for this figure, as Badiou (2002) has recently argued, has come to operate as something of an irreproachable and extra-historical emblem or fetish of our time.

As with Deleuze, Marx's politics takes off from the politicization of the totality of social relations. As such, it challenges the liberal democratic model of politics – the sphere of negotiation between autonomous individuals manifest in the categories of 'citizen' and 'people' – as that which leaves the plane of capital and exploitation largely unproblematized. But Marx's and Deleuze's politics present not merely a *broader* or *richer* space of political activity than that of social democratic politics. Inasmuch as it is a critique and problematization of the forms of identity and practice composed in the capitalist socius, this politics is an explicit *challenge* to social democratic politics. In a quite contrary fashion to Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) post-Marxist argument that politics should orient around a widening of the 'chain of equivalences' of social democracy – and that a widening of democracy was a core principle of the early socialist project (Laclau 2001) – certain Marxist currents have continued to read Marx as proposing an explicitly *anti*-democratic politics. For Bordiga and other theorists related to the Italian communist left such as Barrot and Camatte, for example, democracy is immanent to the rise and functioning of capital such that its efforts to 'reconcile political equality with the division of society into social classes determined by the nature of the mode of production' (Bordiga n.d.: n.p.) is not its *deviation* but its *essence*.[2] As such, 'Marxist communism presents itself as a critique and negation of democracy' (Bordiga n.d.: n.p.). Deleuze's position is not dissimilar. For Deleuze, to be 'on the left' is not a matter of democracy (Deleuze 1997a: *G comme Gauche*; Stivale 2000). Democracy composes a plane of axiomatized molar subjects in relations of equivalence such that democratic politics is 'a kind of grid', a way of understanding and perceiving which

funnels and channels all events and problems into its unifying and totalizing framework (Deleuze 1998d: 40–1; cf. also Massumi 1992: 123–6).[3] Democracy, for Deleuze as for Marx, is immanent to the reterritorializing and recoding forces of capital.[4] To be on the left for Deleuze, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, is instead to perceive the world in terms of minor becomings. This is a no less global project than that framed by the project of democracy; it is a different *perception* of the global plane. To be on the left is, in a sense, to deny the majority, to propose that the majority is 'no one' and that politics occurs across a global plane of minorities, of 'everybody' (*ATP*: 105). Thus, when Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 108) write of or for 'a new earth and people that do not yet exist' they suggest that 'This people and earth will not be found in our democracies. Democracies are majorities, but a becoming is by its nature that which always eludes the majority.' The force of their distaste of democracy and its 'vulgarities', and their sense of the final impossibility of this form to offer any real politics is evident when they write: 'What social democracy has not given the order to fire when the poor come out of their territory or ghetto?' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 107).[5]

It is, then, in the conjunction of a politics rooted in the analysis of the dynamics of capitalist production – in its pervasive, diffuse, and global arrangements and its lines of flight – and a positing of politics across the plane of the socius, not only outside of, but in many senses against, the social democratic political that the communism of Deleuze's minor politics resides. At a time when increasing aspects of social life – from the neo-liberal intensification of work, to the flows of corporate finance and military alliances of a new imperial control disguised in the resolutely not-up-for-debate war against an abstract and pervasive 'terror' – operate fully beyond the reach of any possible progressive challenge from formal democratic politics, it would be a strange accusation indeed to see this framework as utopian. This is not to say that Deleuze falls into some kind of redundant dichotomy of 'reform' or 'revolution'. Thinking in minor terms is not a withdrawal from particular intervention into some hoped-for great crisis and ultimate contradiction – as I showed in Chapter 2, minor politics is concerned with intimate and particular interrogation of social relations. But it is to suggest that minor politics is an engagement that does not traverse the grid of democratic politics, but, rather, seeks to disrupt and deterritorialize the identities, languages, oppressions, exploitations, and practices that maintain the proper functioning of that grid.

This book has sought to consider both the techniques and styles of this engagement, and a number of specific sites and moments of intervention. In this I have considered at a number of points the way such an engagement arises not from the security of a people, but from a sense of cramped and impossible positions. If one subtracts oneself from the political grid of democracy today (which is not the same thing as withdrawing from its *critique*) one is most certainly left with a feeling of impossibility. One is seen to be almost wilfully naive about the real possibilities of politics in the contemporary socius – which, notwithstanding the re-emergence of 'anti-capitalist' themes, is certainly not

configuring itself at the cusp of an alternative social experiment to capital. It is thus worth considering what politically propulsive affective condition one might discern in the midst of impossibility.

Impossibility and joy

I want to draw this book to a close with a discussion of the peculiar affective condition of minor political and communist practice. Hardt and Negri are a useful place to start, for *Empire* ends with a quite spectacular invocation of contemporary communist affect, as it asserts in the last line 'the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 413). The point is made as an affirmation of life, of the constitutive being of the multitude against the 'misery of power'. It is not a wholly abstract formulation, because it is located in the project of a new 'militant'. This is not the ascetic militant of the Third International addled with Soviet doctrine and morality, duty and discipline, but of the history of revolutionary politics from the Spanish Civil War to anti-colonial struggle, and it takes a prototype in the Industrial Workers of the World with its model of organization and agitation immanent to diffuse and migratory labour. The multitude is on a wholly new terrain of biopolitical constitution, but towards the development of a directly political struggle it can learn, it would seem, from the communist movement.

The 'militant', however, is an odd choice of agent. The history of the model of the militant in the 'little diaries', as Kafka might call them, of the communist movement has been one of considerable critique. From feminist, countercultural, left communist, situationist perspectives, the militant has been challenged as an ascetic model of political practice that forms through a fetishized mode of commitment to 'action'. It is a model immanent to the formation of what Camatte (1995) calls political 'rackets', where groups emerge in equivalence to political concepts and theories against those outside the group – those with a less 'militant' attitude – and are propelled by the motive force of commitment and action to ever more self-certain and self-important activity. Rather than accelerate political change, militant forms tend to end up producing specialized roles, hostility to others, fear of models and struggles outside their own variety of political truth, anxiety about being worthy of the cause, and exhaustion – either through the dull repetition of action such as paper-selling and rounds of meetings, or through an acceleration into ever greater self-sacrificial activity that finds its logical outcome in the left-wing guerrilla.[6] Instead of militant activity being a site of lightness and joy, those who experience it are more likely, if criticism can surface, to present the experience in very different terms, akin perhaps, as Autotoxicity (1997: n.p.) describe one experience, to something like being in the midst of 'a psychological flophouse crossed with a local branch of the Air Training Corps'.

The lightness and joy of Hardt and Negri's militant is clearly a product of

its immanent relation to an increasingly autonomous biopolitical production that, as I argued in Chapter 4, is central to *Empire*'s conceptualization of contemporary capital and the emergence of the multitude. And part of the announcement of this joy and a coming communism of the multitude is no doubt an attempt to bring some optimism and possibility for affirmation to the left; indeed, as Balakrishnan (2000: 142) notes, *Empire* offers an optimism that seems to surpass even that of the neo-liberal diagnosticians of the end of history, whose works usually conclude with a note of caution. This does reverse the conventional position of the left, as Balakrishnan (2000: 142) puts it, of 'at best' a 'clear-eyed pessimism', and in this *Empire* is largely unique. It is difficult not to welcome a little affirmation, to feel at one with the cutting edge of change. And Hardt and Negri's efforts to forward an affirmative sensibility rooted in political engagement is important. But if one does not ascribe to their analysis of the ontology of contemporary production, the appeal to the high points of revolutionary politics and their expression of militancy is not adequate for thinking the affective possibilities of contemporary political practice. Political joy in the midst of contemporary regimes of work and control is not that easy.

Deleuze's minor politics is also, I would suggest, concerned with drawing out and affirming a certain affective condition of joy immanent to political composition. However, the conditions of the emergence of joy are very different for Deleuze, and, I would suggest, are founded in a much more pragmatic sense of the very real *difficulties* of political composition. Minor politics, as argued in Chapter 2, arises not from an emerging autonomy, but from cramped and complex relations that offer no easy or inevitable way out, and are packed full of disagreements, tensions, and impossibilities. I have argued that this condition induces modes of political and cultural invention. What I have not considered explicitly is the strange humour and joy that it induces. Deleuze's sense of the peculiar affective condition of this engagement emerges in his discussion of Kafka and Foucault.

Deleuze argues that amongst the many different aspects of Foucault's 'style' was 'an intense violence' born of seeing 'what was intolerable in things', and that was 'mastered, controlled, and turned into courage' (*N*: 103). As if to exemplify the point, Deleuze writes that Foucault 'was trembling with violence on some demonstrations' (*N*: 103). For Deleuze, this violence was immanent to the force of Foucault's work in its genealogical disruption of the present, and in Foucault's own desire to break free from himself: 'once one has to invent new concepts for unknown lands, then methods and moral systems break down and thinking becomes, as Foucault put it, a "perilous act", a violence whose first victim is oneself' (*N*: 103). Central to this violence is Foucault's critique – in works such as *Discipline and Punish* – of the apparent historical flowering of liberal democratic society, which is revealed to be a great labyrinth of productive control. Jameson has presented this form of critique, which seems to build up the intolerable to a vast edifice, as a disempowering critical production:

> What happens is that the more powerful the vision of some increasingly total system or logic – the Foucault of the prisons book is the obvious example – the more powerless the reader comes to feel. Insofar as the theorist wins, therefore, by constructing an increasingly closed and terrifying machine, to that very degree he loses, since the critical capacity of his work is thereby paralyzed, and the impulses of negation and revolt, not to speak of those of social transformation, are increasingly perceived as vain and trivial in the face of the model itself.
>
> (Jameson 1991: 5–6)

Deleuze addresses *Discipline and Punish* in a very different way. He argues that in the midst of Foucault's violence and this writing that emerges from his sense of the intolerable, Foucault's life and work expressed a certain 'shocking' humour. Indeed, contra Jameson, Deleuze perceives Foucault's account of the outlandish punishments in *Discipline and Punish* as producing 'great comic passages' (*N*: 107).[7] This laughter in the midst of the intolerable is, for Deleuze, central to the radical political intensity of Foucault's work. Drawing, it would seem, on Max Brod's account of Kafka's public readings of *The Trial* – another work of an apparently all-encompassing apparatus of control – when the listeners fell about laughing 'quite immoderately' (cited in *K*: 95; cf. Deleuze 1998e), Deleuze writes, in discussion of *Discipline and Punish*:

> The Divine Comedy of punishment means we can retain the basic right to collapse in fits of laughter in the face of a dazzling array of perverse inventions, cynical discourses and meticulous horrors. A whole chain of phenomena, from anti-masturbation machines for children to the mechanics of prison for adults, sets off an unexpected laughter which shame, suffering or death cannot silence . . . Vallès has already contrasted the revolutionaries' unique sense of gaiety in horror with the horrible gaiety of the torturer. Provided the hatred is strong enough something can be salvaged, a great joy which is not the ambivalent joy of hatred, but the joy of wanting to destroy whatever mutilates life.
>
> (Deleuze 1988: 23)

In contrast to Hardt and Negri's location of joy in the midst of productive autonomy and Jameson's diagnosis of the disempowering effects of theorists of the cramping force of social relations, Deleuze, then, sees a certain joy and humour arising from an engagement with, and a critique of cramped space. Deleuze and Guattari even go so far as to suggest that this joy in the midst of cramped space is inseparable from politics:

> Kafka's gaiety, or the gaiety of what he wrote, is no less important than its political reality and its political scope . . . We don't see any other criteria for genius than the following: the politics that runs through it and the joy

that it communicates. We will term 'low' and 'neurotic' any reading that turns genius into anguish, into tragedy, into a 'personal concern'. For example, Nietzsche, Kafka, Beckett, whomever: those who don't read them with many involuntary laughs and political tremors are deforming everything.

(*K*: 95–6)

With this sense of the immanence of cramped space and joy in mind, I want to conclude this book by returning to Virno's (1996d) problem of political 'incoherence'. Virno (1996b) argues that a prime feature of contemporary general intellect-rich work, and the cause of the difficulty of formulating political practice, is its subsumption of the extra-work 'action' (the sphere of invention, contingency, critical practice, knowledge, and a certain 'virtuosity') that was once the preserve and nurturing space of politics. Today, 'politics offers a communicative network and a cognitive content that are weaker and poorer than those to be found within the present-day processes of production. Action appears to be less complex than Work' (191). Hardt and Negri (2000) recognize this condition in their assertion that all of life has become subsumed in productive arrangements. In this environment politics must now take on the lesson of Marx's proletariat; politics resides in the manifolds of capital. Hardt and Negri's recognition of this in the positing of politics immanent to work (considered in the broad sense of the global social factory) is timely indeed. However, as I argued in Chapter 4, Hardt and Negri tend to see the subsumption of life *in* capital as itself a movement toward autonomy *from* capital. As such, the way out of the problem Virno identifies is to let the subsumption of activity in work become itself almost an expression of politics. Deleuze takes a different path, and in this is closer to Virno. For Deleuze, the capitalist axiomatic also subsumes life itself, but the effect of this is to produce, not autonomy, but ever more intricate mechanisms of control (*N*: 175). It is thus in the *midst* of capitalist social production, experienced as a cramped and diffuse milieu, that political composition is to emerge and the problem of political 'incoherence' is to be overcome.

Deleuze would no doubt agree with Virno that this leaves politics as a difficult task. As I suggested with regard to *operaismo*, minor politics is certainly not a politics of optimism. But it is not less productive for that; for it is in the recognition of, and the engagement with, the cramped conditions of life that the incessant bustle, polemic, invention – and strange joy – of politics emerges. Minor politics is at once both a process of cramped space, little intrigue, and intimate deterritorialization, *and* a kind of 'impossible' project of calling forth a 'new earth' and a 'people to come'. Though this might sound like the kind of slightly embarrassing utopianism or teleological thought that contemporary theory has sought to overcome, in Deleuze and Guattari's politics it has a particularly *functional* effect. Rather than a deferral of political practice or the affirmation of a teleology, it is a mechanism for the continual

problematization of any notion that political practice achieves a full pleni-
tude, that the people to come 'arrive'. That is, by situating politics between
the extremes of a 'missing' people and a 'new earth', minor politics seeks to
develop an affective condition that is able to live with, even be nourished by,
its incompleteness, its difficulties, and its 'impossibilities'. It develops as a
milieu, that is, where Beckett's (1989: 101) injunction 'Fail again. Fail better'
is manifest as an *affirmation* of life.

Notes

1 Introduction: the grandeur of Marx

1 At one of the points where Deleuze discusses the nature of a philosophical practice of 'resonance' he explicitly mentions Marx. Here Deleuze writes (1994b: xxi), albeit in a rather enigmatic fashion, that 'a commentary should act as a veritable double and bear maximal modification appropriate to a double. (One imagines a *philosophically* bearded Hegel, a *philosophically* clean-shaven Marx, in the same way as a moustached Mona Lisa.)' Elaborating a little, he continues 'the most exact, the most strict repetition has as its correlate the maximum difference', as it seeks 'the pure repetition of the former text and the present text *in one another*' (xxii).

2 'Something that has not been adequately discussed about Marx's *Capital* is the extent to which he is fascinated by capitalist mechanisms, precisely because the system is demented, yet works very well at the same time' (Deleuze, in Guattari 1995a: 54).

3 See Deleuze (1998a) for discussion of the function of the 'empty square' in structuralism, as the forever vacated space of fixed meaning in any system.

4 Deleuze (1995a: 51) himself says that *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* are completely traversed by Marx and Marxism.

5 This point about the tension between the tendency to exponential production and the need to realize surplus value in a given arrangement is made by Marx (1974a: esp. 249–50) in *Capital III* in his discussion of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall – a text that Deleuze (n.d.b: n.p.) considers to be of central importance: 'One must reread three texts of Marx: in book I: the production of surplus value, the chapter on the tendential fall in the last book, and finally, in the *Grundrisse*, the chapter on automation.'

6 Holland (1998) discerns a movement from a politics of schizophrenia (or deterritorialization) in *Anti-Oedipus* to a more sober analysis of the intricacies of capitalist control in *A Thousand Plateaus* and other later works, where 'the high-speed control feature of advanced capitalism . . . casts doubt on the viability of schizophrenia as a potentially revolutionary line of flight' (72). Holland's essay is concerned to locate this shift textually, as part of an answer to the question 'What happened "in-between" . . . the first and the second volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*?' (65). There is no doubt that *A Thousand Plateaus* is a richer analysis of the intricacies of contemporary capitalist control and is more cautious in its assessments of schizophrenic processes (containing fewer of the injunctions to absolute deterritorialization that close *Anti-Oedipus*). I think it is fair to say, however, that Holland's emphasis on capital and control is as much a product of contemporary concerns and fears as it is of Deleuze and Guattari's work itself.

7 As Deleuze (1995b: 6) wrote of his concentration on Lucretius, Hume, Spinoza,

and Nietzsche against the conventional 'history of philosophy', what appealed to him was 'their critique of negativity, their cultivation of joy'.

8 Stressing the importance of this position, Dauvé responds to Amadeo Bordiga's argument that the whole of Marx's work is an elaboration of communism by suggesting that 'This is undoubtedly the most profound comment made about Marx' (in Dauvé and Martin 1997: 83).

9 These points are made, respectively, in Marx (1973a: 488), Marx (1975b: 278–9), Marx and Engels (1974: 54–5), and Deleuze and Guattari (*AŒ*: 294).

10 Whilst there is difference and variation in themes and styles between Deleuze's and Guattari's works, and between each and their collective work, this book draws on their individual and collective works as part of a single oeuvre, which, for convenience, I often signify with the name 'Deleuze' (as in the book title). Guattari (1998: 192–3) discusses the problems with, and motives for, the frequent elision of his name from what he elsewhere calls the 'deleuzoguattarian' project (Guattari 1980a: 234), but suggests that 'Deleuze' has become an acceptable common noun for it.

11 Nietzsche puts it like this: 'This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expand itself but only transforms itself' (1969: §1067). Nietzsche's (1968: §552) argument that there are no things, only perspectives, is applicable to even the smallest of 'units': 'It is only after the model of the subject that we have invented the reality of things and projected them into the medley of sensations. If we no longer believe in the effective subject, then belief also disappears in effective things, in reciprocation, cause and effect between those phenomena that we call things.
    There also disappears, of course, the world of effective atoms.'

12 Deleuze (1983: 3) writes that 'The history of a thing, in general, is the succession of forces which take possession of it and the co-existence of the forces which struggle for possession.' There is, however, still something of a 'thing' in this expression. Foucault (1972: 47) perhaps expresses the Nietzschean conception of matter better when he writes: 'What, in short, we wish to do is to dispense with "things" . . . To substitute for the enigmatic treasure of "things" anterior to discourse, the regular formation of objects that emerge only in discourse.'

13 Essentially, the term 'assemblage' describes a process of relations of proximity where the multiplicity of connection and flux across forces in relation is such that what defines the assemblage is its singular functioning (with forms of content and expression), and its mutation (around the play of territorialization and deterritorialization).

14 'A thing has as many senses as there are forces capable of taking possession of it. But the thing itself is not neutral and will have more or less affinity with the force in current possession' (Deleuze 1983: 4).

15 For Deleuze, every 'thing' has two aspects, the 'actual' and the 'virtual', where the former is a 'selection' of the manifold potential of the latter (cf. Deleuze 1994b).

16 Deleuze offers a useful example here of the polymorphous nature of May '68: '*Anti-Oedipus* was about the univocity of the real, a sort of Spinozism of the unconscious. And I think '68 was this discovery itself. The people who hate '68, or say that it was a mistake, see it as something symbolic or imaginary. But that's precisely what it wasn't, it was pure reality breaking through' (*N*: 144–5).

17 It is crucial to understand that there is no primary element to Deleuze and Guattari's monism other than an infinite process: 'What we are talking about is not the unity of substance but the infinity of the modifications that are part of one another on this unique plane of life' (*ATP*: 254).

18 Marx (1975a: 348) himself writes that '[communism] is the solution of the riddle

of history and knows itself to be the solution'. It is clear from Marx's definition of the 'real movement' that the 'solution' – whilst it may indeed point to a post-capitalist socius – is immanent to the engagement with the riddle itself.

19 The term 'minor politics' is derived from Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of the 'minor', 'minoritarian', and 'minor literature'. Though they have used the expressions 'minor literature and politics' and 'Kafka politics' (*K*: 86, 7), 'minor politics' is not a term they employ.

20 See Massumi (1997: 760–1) and Mustapha and Eken (2001: 6) for a similar presentation of this kind of Nietzschean (but no less Marxist) communism.

21 Neither should it be seen as a denial of the crucial space of political theory and practice that has developed through a self-declared communist movement.

22 Deleuze does, however, at times pose his politics in terms of 'class struggle' and a 'revolutionary' project (cf. Deleuze 1977: 100–1).

23 Deleuze (1990: 72–3) comes closest to presenting his own project in these terms when he writes of the 'great politics' in *The Logic of Sense*: 'It suffices that we dissipate ourselves a little, that we be able to be at the surface, that we stretch our skin like a drum, in order that the "great politics" begin. An empty square for neither man nor God; singularities which are neither general nor individual, neither personal nor universal. All of this is traversed by circulations, echoes, and events which produce more sense, more freedom, and more strength than man has ever dreamed of, or God ever conceived.'

24 Deleuze (1992: 85) writes: 'The question of the corresponding assemblage of enunciation' to the cinema as machinic assemblage of matter-images 'remains open, since Vertov's answer (Communist society) has lost its meaning.'

25 Deleuze (1994b: 186) does give a certain priority to 'the economic', but it is the economic as the plane of configuration of life in capital which always operates through the quantitative organization and conjoining of abstract flows: 'In short, the economic is the social dialectic itself – in other words, the totality of the problems posed to a given society, or the synthetic and problematising field of that society. In all rigour, there are only economic social problems, even though the solutions may be juridical, political or ideological, and the problems may be expressed in these fields of resolvability.'

26 One of the most important possible effects of *Empire* is the way it may draw out a new set of problematics for research and politics through critical engagement with the text – something that Hardt and Negri (2001: 236) call for when they say that 'Ours is the kind of book that asks to be criticized.'

27 Deleuze's empiricism is a perspectivism toward an overturning of all thought of identity and representation (populated as identity thought is with the dualisms of subjects and objects, universals and particulars), with an affirmation of relations of connectivity and resonance across, against, and within 'things'. As Deleuze (1994b: 57) writes: 'The intense world of differences, in which we find the reason behind qualities and the being of the sensible, is precisely the object of a superior empiricism. This empiricism teaches us a strange "reason", that of the multiple, chaos and difference (nomadic distributions, crowned anarchies).' In Deleuze's empiricism, as should be clear from my discussion of materialism, relations are not derived from things, but vice versa: 'Relations are not internal to a Whole; rather, the Whole is derived from the external relations of a given moment, and varies with them' (Deleuze 1997b: 59). The particular as a unit of empiricism is thus not a unit at all, but a multiplicity of relations. Faced with these multiplicities, empiricism seeks to create new differences through new relations and resonances. It is thus a methodology of 'and' rather than 'is' (cf. Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 54–9).

2 Minor politics: the styles of cramped creation

1 'America sought to create a revolution whose strength would lie in a universal immigration, émigrés of the world, just as Bolshevik Russia would seek to make a revolution whose strength would lie in a universal proletarianization, "Proletarians of the world" . . . the two forms of class struggle. So that the messianism of the nineteenth century has two heads and is expressed no less in American *pragmatism* than in the ultimately Russian form of socialism' (Deleuze 1997b: 86).

2 When discussing the contemporary persecution of the Palestinians Deleuze argues that certain forms of colonialism – notably those which seek a *terra nullius* (1998b) – operate through the absolute denial of the existence of those who are not part of 'the people' being composed: 'From beginning to end, {Zionist terrorism} involved acting as if the Palestinian people not only must not exist, but had never existed' (1998c: 30). A certain degree of commonality between the experiences of the Palestinians and the indigenous North Americans is then marked in a conversation between Deleuze and Elias Sanbar (1998) entitled 'The Indians of Palestine'.

3 Ever since the reterritorialization of the Soviet revolution, 'There's no longer any image of proletarians of which it's just a matter of becoming conscious' (*N*: 173).

4 'Writing has a double function: to translate everything into assemblages and to dismantle assemblages. The two are the same thing' (*K*: 47).

5 Kafka (1999: 150–1) himself characterized the 'literature of small peoples' thus: '1. Liveliness: a. Conflict. b. Schools. c. Magazines. 2. Less constraint: a. Absence of principles. b. Minor themes. c. Easy formation of symbols. d. Throwing off of the untalented. 3. Popularity: a. Connection with politics. b. Literary history. c. Faith in literature, can make up their own laws.'

6 My discussion of the criteria and techniques of minor politics is more closely related to the structure of Deleuze's (1989: 215–24) account of the criteria of minor cinema in *Cinema 2*, where the first principle is that the people are missing.

7 See Patton (2000: 83–7) for a wider discussion of Deleuze's break with liberal understandings of freedom.

8 Kafka seems to reflect this when he says to Janouch (1971: 20) that he is in a cage, 'not only in the office, but everywhere . . . I carry the bars within me all the time.'

9 I am grateful to Derrol Palmer for helping me find this reference.

10 Pascal (1982: 197–201) argues that the difference between the ape's 'way out' and romantic ideas of freedom and the authentic independent self is a central aspect of the story: a story that he suggests presents the dilemma of existence under social constraints as an open, continuous, subtle, and pragmatic experimentation.

11 Deleuze and Guattari (*ATP*: 83) put it like this: 'A type of statement can be evaluated only as a function of its pragmatic implications, in other words, in relation to the implicit presuppositions, immanent acts, or incorporeal transformations it expresses and which introduce new configurations of bodies.'

12 Chapter 1 of *Anti-Oedipus* describes three 'syntheses' of desiring production: the connective synthesis of production, the disjunctive synthesis of recording, and the conjunctive synthesis of consumption-consummation. Essentially, the first synthesis is the site of the undifferentiated 'flow' of desiring production where desiring machines make continual couplings of the 'and . . . and . . . and' type. The second is the recording 'break' of desiring production that inscribes production on a surface (the Body without Organs) as a series of disjunctions which are distributed as a grid, network or series of coordinates. The third synthesis emerges on the recording surface of the BwO to produce a kind of subject through a localization and consumption of the sensual pleasure, or the product of the disjunctions. Operating together the three syntheses describe the production and investments of subjectivity in a social system. Relations of 'exclusive disjunction'

serve to reinforce the demarcation of identity formed in the three syntheses as the subject – a *product* of the syntheses, and hence always 'adjacent' to them – comes to recognize itself as the *cause*. Relations of 'inclusive disjunction', on the other hand, serve to set the subject free to continuously and variously 'consummate' itself in every new disjunction, 'garnering here, there, and everywhere a reward in the form of a becoming or an avatar, being born of the states that it consumes and being reborn in each new state' (*AŒ*: 16). See Holland (1999: Ch. 2) for an incisive explication of the three syntheses.

13 Writing of fetishism, value, and common sense in Marx (following the sense of his analysis of the fetishism of commodities; Marx 1976: 163–77), Deleuze (1994a: 207–8) says that every 'solution' to a social problem is doubled with a 'false problem' where the identities *produced* in social regimes become *objective truths* in social consciousness (such that 'The natural object of social consciousness or common sense with regard to the recognition of value is the fetish') (cf. also *AŒ*: 4).

14 See Wagenbach (1984) and Werckmeister (1997) for discussion of the importance and complex effects of Kafka's work in the Workmen's Accident Insurance Institution, as against the common interpretation of Kafka's employment as merely a strain on, and a distraction from his art.

15 Indeed, in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze (1994a: 207, 327) aligns himself with the position developed by Althusser and the group around *Reading Capital* that Marx presents a theory of capital as premised on processes of difference and variation rather than contradiction: 'Those commentators on Marx who insist upon the fundamental difference between Marx and Hegel rightly point out that in *Capital* the category of differenciation (the differenciation at the heart of a social multiplicity: the division of labour) is substituted for the Hegelian concepts of opposition, contradiction, and alienation, the latter forming only an apparent movement and standing only for abstract effects separated from the principle and from the real movement of their production' (Deleuze 1994a: 207).

16 It is worth saying a little about Kafka's relations with socialist and anarchist movements. As Kafka reports to Janouch (1971: 86), an incident in his youth when his family cook playfully called him a Ravachol (the name of a French anarchist, though he knew this only later, being told at the time that it meant murderer and criminal) left him with a lasting 'groundless sense of guilt' such that he says 'I knew that I was an Ishmael, a criminal, in short – a ravachol' (89). Later he studied in depth the lives and ideas of the historical figures of anarchism, and frequented various circles and meetings, including, in 1910, the anarchist Club of the Young. He says that he 'devoted much time and money to the subject' (90). Brod comments on Kafka's diary entry 'Don't forget Kropotkin!' that 'Kropotkin's memoirs were among Kafka's favourite books, as were the memoirs of Alexander Herzen' (in Kafka 1999: 233, 496). But Kafka's relationship, as one might expect, is clearly not a simple one of identity with these movements. A sense of ambiguity is clear in this section from Janouch (1971: 90): '"[The anarchists] all attempted to realize the happiness of mankind without the aid of Grace. But –," Kafka lifted both arms like a pair of broken wings and let them fall helplessly, "I could not march shoulder to shoulder with them for long."' Kafka also says to Janouch that he knows the Czech anarchists 'A little', but, 'very nice, jolly people' that they are, he has trouble taking their radical pretensions seriously. And when coming across a workers' march he says: 'These people are so self-possessed, so self-confident and good-humoured. They rule the streets, and therefore think they rule the world. In fact, they are mistaken. Behind them already are the secretaries, officials, professional politicians, and all the modern satraps for whom they are preparing the way to power . . . At the end of every truly revolutionary development there appears a Napoleon Bonaparte' (in Janouch 1971: 119–20). In response to Janouch's questioning of his feelings about an expansion of the Russian revolution,

Kafka says: 'As a flood spreads wider and wider, the water becomes shallower and dirtier. The Revolution evaporates, and leaves behind only the slime of a new bureaucracy. The chains of tormented mankind are made of red tape' (119–20).

17 'The Anomalous is always at the frontier, on the border of a band or a multiplicity; it is part of the latter, but is already making it pass into another multiplicity, it makes it become, it traces a line between' (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 42). The anomalous can equally come from outside the pack: 'Sometimes the borderline is defined or doubled by a being of another nature that no longer belongs to the pack, or never belonged to it, and that represents a power of another order, potentially acting as a threat as well as a trainer, outsider, etc.' (*ATP*: 245–6).

18 Slater (2001) provides an excellent analysis of the possible directions that disagreement, polemic and debate can take in a minority community in his analysis of the formation and splits in the Situationist International. The tendencies in this case are seen on one side as a movement towards an open and experimental critical engagement expressed in the Situationist Bauhaus slogan 'divided we stand' and Asger Jorn's understanding of 'open creation', and, on the other, towards the solidification of an autonomous racket through Debord's emphasis on theoretical coherence and situationist discipline.

19 Though it might have been presented as a critique of the eleventh thesis, Deleuze (n.d.a) proposes something similar when he writes of Nietzschean interpretation: 'It is possible that in the current idea of interpretation, there is something that might go beyond the dialectical opposition between "knowing" [*connaître*] and "transforming" the world.'

20 In his period of non-involvement with groups after the collapse of the Communist League, Marx told Engels: 'I am greatly pleased by the public, authentic isolation in which we two, you and I, now find ourselves' (cited in Wheen 1999: 265). In this context, Marx's distaste for the cult of personality is also worth noting. Camatte interestingly presents this as a necessary aspect of the deferral of group identity, and cites Marx: 'Both of us scoff at being popular. Among other things our disgust at any personality cult is evidence of this . . . When Engels and I first joined the secret society of communists, we did it on the condition *sine qua non* that they repeal all statutes that would be favourable to a cult of authority' (Marx to Blos, cited in Camatte 1995: 20). Such an avoidance of identity is explained by Bordiga – who did not sign his own work – thus: 'it is the attribute of the bourgeois world that all commodities bear their maker's name, all ideas are followed by their author's signature, every party is defined by its leader's name . . . Work such as ours can only succeed by being hard and laborious and unaided by bourgeois publicity techniques, by the vile tendency to admire and adulate men' (cited in Camatte 1995: 175). Though the minor aspect of these positions is clear, it is worth pointing out – following Camatte (1995: 175–6) – that there are always attendant dangers of the return of a self-sacrificial militancy and a subsumption of the singularities of life to the dictatorship of 'doctrinal monolithism'.

21 See Murphy (n.d.: section 6), Macey (1993: 392–4), and the collection of Deleuze's short political articles and letters in *Discourse* 20(3).

22 'For me, the aftermath of '68, was made up of action committees, psychiatric alternatives; the feminist and gay movements . . . I was hoping that a collective development could be pursued, but instead a sort of prohibition against thinking set in. Today it's hard to imagine the kind of demagoguery that reigned at Vincennes and in those milieus: "What are you talking about?" "I don't get it!" "What does that mean?" "Why use complicated words like that?" Deleuze's course was continually interrupted by unbelievable idiots' (Guattari 1995a: 30).

23 A sense of the complexity of Guattari's (1984: 35) mode of group analysis is evident in his lament that 'There is, for instance, no description of the special

characteristics of the working class that established the Paris Commune, no description of its creative imagination'.

24 See Cohn-Bendit and Cohn-Bendit (1969: esp. 48–57) for an account of the formation of the 22 March Movement.

25 In a 1980 interview Guattari says: 'I've changed my mind: there are no subject-groups, but arrangements of enunciation, of subjectivization, pragmatic arrangements which do not coincide with circumscribed groups. These arrangements can involve individuals, but also ways of seeing the world, emotional systems, conceptual machines, memory devices, economic, social components, elements of all kinds' (Guattari 1996a: 227–8).

26 Jacques Camatte (1995) presents a left communist critique of the groupuscule, or 'racket' form in proletarian milieus in a fashion that resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's critique of subjugated groups. Camatte argues that political rackets are the political correlate of business organizations in the phase of the real domination of capital. The racket tends to coalesce in terms of what it collectively affirms itself to *be* rather than in terms of its critical practices: what it *does*, as internal differences are subsumed into models of 'authentic' unity in opposition to external relations (be they social forces or other rackets). Coherence and internal hierarchy are produced around attraction points of leaders (be they formal, or informal (cf. Freeman n.d.) – sometimes being based around, for example, a particular member's cultural capital, such as their theoretical sophistication), revered texts, conceptual abstractions and particular political models, or sanctioned practices, and are enforced through the motive power of political 'commitment', continual 'racketerist marketing', and fear of exclusion.

27 Guattari (1984: 187–8; 192–3) offers an insightful account of Trotsky's relation to Lenin and the Soviet state, following the argument that having 'previously been among the loudest in denouncing the danger of the "political substitutionism" inherent in Leninist centralism', 'Trotsky, forced into Leninism by the revolution . . . came to apply with savage rigidity a grotesque Bolshevism' (188).

28 For developments in this understanding of the party as a movement immanent to capital, as against what Dauvé and Martin (1997: 67) identify as the false problem of 'need of the party/fear of the party' expressed by Leninism and councilism respectively, see Antagonism (2001), Camatte (n.d., 1995), and Dauvé and Martin (1997: 63–76).

29 Here I am making a point about which, at the time of the *Manifesto*, Marx was more ambiguous. In the *Manifesto* Marx does in fact write of the need 'to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State' (Marx and Engels 1973: 59). Whilst this is problematic, as Marx's theory develops – particularly after the experience of the Paris Commune – he breaks with this understanding of the state, such that, as Engels writes in 1888, the formulation of the state in the *Manifesto* becomes 'antiquated'. Citing Marx's *The Civil War in France*, Engels writes: 'One thing especially was proved by the Commune, *viz.*, that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes"' (in Marx and Engels 1973: 14).

30 Building on Marx's distinction between the 'formal' and 'material' party, Bordiga and theorists and groups related to the Italian left have developed one of the most useful communist analyses of the party in these terms. For Bordiga, there is no necessary continuity of a formal party across time. Indeed, devoid of a strong proletarian movement, the formal continuity of the party can function – as it did with the Russian model – as a mechanism of domination. Instead, in times of waning proletarian activity, Bordiga proposes a more informal and diffuse material party. The introduction to Antagonism (2001: 18) describes Bordiga's position: 'The party may exist as a more diffuse movement, perhaps of several groups, all or none of whom may be called parties. Or it may consist of fractions of such groups,

or of informal connections amongst individuals who are not members of any group.'

31 I am only reading this problematic from Deleuze's perspective, not assessing the adequacy of his reading of Foucault. It is beyond the scope of this book to approach the question through Foucault's work. It is worth noting, though, that if Foucault had problems with the question of resistance, he did not feel the need to respond directly to Deleuze's interpretation. Perhaps there is some truth in Deleuze's rather touching comment after Foucault's death about their relationship: 'I needed him much more than he needed me' (*N*: 83). For a more detailed consideration of Deleuze's and Foucault's biographical and philosophical relations see Goodchild (1996: 131–5).

32 Foucault's 'anti-Marxism' is misconceived if it is seen as a refusal of a serious and wide-ranging political project. If anything, Foucault's problem with Marxism is that it is *not radical enough* – being caught, as he sees it, in the nineteenth-century paradigm of Life, Labour, and Language, and its model of Man. Whilst at one point Foucault (1970: 262) thus, rather uncharitably, describes 'Marxism' as something which 'exists in nineteenth-century thought like a fish in water: that is, it is unable to breathe anywhere else', it is noteworthy that he also presents Marx alongside the privileged figure of Nietzsche as a force that *decentres* anthropology and humanism, albeit one that is continually subject to reterritorializations: 'One is led therefore to anthropologize Marx, to make him a historian of totalities, and to rediscover in him the message of humanism; one is led therefore to interpret Nietzsche in the terms of transcendental philosophy and to reduce his genealogy to the level of a search for origins' (Foucault 1972: 13).

33 Bringing together the two dominant misinterpretations of Foucault – that the 'death of man' was a nihilism, and that Foucault's later works marked a 'return to the subject' – Deleuze writes that 'misinterpretations are never innocent, they're mixtures of stupidity and malevolence' (*N*: 99).

34 François Ewald (1994) explains how in 1977 Deleuze had entrusted these notes to him to pass on to Foucault, and describes them as having something intimate, secret, and confidential about them.

35 In a passage that is worth citing at length, Deleuze continues: 'In any case, they scare me. There is a molecular speech of madness, or of the drug addict or the delinquent *in vivo* which is no more valid than the great discourses of a psychiatrist *in vitro*. There is as much self-assurance on the former's part as certainty on the latter's part. It is not the marginals which create the lines; they install themselves on these lines and make them their property, and this is fine when they have that strange modesty of men of the line, the prudence of the experimenter, but it is a disaster when they slip into a black hole from which they no longer utter anything but the micro-fascist speech of their dependency and their giddiness: "We are the avant-garde", "We are the marginals" (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 139).

3 The lumpenproletariat and the proletarian unnamable

1 For examples of these lumpenproletarian positions see Fanon (1967), Clarke *et al*. (1994), E. Cleaver (1970, 1972), K. Cleaver (1975), 'What is the Provotariat?' in *Heatwave* (1993), and Gray and Radcliffe (1966). Eldridge Cleaver's (1970: 7–8) description of the lumpenproletariat in his attempt to theorize the class formation of the US black ghetto, is not untypical: 'OK. We are Lumpen. Right on. The Lumpenproletariat are all those who have no secure relationship or vested interest in the means of production and the institutions of capitalist society. That part of the "Industrial Reserve Army" held perpetually in reserve; who have never worked and never will . . . all those on Welfare or receiving State Aid. / Also the so-called "Criminal Element", those who live by their wits, existing on what they can rip off,

who stick guns in the faces of businessmen and say "stick 'em up", or "give it up!" Those who don't even want a job, who hate to work . . . / But even though we are Lumpen, we are still members of the Proletariat . . . In both the Mother Country and the Black Colony, the Working Class is the Right Wing of the Proletariat, and the Lumpenproletariat is the Left wing.'

2 For example, though not actually holding a lumpenproletarian position themselves, the Situationist International suggest that 'the lumpenproletariat embodies a remarkably radical implicit critique of the *society of work*' (Vaneigem, in Knabb 1981: 126).

3 1960s and '70s academic work on deviancy and political marginality, for example, frequently employs a model of an integrated working class and an extra-legal and subcultural lumpenproletariat (cf. Hall 1974; Horowitz and Liebowitz 1968; Taylor and Taylor 1968). Horowitz and Liebowitz (1968: 293) clearly express this thesis when they write: 'If any group has emerged as the human carrier of the breakdown between political and private deviance, it has been the *lumpenproletariat*, or the non-working class. This group has replaced the established working and middle classes as the deciding political force in America.'

4 It is noteworthy, in this context, that when Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis (in Benjamin 1986) describe the porous and intoxicating life of the people of Naples in a fashion similar to Deleuze and Guattari's minor (where 'each private attitude or act is permeated by streams of communal life' and 'Poverty has brought about a stretching of frontiers that mirrors the most radiant freedom of thought'; 171), they are writing of what Marx and Engels saw as the most lumpen of cities (cf. Bovenkerk 1984: 25).

5 I have used Beckett's (1979) term 'unnamable' because it is a useful means of characterizing the proletariat as an immanent potential which cannot be fixed or 'named' in any one time or space. Following Deleuze and Guattari's (*AŒ*: 20–1) use of the term, the unnamable can be seen as both the limit point of minor processes of inclusive disjunction and as the plane populated by, and expressed in, minor composition, just as Marx's communism is simultaneously the overcoming of the socius and an immanent engagement with it.

6 A third perspective – on the conjunction of 'race', crime, policing, and unemployment – is more empirically grounded (cf., for example, E. Cleaver 1970; Gilroy and Simm 1985; Hall *et al.* 1978). Because this chapter focuses on the way the lumpenproletariat works in *Marx's* texts, a consideration of this work is beyond its scope.

7 Indeed, Bovenkerk (1984) has argued, following historical work by Traugott (1980), that the key empirical peoples that Marx and Engels describe as lumpenproletarian turn out not to be so easily definable as such, *by their own criteria*. The Bonapartist 'swamp flower' of the Mobile Guard, for instance, is shown by Traugott to have been of a very similar social composition to the proletarian insurgents, indeed being typically *more* skilled (with their relative youth being the most marked difference). Most bizarrely Bovenkerk points out that the 10 December Society (which is almost the archetype of the lumpenproletariat, and for Marx of central importance in Louis Bonaparte's accession to emperor) is so undocumented that Traugott even suggests that this 'mysterious society may have been largely imaginary' (cited in Bovenkerk 1984: 41). Rather than follow Bovenkerk and see this as a refutation of the analytic efficacy of Marx's category, this anomaly should further encourage one to see the lumpenproletariat as not primarily a social group, but, as I am arguing, a mode of practice.

8 As one example, a partial list of the Parisian '*sectes communistes*' in 1842 included *égalitaires*, *fraternitaires*, *humanitaires*, *unitaires*, *communitaires* or *icariens*, *communistes*, *communionistes*, *communautistes*, and *rationalistes* (Louis Reybaud, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, cited in Bestor 1948: 291).

9 Engels explains that 'communist' rather than 'socialist' was employed in the *Manifesto* because of its revolutionary connotations: 'Whatever portion of the working class had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions, and had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change, called itself Communist . . . Thus, Socialism was, in 1847, a middle-class movement, Communism a working-class movement. Socialism was, on the Continent at least, "respectable"; Communism was the very opposite' (Engels, preface to the 1888 English edition of Marx and Engels 1973: 12–13).

10 It seems as though Sismondi was the first to use the term in a modern sense in his 1837 *Études sur l'économie politique*, and it is not without importance that Marx (1978: 5) prefaces *The Eighteenth Brumaire* with a reference to his definition: 'People forget *Sismondi'*s significant saying: The Roman proletariat lived at the expense of society, while modern society lives at the expense of the proletariat.'

11 This is not to say that there is not at times a highly dubious moral sentiment in Marx's accounts of the lumpenproletariat. It is in the account of the correlate of the lumpenproletariat, the nationally and ethnically defined 'unhistorical peoples' (notably the Slavs), that Marx's and especially Engels' methods display their most unsavoury aspects (as evident, for example, in Engels' use of Hegel's expression 'ethnic trash'). Ritter (1976) usefully argues that Engels' attitudes are a fall-out not so much of a nationalism and racism, but of the fanaticism of his proto-Darwinian Eurocentric method (though, of course, such Eurocentric evolutionism was historically immanent to racist formations). Whilst it is probably more productive to critique Marx and Engels for their method than their personal prejudice, the two cannot be wholly divorced. For example, Engels' (1943: 90–4) racist account of the Irish, contemptible in itself, can be seen to contribute to and reflect a flawed reading of the proletariat, in the formation of which, as Linebaugh (1991) has masterfully shown, the workers of Irish descent contributed much in internationalism and practical innovation. All this said, though it is by no means an excuse, Marx and Engels never match Bakunin in racist sentiment.

12 Sergei Eisenstein provides a cinematic version of this thesis in his account of lumpenproletarian reaction in the 'agitguignol' *Strike* (1924), a film which Bordwell (1993) describes as an anatomy of a political process. In a practice that is ironically marked as 'work', the lumpenproletariat are drawn forth to help break the strike at the behest of a secret service agent and with the call from the lumpen king, 'I need five unscrupulous men' (to which the reply naturally returns, 'None of us have any scruples'). The scene emphasizes extra-temporal debauched excess much like Marx's description in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*. The secret agent enters into a marginal space that is far from the mapped territory of the other scenes of the film (factory, police office, street), avoiding a dead hanging cat en route to an encounter with the lumpen king, where the comic effect, which pervades the whole encounter, is produced through a jazz soundtrack and the inversion of aristocratic trappings (before preening himself the 'king' spits in his dresser mirror, held by his midget servant, and he sleeps in a dilapidated car which doubles as a throne). In a most bizarre scene we then encounter a mass of assorted ragamuffins as they emerge from a field of sunken barrels. The stark contrast between the purity, coherence, and identity of the workers and the filthy proliferation of the lumpenproletariat is clearly marked. I should add that though this exemplifies an aspect of Marx's account of the lumpenproletariat, *Strike'*s model of the proletariat is more akin to the political model of 'the people' than the minor mode of composition that I am elaborating here.

13 Marx's efforts to drive the secret societies out of the First International (as a masonic social form far from the mass open movement that Marx saw in the Chartists and sought to develop in a proletarian organization; cf. Nicolaevsky 1997), owe much to his conflicts with the Bakuninists and the conspiratorial forms

of revolutionary politics most clearly expressed by Nechayev (1989) in his *Catechism of the Revolutionist*. To cite one passage amongst many, Nechayev describes the correct ethics of the covert nihilist revolutionary thus: 'The revolutionary is a dedicated man. He has no interests of his own, no affairs, no feelings, no attachments, no belongings, not even a name. Everything in him is absorbed by a single exclusive interest, a single thought, a single passion – the revolution . . . All the tender and effeminate emotions of kinship, friendship, love, gratitude and even honor must be stifled . . . Night and day he must have one thought, one aim – merciless destruction' (4–5). Though the controversy as to the source of this essay seems to have cleared Bakunin from its authorship (cf. Avrich 1987), the conspiratorial and elitist thinking of Bakuninist anarchism – whereby the revolution is declared as popular but is to be secretly driven by a handful of conspirators – is put as strongly by Bakunin as Nechayev. For example, Bakunin (n.d.: 26–7) writes: 'We are bitter foes of all *official power*, even if it were ultra-revolutionary power. We are enemies of all publicly acknowledged dictatorship . . . Rejecting any power, by what power or rather by what force shall we direct the people's revolution? *An invisible force – recognized by no one, imposed by no one – through which the collective dictatorship of our organization will be all the mightier* . . . But imagine, in the midst of this general anarchy, a secret organization which has scattered its members in small groups over the whole territory . . . an organization which acts everywhere according to a common plan . . . This is what I call *the collective dictatorship* of the secret organization.'

14 The rationale behind the exclusion of Bakunin's *Alliance of Social Democracy* from the International is explained in some 120 pages (Marx and Engels 1988), but begins by stating that the danger of a broad banner workers' movement, as the International's explicit concern, was always in letting in *déclassé* (lumpen) elements.

15 The argument that Bakunin perceives in Marx the seeds of statism – that he, in a sense, predicts the Soviet Union – is not uninteresting, but it can be made only by ignoring the centrality of *Bakuninist* notions of organization and 'invisible dictatorship' to Leninist politics (cf. Blissett 1997; Blissett and Home n.d.).

16 Engels refers to this as 'that old pan-Slav swindle of transforming ancient Slav common property into communism and portraying the Russian peasants as born communists' (Marx and Engels 1981: 44). For discussion of *Marx's* understanding of the possibilities of the commune, see Camatte (1978).

17 Bakunin seems to practise what Marx and Engels (1988: 520) refer to as a 'law of anarchist assimilation', whereby a whole series of groups (from religious sects to students and brigands) are brought under the banner of a spontaneist 'anti-authoritarian' movement. Marx's critique is not just that the collective 'community' of these formations is often little more than a product of Bakunin's imagination, but that it is also a cynical deployment of a populist rhetoric that disguises a tapestry of secret societies and 'invisible dictatorship' (cf. Marx and Engels 1988).

18 This is not to suggest that Bakunin was not an advocate of revolutionary change, but simply that his change was to be the expression of the identity of his political agent.

19 In *Revolutionary Catechism*, for example, Bakunin (1973: 76) writes: 'Replacing the cult of God by *respect and love of humanity*, we proclaim *human reason* as the only criterion of truth; *human conscience* as the basis of justice; *individual and collective freedom* as the only source of order in society.'

20 Debord (1983) presents one of the most concise and incisive Marxist critiques of utopian socialism and anarchism in these terms (albeit a critique which could apply to the humanist and Hegelian tendencies in the Situationist International itself; cf. Ansell Pearson 1997:155–60; Debray 1995). Having argued that Marx's

'science' is an understanding of forces and struggle rather than transcendent law (Debord 1983: §81), Debord writes: 'The utopian currents of socialism, although themselves historically grounded in the critique of the existing social organization, can rightly be called utopian to the extent that they reject history – namely the real struggle taking place, as well as the passage of time beyond the immutable perfection of their picture of a happy society' (§83). Debord then moves to consider anarchism: 'The anarchists *have an ideal to realize* . . . It is the *ideology of pure liberty* which equalizes everything and dismisses the very idea of historical evil . . . Anarchism has merely to repeat and to replay the same simple, total conclusion in every single struggle, because the first conclusion was from the beginning identified with the entire outcome of the movement . . . [I]t leaves the historical terrain by assuming that the adequate forms for th[e] passage to practice have already been found and will never change' (§92).

21 Marx (1976: 280) clearly makes this point when he writes: 'The sphere of circulation or commodity exchange, within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham.'

22 In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx (1974b: 358; emphasis added) writes that a general prohibition of child labour '– if possible – would be a reactionary step. With strict regulation of working hours according to age and with other precautionary measures to protect children, *the early combination of productive labour with education is one of the most powerful means for the transformation of present society*.'

23 It is noteworthy that from 1937 Soviet workers were no longer officially defined as a 'proletariat' (Gould and Kolb 1964: 547). The difference between the empirical reality of Soviet workers' lives (cf. Haraszti 1977) and their conceptual definition (as a proletariat so much 'for itself' that it had self-dissolved in the end of pre-history) hardly needs pointing out.

24 It is important to note that Marx (1973b: 240) draws a distinction between the 'conservative' smallholding peasant who seeks to consolidate this state of affairs, and the 'revolutionary' peasant who, 'in alliance with the towns', 'strikes out beyond it'. The question of the relation between the peasantry and the proletariat in contemporary global arrangements obviously has to be thought through in a more complex fashion.

25 Marx (1976: 342) famously describes the capital/labour relation thus: 'Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.' Hence, in stark comparison to the passage about child labour above, Marx (1976: 548) writes: 'Factory work exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost; at the same time, it does away with the many-sided play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and in intellectual activity.' See Marx (1973a: 123) for a clear statement that this is nothing peculiar to 'factory' work, and *Midnight Notes* (1981: 1) for a more recent version of this position.

26 Deleuze and Guattari (*AŒ*: 265) explain the process similarly: 'Individual persons are social persons first of all, i.e., functions derived from the abstract quantities; they become concrete in the becoming-related or the axiomatic of these quantities, in their conjunction . . . the capitalist as personified capital – i.e., as a function derived from the flow of capital; and the worker as personified labour capacity – i.e., a function derived from the flow of labour.'

27 For this reason Gilles Dauvé (1997: 30) argues that 'All theories (either bourgeois, fascist, stalinist, left-wing or "gauchistes") which in any way glorify and praise the proletariat as it is and claim for it the positive role of defending values and regenerating society, are counter-revolutionary. Worship of the proletariat has become one of the most efficient and dangerous weapons of capital.'

28 At a more empirical level, the way that the critique of work straddles both lumpenproletarian and proletarian formations leaves Marx in a much more sticky position than I am able, in this conceptual elaboration, to explore here. A brief point, however, can be made. By placing the transatlantic relations and flows of people, ideas and practices at the centre of analysis, Linebaugh (1991), Linebaugh and Rediker (1990, 2000), and Gilroy (1993) have shown how a complex, vibrant, polyglot, transatlantic working class existed long before Marx and Engels were placing their hopes, in the *Manifesto* for example, in the relatively territorially and culturally fixed factory. If we are to follow this argument, a number of the peoples and social sites that Marx was inclined to see as manifesting lumpenproletarian tendencies – the 'escaped galley slaves' and the taverns of the docks, for example – can be seen as traversed by capitalist social relations. As such, the critique of work that emerges amongst these peoples can actually be seen as a product of *proletarian* experience. Research in this direction does not undermine Marx's conceptual elaboration of the proletariat, but it can help to overcome some of the more narrowly focused, moralistic and, at times, racist aspects (cf. Ritter 1976) of his and Engels' more empirical work on lumpen and proletarian formations. It can also provide a rich site for the exploration of the techniques, styles, knowledges and inventions of historical proletarian politics. Linebaugh and Rediker (1990: 240), for example, have shown that the 'strike' was an invention not of the factory, but of the ship (as a practice of 'striking' the ropes of the ship's sails to prevent it from sailing).

29 Here 'working class' is meant in its sociological sense as an empirical group of people.

30 Marx does, of course, produce outlines of possible practice and sets of demands (in, for example, the *Manifesto* or the programme of the International), but none of these are anything but situated in time and space.

31 For Balibar, the proletariat is thus a 'nonsubject' that emerges intermittently from the configurations of capital. Balibar argues that the great failure of Marxism was to think of the proletariat as the subject of history, and hence remain within the antinomies of dominant knowledge. This is manifested in two central problems of orthodox Marxism: first, the assumption that the party represented the essential continuity of this subject in history, and the resultant illusion that party unity equated with class unity; and, second, the related positing of proletarian standpoint in terms of (true) 'consciousness', rather than in a more situated 'theory'.

32 It is important to note that for Deleuze and Guattari this dispersion of points of political tension and invention is not an assertion of minority independence. Minority inventions only tend toward proletarian composition in so far as their concerns and problematisations are articulated and reverberate in a fashion that prevents an isolated solution (cf. Deleuze 1977: 104–5).

33 Because the proletariat is not an empirical group of people but a mode of composition, it is not subject to that 'critique' of Marxism that proposes that a previously homogenous working class has, in the development of modernity, split into a plethora of different class and social fractions. See Bordiga (in Antagonism 2001: 37–8) for an early challenge to this weak critique of Marxism.

34 I would suggest that the model of lumpenproletarian composition that this chapter has developed is akin to the self-fetishization of the marginal that Deleuze criticizes in *Dialogues* (cf. Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 139).

4 The social factory: machines, work, control

1 The translation of *operaismo* as 'workerism' is, as Hardt (1990a: 249) points out, problematic: 'The English usage of "workerism" and the French "ouvrièrisme"

correspond to the Italian "fabrichismo" in that they are used pejoratively to designate those who cannot or will not recognize the power of social struggles outside the factory. The characteristic of "operaismo" is that it has been able to transform itself in step with the changing nature of work.'

2   Zizek's (2001) more recent comments on *Empire* have been more critical.

3   In this context it is noteworthy that Negri (1998: n.p.) indicates that he has some knowledge of the intended focus of Deleuze's unfinished book on Marx. Whatever access Negri had to Deleuze's ideas in progress, he presents Deleuze's argument, I think problematically, in terms very similar to his own, as a communism of the multitude: 'Here there is the multitude that constitutes the common. And this is the concept of communism that, from what I have understood, was constructed in the "Grandeur de Marx", Deleuze's unfinished book.'

4   An earlier English language engagement with Negri, *operaismo* and *autonomia* emerged in the more expressly political milieu of the Red Notes group (cf. Red Notes 1977, 1979, 1981; Italy '79 Committee 1982; Negri 1988a), and in the US journals *Zerowork* and *Midnight Notes*, and the work of Harry Cleaver (1979).

5   Thus, whilst I would agree with Wright (2002) that a simplification of the complexity of *operaismo* and *autonomia* and the over-alignment of this current with Negri owes something to Negri's reception through Deleuze and Guattari, a '*melange*', as Wright (2002: 2) puts it, of Deleuze and *operaismo* can also function in a productive way, and without either simplification or subsumption of complex positions to Negri's perspective.

6   *Operaismo* and *autonomia* maintain a persistent presence in Deleuze and Guattari's work. *A Thousand Plateaus*, for example, cites Yann Moulier, Tronti, and Negri in the context of new forms of socialized work, the *emarginati*, the problem of the Subject of orthodox Marxism, and the refusal of work (cf. *ATP*: 469, 571–2). Guattari wrote an essay with Negri (1990) and had some involvement with *autonomia* (cf. Guattari 1980a, 1980b; and *Semiotext(e)* (1980: 133) for a photograph of Guattari in Radio Alice's studio). He also wrote the preface to Collectif A/traverso (1977). As well as signing the petition against the repression of *autonomia*, along with Sartre, Barthes, and Foucault, amongst others (cf. Red Notes 1978: 36–7), Deleuze (1980) wrote a letter against Negri's imprisonment in 1979, a preface to the French edition of Negri's *The Savage Anomaly*, and a review of *Marx beyond Marx* (Deleuze n.d.c) that was forwarded as a proof of Negri's innocence. As a piece of anecdotal evidence of the influence of Deleuze and Guattari in *autonomia*, *Libération* reported that a student questioned in France about Franco Piperno (who had fled Italy to escape imprisonment) was asked if he had read *Anti-Oedipus* (Massumi 1987: 71).

7   There are, of course, exceptions. It is notable that Meaghan Morris, who is generally critical of cultural studies' tendency to populism and the neo-Gramscian politics of hegemony, wrote an excellent account of *autonomia* and its relations with the PCI as early as 1978. Paul Gilroy (1982), equally critical of the neo-Gramscian vein in cultural studies, also draws on some of the insights of *autonomia*.

8   Whilst the theoretical and political tendencies of *operaismo* pushed well beyond the PCI, the current maintained a relation to the orthodox left, due both to a reluctance to develop as an independent faction, and to a sense of the possibility of radicalizing the rank and file, and even the party itself. For Tronti, in particular, the party was of central political importance, and his struggle to save it from social democracy saw him eventually return to the fold (cf. Wright 2002: 68–75; Piotte 1987: 28). If the critique of the functionality of the PCI to the incorporation of working-class struggle was a while coming, the struggles around '68 saw a change of position, from where the PCI was to have no place in *operaismo*'s and, later, *autonomia*'s politics (cf. Wright 2002: 110–14).

9   See Bologna (1980a) for a short account of the variations of position, Piotte (1986)

for relations between Tronti and Negri, Wright (2002: 58–62) for the split between Panzieri and Tronti, and Wright (2002: 141–51) for the tension in Potere Operaio between Negri, Piperno, and Scalzone.

10 Despite a continued flirtation with Leninism, Potere Operaio dissolved following a meeting in Padua in 1973 saying: 'We have rejected the logic of the political group in order to be within the real movement, in order to be within organised class autonomy' (in Red Notes 1979: 32). Bifo (1980: 151–2) suggests that following the big FIAT Mirafiori occupation earlier that year (cf. Negri 1979b), within which the revolutionary groups only had a marginal presence, Potere Operaio's dissolution showed that it was the only group to recognize the changes taking place in the movement.

11 'Results of the immediate process of production' (sometimes known as 'the missing sixth chapter') was first published in 1933 in German and Russian, but took on particular importance – especially for the Italian and French extra-parliamentary communists – when it was republished in other European languages in the late 1960s (1976 in English).

12 Pioneered by Romano Alquati *operaismo* adopted Marx's method of the 'Workers' Inquiry' (cf. Marx 1973d) as a means of 'hot investigation' into the conditions and forms of resistance in the factories (cf. Bologna 1991). The workers' enquiry enabled the operaists to develop analysis from close attention to a social sphere which itself embodied a considerable degree of political, tactical, and organizational sophistication developed through the collective experience of the workers' movement since the Resistance (cf. Bologna, in Cuninghame 2001). Ironically, as Moulier (1989: 14) reports, these 'hot investigations' were the object of considerable interest from the employers who found they gave more insight to the functioning of their factories than conventional studies.

13 The practicality of *operaismo*'s position is evidenced by Moulier's (1989: 13) anecdote that the bedroom walls of activists saw the substitution of diagrammatic maps of the FIAT Mirafiori factory for the epinal figures of Mao and Che Guevara.

14 As Rosenberg (1982: 36) points out, this accusation usually follows a citation from *The Poverty of Philosophy*, where Marx writes 'The handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist'.

15 This is not to deny the possibility of specifically technological innovation, but it is to say that it is only as an expression of particular social problematizations, possibilities, and lines of flight that a technological innovation could be possible, and maintain any consistency. To cite a passage from Marx (1970: 21) that Deleuze is fond of using at these moments, 'Mankind . . . inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation' (cf. Deleuze 1994a: 186).

16 Deleuze and Guattari (1977) at one point suggest that Marx does not always present such a machinic conception of the relation between the technical machine and the human, but, rather, that he sees the machine as a succession to the tool in an evolutionary understanding of the human biological organism. I am arguing, however, that the presentation of machines in *Capital* (Chs 14 and 15) and in the *Grundrisse* – though occasionally displaying humanist errors – does not present the machine in such a fashion, but rather, as Deleuze and Guattari (1977: 131) suggest elsewhere, presents 'man and the tool *{as} already* components of a machine constituted by a full body acting as an engineering agency'. For, as I argue below, Marx's distinction between tools and machines is not based on the notion that machines are more complex tools, but that the technical machine – as it emerges in capitalist manufacture – is created by, and is functional to the *social* configuration of capital, machining the humans and tools within itself for the maximization of surplus value.

17 Marx (1976: 490) makes these points as follows. First: 'manufacture was unable either to seize upon the production of society to its full extent, or to revolutionise that production to its very core. It towered up as an artificial economic construction, on the broad foundation of the town handicrafts and the domestic industries of the countryside. At a certain stage of its development, the narrow technical basis on which manufacture rested came into contradiction with requirements of production which it had itself created.' Second: 'the complaint that the workers lack discipline runs through the whole of the period of manufacture'.

18 'Cooperation in its capitalist form is . . . the first and basic expression of the law of (surplus) value' (Panzieri 1976: 7). This is the directly 'capitalist' process where the super-adequate power of *collective* labour is manifested *after* the sale of individual labour at its necessary price (cf. Marx 1976: 451).

19 'The *specifically capitalist mode of production* not only transforms the situations of the various agents of production, it also *revolutionises* their actual mode of labour and the real nature of the labour process as a whole' (Marx 1976: 1021).

20 Marx (1976: 563) thus writes: 'It would be possible to write a whole history of the inventions made since 1830 for the sole purpose of providing capital with weapons against working-class revolt.' Other crucial elements of this new machinic environment, as Linebaugh (1991) and Thompson (1967) have emphasized, are the wage and the clock.

21 In the terms of *Anti-Oedipus*, the recording surface of the Body without Organs of capital sets its disjunctions in and through the technical machines such that they become the quasi-cause of production, and the productive desiring machines are left circulating around, and constrained within them. With the development of real subsumption, the 'productive powers and the social interrelations of labour in the direct labour-process seem transferred from labour to capital. Capital thus becomes a very mystic being since all of labour's social productive forces appear to be due to capital, rather than labour as such, and seem to issue from the womb of capital' (Marx, cited in *AŒ*: 11).

22 Bearing in mind that there is little debate about the possible relations that could be drawn between aspects of *operaismo* and the earlier Italian left, it should be noted that this point was made by Bordiga in his 1953 essay 'The spirit of horse power' (in Bordiga 2001). In this trenchant critique of the Russian and Chinese states' claims to be an existent socialism, Bordiga rehearses Marx's discussion of machines to show that with the development towards production driven by 'the sinister steel automatons', 'The *physical person* of the individual master is . . . not required, and bit by bit he disappears into the pores of share capital, of management boards, of state-run boards, of *the political state*, which has become (since a long time ago) entrepreneur and manufacturer, and into the very latest vile form of the state which pretends to be "the workers themselves"' (82).

23 In the second and third volumes of *Capital* Marx explains how, through credit and finance, initially through the formation of stock companies, capital develops into a social system that is in a sense 'social' in its ownership. Individual capitalists and separate spheres of society, all competing with each other, and necessarily not supporting an 'unproductive' (reproduction) sphere, are replaced by a mutually self-supporting system of 'social capital'. Competition is no less important, but it increasingly becomes a mechanism internal to the social whole (rather than a game between distinct players).

24 Marx (1974a: 388) puts it like this: 'But since, on the one hand, the mere owner of capital, the money-capitalist, has to face the functioning capitalist, while money-capital itself assumes a social character with the advance of credit, being concentrated in banks and loaned out by them instead of its original owners, and since, on the other hand, the mere manager who has no title whatever to the

capital, whether through borrowing it or otherwise, performs all the real functions pertaining to the functioning of capitalist as such, only the functionary remains and the capitalist disappears as superfluous from the production process.'

25 The PCI is a central example. Building on its earlier politics of an 'anti-fascist' cross-class alliance, the post-war PCI was to develop with an explicit focus on formal democratic politics and working class participation in the development of national capital (cf. Partridge 1996: 76–7; Wright 2002: 8–9).

26 The first article of the 1948 Italian Constitution reads: 'Italy is a democratic republic founded on labor' (cited in Hardt and Negri 1994: 55).

27 The American journal *Zerowork* (1975: 6) neatly summarizes the case against socialism: 'Our analysis of the crisis implies a rejection of the basic proposal of the Left: socialism . . . [Socialism] can mean only one of two dubious things. Either, as the ideology of the libertarian Left, it finds in small-scale production the solution to the "degradation of work", or it is a capitalist strategy of economic planning. In the first respect socialism is romantic and quaintly useless. In the second respect, however, socialism means primarily disciplining the working class . . . In both cases the demand for socialism clashes with the working class demands against work.'

28 Passages from the 'Fragment' return throughout Negri's work from his essays in Potere Operaio up until *Empire*. The importance he attributes to the 'Fragment' is clear when he writes that it is 'without doubt, the highest example of the use of the antagonistic and constituting dialectic that we can find, certainly in the *Grundrisse*, but perhaps also in the whole of Marx's work' (Negri 1991a: 139).

29 The 'Fragment on Machines' covers the end of Notebook VI and the beginning of VII of the *Grundrisse*, but the exact page references vary a little between commentators. I use Negri's (1991a) inclusion of pages 690–712 in Marx (1973a).

30 In his excellent critique of the 'end of work' thesis, Caffentzis (1997: 30) cites a range of sources to show that in the US the work day, the work year, and the number of waged workers have all significantly increased since the 1973–4 energy crisis (and that OECD figures are similar for the advanced capitalist world).

31 There are, thus, sections in the 'Fragment', notably at the point where Marx uses the expression 'general intellect' (706), which seem to present technology more as a generic human creation, an almost pure knowledge – the product of the 'human hand' and the 'human brain' – than as a functional product of specific (and, in capital, exploitative) social relations.

32 'Socialized worker' is a translation of *operaio sociale*, sometimes also translated as 'diffuse worker' and 'social worker'.

33 The broader argument of *Empire* concerning the history and contemporary forms of global governance is beyond the scope of this chapter.

34 Negri traces this development as a direct response by capital to the effective power of the mass worker (cf. 1988b: 212–16).

35 Hardt and Negri (1994: 280–1) give a fuller definition: 'living labor is manifest above all as abstract and immaterial labor (with regard to quality), as complex and cooperative labor (with regard to quantity), and as labor that is continually more intellectual and scientific (with regard to form). This is not reducible to simple labor – on the contrary, there is a continually greater convergence in techno-scientific labor of artificial languages, complex articulations of cybernetics and systems theory, new epistemological paradigms, immaterial determinations, and communicative machines. This labor is social because *the general conditions of the vital process* (of production and reproduction) pass under its control and are remodelled in conformity with it.'

36 '[T]he more production becomes immaterial and the more it is socialized, the more labour becomes autonomous from capitalist command' (Hardt and Negri, in Brown *et al*. 2002: 205).

37 Negri (1989: 78) describes this communicational network of activity/work as both a Foucauldian 'spatial universe' and a site of Habermassian 'communicative action'. The premise of Foucault's work is of course that micro-powers infuse the social as its very basis of constitution (cf. Foucault 1980: 94). The degrees of intensity and complexity of this are such that, contra Habermas, any talk of pure communication is a theoretical fiction (or, put another way, itself a product of a particular conjunction of power/knowledge). For Negri to utilize Foucault's image of proliferating networks as constituting a possibility for communism as an equality in communication is thus, to say the least, problematic. The idea that communism is collective control over a purified language resurfaces in *Empire* where Habermas is again deployed, only this time he is seen as presenting the possibilities of communicative action in a too limited fashion: '[Habermas] grants the liberated functions of language and communication only to individual and isolated segments of society' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 404).

38 Negri sees this process as an overcoming of the law of value, interpreted as a quantitative relation between labour time and price, and its replacement with a 'law of command' (Negri 1991a: 172; cf. also Hardt and Negri 2000: 357–8, 401). This is a reductive interpretation of the law of value, which, as Elson (1979) argues, should not be seen as a question of the price of a commodity, but of the form labour takes in capital. However, in so far as Negri suggests that production becomes determined by social needs (rather than the capitalist need for productive work) he seems to have dropped both a limited and a full concept of the law of value.

39 Exploring *Empire*'s very confusing sense of the relation between Empire, multitude, and biopolitical production, Moreiras (2001: 225) provocatively asks of the clothes company Zara (which operates in a decentralized, flexible manner in direct relation to consumer desire and without the exploitation of third world labour), 'what keeps Zara from understanding itself as an instance of counter-Empire? And what would keep us from suspecting that there is finally no difference between Empire and counter-Empire, once immanentization has run full course?' One suspects that Hardt and Negri interpret the apparent coming to immanence of production and desire in contemporary biopolitical production ('In the new modes of life, in an ever larger domain, labour becomes desire'; Hardt and Negri, in Brown *et al*. 2002: 205) as the impending arrival of what Deleuze and Guattari see as the condition of the 'new earth', when desiring-production and labour-power finally manifest their unity of substance in 'production *in general and without distinction*' (something capital discovers, but continually realienates) (*AŒ*: 302), hence Hardt and Negri's ambivalence over the affirmation or critique of Empire that is the focus of Moreiras' essay. The emphasis in contemporary work on the drawing-in of desire to work (as a means of overcoming the 'crisis of work' of the 1960s and '70s; cf. Virno 1996c; Heelas 2002) is a crucial site for contemporary research, but, as Moreiras' example highlights, it is problematic indeed to see desire as somehow set free in this arrangement (desire, after all, always invests the socius – and its identities, arrangements, objects, and horrors – in some fashion).

40 Though this discussion focuses on Negri's more recent elaboration of the socialized worker, it is worth noting that in his early exploration of the socialized worker's tendency toward autonomy (in, for example, Negri 1979a) it is less self-management than political violence and 'armed struggle' which becomes the mechanism for shrugging off an external capitalist command.

41 By moving toward an affirmation of the current composition of life as communist, Negri also starts to sound like the 'planning' perspective critiqued by Panzieri. Whilst, no doubt, certain forms of general intellect-rich labour are composed of more diffuse and complex attributes and forces that far exceed the limited form of composition of factory work, as Bifo (1980: 168) writes, 'it would be simplistic to

conclude that the revolution . . . needs to substitute a Leninist seizure of Knowledge for a Leninist seizure of the State. The problem is in reality much more complicated, since not only the properties and use of Knowledge, but also its structure, are determined by its capitalist functioning.'

42 See the exchange between Negri and Derrida on this point in Sprinker (1999).

43 'Communication society' is in this essay Negri's term for Deleuze's model of 'control society' (cf. Negri 1992:105). Deleuze's expression 'control' clearly brings pejorative connotations to an understanding of a system (where communication is indeed prevalent) that Negri would prefer to elide, as is evident in his question. Though in *Empire* control emerges to an apparently central place, as the book develops it seems to become subsumed in the category of 'Empire', which itself becomes increasingly 'empty'. When *Deleuze and Guattari* (*ATP*: 460) write of the return of 'empire' ('modern States of the third age do indeed restore the most absolute of empires'), it is immanent to the most intricate control.

44 In *Empire* Hardt and Negri (2000: 28) suggest that Deleuze and Guattari 'discover the productivity of social reproduction . . . but manage to articulate it only superficially and ephemerally'.

45 That said, it is only after the arrival of capital that, as was also the case for Marx, the possibility of approaching a 'universal history' emerges, for the deterritorialization actualized by capital (as it discovers and sets free abstract labour) is revealed to be the limit that all previous socii' sought to ward off (*AŒ*: 153). As Holland (1999) considers in detail, it is on this precondition that it is possible for life in capital to perform an autocritique towards the full development of universal or world history, whose subject – akin to Marx's communist overcoming – would be molecular life, where 'Nature = Industry = History' (*AŒ*: 25; cf. Holland 1999: 95, 111).

46 Thus Deleuze and Guattari are fully in accord with Marx's description of capital in the *Manifesto*: 'Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober faces his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind' (Marx and Engels 1973: 36–7).

47 For Marx's account of the centrality and novelty of the quest for 'wealth itself' in disrupting all previous modes of community (and the denunciation of such practice in antiquity for fear of this very potential) see Marx (1973a: 540–1).

48 This 'double movement' is presented in *Anti-Oedipus* (259) thus: 'In *Capital* Marx analyzes the true reason for the double movement: on the one hand, capitalism can proceed only by continually developing the subjective essence of abstract wealth or production for the sake of production, that is, "production as an end in itself, the absolute development of the social productivity of labor"; but on the other hand and at the same time, it can do so only in the framework of its own limited purpose, as a determinate mode of production, "production of capital", "the self-expansion of existing capital."'

49 In this Marxian sense, money is first and foremost not a mechanism of exchange, but of command and management of social labour. For an explanation of this point, and a series of analyses of the politics of money that follow from it, see Bonefeld and Holloway (1996).

50 Massumi (1992: 128–9) explains this well: 'Capital functions directly through incorporeal transformation, without having to step down or up to another level . . . Capital can be given an image – in fact it *must* have one in order to act – but it is imageless as such. It is a body without organs. In other words, a network of virtual

relations, a selection of which is immediately actualized at ground level wherever one of capitalism's working images (organs) goes. These images are conveyances (components of passage). They bring to designated bodies at each spatiotemporal coordinate through which they circulate a relation that fundamentally changes those bodies' social and physical reality. That relation *is* capital as an immanent social agency.'

51 The term 'bourgeoisie' is used because it is the dominant class, or axiomatic model of smooth-running capital – the mechanism of identity formation that functions to realize and fix the super-adequacy of life in capitalist forms. This notion that the bourgeoisie is not a social group but a particular mode of composition immanent to capital explains Deleuze's argument (in Guattari 1995a: 65) that the bourgeoisie 'has never been revolutionary'. Even in the emergence of capital, it is the name for one side of the double movement of capital – the immanent control of the forces that the other side – production for production's sake – sets loose.

52 This investment in the capitalist socius, as fundamental to identity as it is (since that which is invested produces the identity and its investment in the first place), is the basis for Deleuze and Guattari's crucial assertion that the question of support for, and critique of, the status quo resides not in one's 'interest', but in one's 'desire', or libidinal investment. Since we are all, as Guattari (1996a: 101–15) puts it, 'machinic junkies', *Anti-Oedipus* asks, how can one not invest in the great mutant flow of capitalism?: 'a pure joy in feeling oneself a wheel in the machine, traversed by flows, broken by schizzes. Placing oneself in a position where one is thus traversed, broken, fucked by the socius, looking for the right place where, according to the aims and the interests assigned to us, one feels something moving that has neither an interest nor a purpose . . . a taste for a job well done' (*AŒ*: 346–7).

53 'There is no ideology, there are only organizations of power once it is admitted that the organization of power is the unity of desire and the economic infrastructure.' For example, 'The church is perfectly pleased to be treated as an ideology. This can be argued; it feeds ecumenism. But Christianity has never been an ideology; it's a very original, very specific organization of power that has assumed diverse forms since the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages' (Deleuze, in Guattari 1995a: 57–8).

54 It is Burroughs' delirious fascination with the intricacies of controlling techniques – from word locks to Nova police, the atom bomb to the Mayan calendar and psychoanalytic and hypnotic suggestion – and his fully social, even cosmic understanding of the plane of composition of power which, one can imagine, inspires Deleuze.

55 Incidentally, Deleuze (1995a: 51) calls this text 'completely marxist'.

56 Guattari (1984) identified this tendency in the mid-1970s in the context of the break-up of the psychiatric hospital. '[W]hat . . . strikes me', Guattari says, 'is that all the great repressive organizations like schools or army, which used to consist of a single institutional whole, are now tending to become fragmented and scattered all over the place . . . [V]ery soon everyone will become his own mini-instrument of repression, his own school, his own army . . . [T]he policy of community psychiatry and psychoanalysis (and the two are now closely related) corresponds to the most sophisticated technocratic forms of population surveillance and control' (48). It is interesting, given Guattari's complex relation to Lacan, that he identifies 'Lacanism' – with its 'mathematico-linguistic' model of the unconscious and its subtle and incorporeal mechanisms of analysis – as 'A testing-ground, an advance technology, the prototype of [these] new forms of power': 'The psychoanalyst of today doesn't say a word to his patient. Such a system of channelling the libido has been achieved that silence is all that is needed' (50).

57 My use of the term 'cybernetic' here is slightly problematic, for in Deleuze and Guattari's (*AŒ*: 251–2) assessment it is too mechanical a model, too reliant on

'isolated formulas'. The axiomatic generally – and this tendency is only *increased* in control – operates as a more subtle series of 'intuitions' and 'resonances' with a plethora of decisions, administrations, predictions, reactions, and inscriptions, for which more technical concretizations are only aids. That said, Guattari and Alliez (in Guattari 1984: 285) describe this model of production as 'cybernetic capital'.

58 It is for this reason that Guattari (1984: 259) writes that 'Kafka is not, as some have said, a nineteenth-century writer imprisoned in family conflicts. He is a twenty-first-century writer describing the earliest stages of a process whose implications we are barely beginning to grasp today.'

59 The importance of business as an abstract form concretely embodied in varied spheres is stressed in a number of examples: TV game-shows are said to be popular 'because they're a perfect reflection of the way businesses are run' (*N*: 179), continuing education and continuous assessment are 'the surest way of turning education into a business' (179), and 'Even art has moved away from closed sites and into the open circuits of banking' (181). This 'business' or 'enterprise' model is also put forward by Negri as central to what he calls in pre-*Empire* work, the 'crisis-state'. As with Deleuze, this is a form of control that arises with the collapse of distinct enclosure, and of the normalizing regulation of labour through Keynesian wage/productivity tie-ins. In ever more fluid productive space, the 'enterprise' comes to be the site of productivity across the social as a modulating capture of energies that is able to remove the stabilities of large-scale production and compose forms of identity and self-control in varying and changing fashion: 'The key control mechanism in this transformation is the enterprise, in the sense that it extends the norms of factory-command over work to the whole social labour time' (Negri 1988c: 123).

60 Clearly aware of the centrality to Marx's overall system of his argument that machines cannot create value, *Anti-Oedipus*' assertion of machinic surplus value is couched in what Deleuze and Guattari rather self-consciously call a deliberate 'indispensable incompetence'. This is a ruse they take from Maurice Clavel's apparent use of 'wilfully incompetent questions' to Marxist economists concerning the credibility of the centrality of human surplus value in the face of the productive power of machines (*AŒ*: 232), but they situate *their* 'incompetence' around the question of the 'surplus value of flux' which, as I am arguing, is in accord with the essential logic of the labour theory of value.

61 Making a similar point, Diane Elson (1979: 123) has argued that 'the *object* of Marx's theory of value was labour. It is not a matter of seeking an explanation of why prices are what they are and finding it in labour. But rather of seeking an understanding of why labour takes the forms it does, and what the political consequences are.'

62 Though Deleuze and Guattari (*AŒ*: 492) suggest that machinic surplus value emerges 'less and less by the striation of space-time corresponding to the physicosocial concept of work' we have seen already how 'business' becomes a pervasive model for an increasingly subdivided and diffuse 'productivity', and hence I would suggest that they are here using the word 'work' in a limited, descriptive sense (something like the Keynesian 'job') rather than in a machinic sense. In the sense in which this book defines work in abstract terms as the axiomatized reterritorialization of human practice immanent to the capitalist mission of production for production's sake, the extension of *machinic enslavement* is simultaneously an extension of *work* (cf. *ATP*: 400–1).

63 Guattari (1996a: 206) thus suggests that 'The recasting of the quantification of value based on work-time won't be, as Marx assumed, the privilege of a classless society.'

64 Notably the essay overplays the reduction of work time as a measure of value (since the quantification of labour, however impossible it is to *really* measure individual

contribution, is still fundamental to the capitalist valuation and axiomatization of life) and suggests that the concept of 'average social labour' is an abstraction inappropriate for an understanding of the concrete practices of labour (when in fact it is central to an understanding of the processes of abstraction necessary for unbounded productivity, as I explored above through *Anti-Oedipus*).

65 See Terranova (2000) for an examination of internet labour in similar terms.

66 'The sales department becomes a business centre or "soul" . . . Marketing is now the instrument of social control and produces the arrogant breed who are our masters' (*N:* 181).

67 Massumi (1996) provides an example of a study of children's experience of a TV film where non-verbal bodily response, even as it contradicted verbal response, was used as the basis for judgement of the affective content of the image.

68 This primacy of machinic arrangements, as against a framework based on the demarcation of human and technical elements, is clear in Paolo Virno's (1996b: 22) characterization of contemporary production: 'In contemporary labor processes there are entire conceptual constellations that function by themselves as productive "machines", without ever having to adopt either a mechanical body or an electronic brain.'

69 As Rose (1999b: 483) argues in his discussion of the 'etho-politics' of the political and governmental imaginary of the 'Third Way', we have a model of the human actor that is 'no longer the nineteenth-century economic subject of interests but an entrepreneur of his- or her-self, striving to maximize his or her own human capital by choices which are, as it were, investments for the purpose of the capitalization of one's own existence.'

70 Fox Piven and Cloward (1972: 6–7) draw attention to the historical problem of unemployment which the JSA and the New Deal are the latest attempts to overcome: 'The regulation of civil behavior in all societies is intimately dependent on stable occupational arrangements. So long as people are fixed in their work roles, their activities and outlooks are also fixed . . . Each behavior and attitude is shaped by the reward of a good harvest or the penalty of a bad one, by the factory paycheck or the danger of losing it. But mass unemployment breaks that bond, loosening people from the main institution by which they are regulated and controlled. Moreover, mass unemployment that persists for any length of time diminishes the capacity of other institutions to bind and constrain people . . . [W]ithout work, people cannot conform to familial and communal roles; and if the dislocation is widespread, the legitimacy of the social order itself may come to be questioned.' It is with this in mind that Walters (1994) has shown how the 'invention' of unemployment – loosely fitting with the diagram of discipline – and its institutional apparatus was a strategy intended to construct a coherent unemployed subject comparable to the employed subject. Contemporary emphasis in neo-liberal governance on an ethically intensive process of 'jobseeking' (where benefit is only paid on the basis that the jobseeker enters into arrangements of self-optimization – including training and maintenance of acceptable physical appearance – and continual job application) can be seen as the form of 'unemployment' appropriate to control. And, indeed, the JSA can be seen as a direct response to the breakdown of the disciplinary model of the unemployed subject that became evident – with the increasing affirmation of unemployment as a space of relative autonomy from work – under Thatcher and Reagan (cf. Aufheben 1998).

5 The refusal of work

1 The Movement of '77 was the high point of *autonomia*, characterized by the emergence and politicization of a wealth of marginal practices, feminist struggle, a

strong critique of orthodoxy, countercultural experiments, and mass occupations, especially in Rome and Bologna in the spring. The Hot Autumn of '69 was the summit of the autonomous struggles of the students and the mass workers in the Northern factories. See Bifo (1980), Bologna (1980b), Lumley (1990), and Wright (2002) for histories of these movements.

2 The complexity of this formation is visually exemplified by a flow diagram that appeared in *L'Espresso* of the development of the extra-parliamentary left between 1968 and 1977. Tracing independent and intersecting lines for anarchists, Leninists, Trotskyists, situationists, and Bordighists, and their various journals and political groupings, the diagram resorts to the illustrative technique of an amorphous bubble to map the area of *autonomia* (in Red Notes 1979: 204–5).

3 It should be noted that Moulier (1989: 21) suggests that this mode of engagement was not without its problems – notably in the persistent use of Leninist vocabulary which, whilst certainly changed in meaning in the hands of *operaismo*, was something of a problematic feature of this current, particularly in its understanding of organization and armed struggle.

4 Though they also offer considerably more than the self-management thesis, the main figures here are Pannekoek, Gorter, and Rühle – those who Lenin (1965) described as manifesting the 'infantile disorder' of left communism.

5 For this perspective see Barrot (1987), Camatte (1995), Dauvé and Martin (1997), and International Communist Current (1992). For critical overviews see Antagonism (2001) and Aufheben (1999).

6 As Antagonism (2001: 8) puts it: 'The council communists put faith in "the workers themselves" and tended to assume that communism was immanent in all workplace struggles.'

7 Dauvé ('Leninism and the Ultra-Left' in Dauvé and Martin 1997) argues that the ultra-left's assertion of the centrality of the 'workers themselves' (against the Leninist party) ultimately only affirms one subject of capitalist relations, 'the workers', against another, 'the capitalists', because it posits its critique on the terrain of 'management' rather than on production. Assertion and fear of the party (Leninism and ultra-leftism respectively) are thus false problems, and mirror images of each other, which overemphasize the 'form' of the communist movement against its 'content' which is the organic product of the capitalist mode of production itself (which was where Marx's few comments on the party as a product of the 'real movement' are located).

8 Such an interpretation of 'self-management' is amply evident in Katsiaficas's (1997) book on European 'autonomous movements', including *autonomia*, which argues that 'our natural tendencies to favour equality and love freedom' are enabled in a self-management (as against vanguard politics) that lets the 'I' speak forth (239). Though the movements that Katsiaficas discusses are primarily a product of large industrial and post-industrial cities (the very precondition of metropolitan squatting, for example), he wants to distil their essence (sometimes, it has to be said, with the aid of the pronouncements of some of these movements themselves) to a naturalized humanity. He suggests, for example, that, against Haraway's 'cyborg' figure, a 'role of movement participation is to preserve and expand the domain of the heart in social relations – of all that is uniquely human, all that stands opposed to machine culture' (238).

9 The affirmation of the Lip occupation as an exemplary moment of revolutionary struggle (no doubt seized upon after the disillusionment of the post-'68 period) is evident in the conclusions – which contain no hint of irony – of one British pamphlet on the subject: '[Lip] is exemplary because for the first time in many years the working class has attacked, in deeds not just in words, the roots of capitalist society: private property, control and distribution of the means of production and consumption. What is also radical is that, as a result of the

methods of action used, a factory has been functioning for 2 months without the boss. The workers started up production again, they sold, and they paid themselves' (*Lip* 1973: 10).

10 *Négation*'s critique is, of course, not at the level of political accusation against the workers, who, given the isolated nature of the struggle and the impending withdrawal of their means of subsistence were in many ways compelled by the social configuration into this practice.

11 With the Lip case in mind, Antagonism (2001: 11) argue that 'Self-management operates . . . as a weapon of capitalist crisis management.' '[A]s a measure that is often introduced in unprofitable, failing companies, by workers trying to prevent closure and their own unemployment, self-management often entails a higher level of exploitation than a normal business. The workers "freely choose" (under pressure from the market) to work harder for less money, in order to keep the enterprise going.'

12 Such predictions actually go as far back as antiquity. In response to Cicero's and Aristotle's propositions that machines could overcome work, Marx (1976: 532) writes: 'Oh those heathens! They understood nothing of political economy and Christianity.'

13 Two anecdotes can make the point. An advertisement for a leading cold and influenza remedy that appeared in the London Underground in the winter of 1997/ 8 displayed some of the imperatives and pernicious mechanisms of work when it asked: 'What sort of person goes to work with the flu?', and gave the response: 'The one after your job.' Elsewhere, the intensification of work which accompanied the growth of flexible production techniques was such that the Japanese were induced to coin a new word – 'karoshi' – to describe a condition of death through overwork (cf. Kamunist Kranti 1997).

14 The way that this naturalization appears to have been *eased* by the Labour Party's historical relations to a socialist tradition (with the return of 'Old Labour' talk of full employment, the right to work, and a community of workers) exemplifies a little of the mainstream left's uncritical relation to the category 'work'.

15 In a 1987 conversation with Pope John Paul II, the Polish leader General Jaruzelski proposed that the common ground between East and West was not the Eastern block's movement toward capitalism, but the affirmation of what he called 'the Theology of Work' (cited in Hunnicutt 1988: 314–15). But such a perspective on work was not limited to Stalinism. Trotsky's 'militarization of labour' is a useful example since Trotsky has retained a popular image of being on the left of Marxism. As is clearly evident in this passage, in Trotsky's socialism there is to be no reduction in work: 'Under capitalism, the system of piece-work and of grading, the application of the Taylor system, etc., have as their object to increase the exploitation of the workers by the squeezing-out of surplus value. Under Socialist production, piece-work, bonuses, etc., have as their problem to increase the volume of socialist product, and consequently to raise the general well-being. Those workers who do more for the general interest than others receive the right to a greater quantity of the social product than the lazy, the careless, and the disorganizers' (1961: 149).

16 Lafargue's essay, as far as I know, is the first to explicitly emphasize the critique of work as the basis of a communist politics within a Marx-informed communist milieu. In a broader sense, the critique of work of course emerges earlier than this. As Illich (1981) has argued, work itself is a modern capitalist invention (cf. also *ATP*: 400–1, 490–1). The problems with generalizing sweeps through history aside, Illich argues that for the classical Greeks and Romans work done with the hands was a more lowly practice than begging (not, of course, that this prevented slaves and women doing it), and through the Middle Ages wage labour (as against

household subsistence, certain trades such as shoe making, and begging) was a sign of misery and lack of community. In the emergence of modern capitalism it took considerable effort to turn peasants and vagabonds into the proletariat (cf. Linebaugh 1991; Marx 1976: 899; Thompson 1967). In the politics of modern capitalism itself, Lafargue was by no means the first to raise the issue; anti-work perspectives and practices were a persistent feature of slave resistance (cf. Rawick 1972), and were prevalent amongst other elements of the transatlantic working class (cf. Linebaugh and Rediker 1990, 2000).

17 It is noteworthy that the politics of the refusal of work has often emerged from movements seeking to overcome the neat demarcation between workers' politics, counterculture, and artistic practice. That said, as journals like *Aufheben*, *Midnight Notes*, and *Zerowork* have sought to highlight, the refusal of work is a persistent feature of global workers' struggle, and hence should not be seen only through this rather Euro-American lens.

18 For accounts of the refusal of work in these movements and currents see, respectively, Thoburn (forthcoming), Huelsenbeck (1966), Thirion (1929), Knabb (1981), Hoffman (1996), Rubin (1970), Neville (1971), Cleaver (1970), Linebaugh and Ramirez (1975), Gambino (1976), Carpignano (1975), Échanges et Mouvement (1979), Rothbart (1978), Gilroy (1987: 199–203), Hall *et al.* (1978), Howe (1973), 'After Marx, April' Collective (1981), Aufheben (1998), *Bad Attitude* (1995), Carr (1975: 54–5), Kenyon (1972), Unwaged Fightback (1987) and Job Shirkers Alliance (n.d.).

19 A photograph of this graffiti ('Never Work') appeared in *Internationale Situationniste* no. 8 1963 (IS 1970), with the heading 'Preliminary program to the situationist movement', and it reappeared in the Sorbonne in May '68 (Pagès 1998: 36). Much of the elaboration of the refusal of work in these smaller groups and journals has developed from some relation to the politics of the SI, but the best of it is part of a movement of overcoming the SI's contradictory position, highlighted by Dauvé (2000: 48), of affirming the critique of work on the one hand, whilst advocating workers' councils on the other.

20 This is something of a sine qua non for autonomist theory. Midnight Notes (1981: 1), for example, reiterate the principle thus: 'our *struggles against capital* are its only motors for development. This is not a picture of some pure defeat in which the harder we struggle the more perfect capital's dominion; rather, the struggles that develop in one mix of living and dead labor, in one social arrangement of exploitation, force the *specific* arrangement to collapse. A crisis ensues. In the labyrinth of the crisis, capital can only find its way by following the working class and trying to devour it at the exit.'

21 Negri's essay on Keynes (in Negri 1988a), where Keynesianism (productivity/pay tie-ins, the welfare state, the general interest of labour) is presented as the capitalist response to the Soviet revolution, is the classic example of research premised upon the reversal of perspective.

22 Hardt and Negri (in Hardt *et al*. 2002: 189) present the relation to the reversal of perspective – of 'proletarian class struggle as an autonomous and creative power' – as the fundamental marker of any Marxist and materialist politics' efficacy.

23 Against what he presents as a 'weak version' of the reversal of perspective – that capital is a *reaction* to working-class struggle – Holloway (1995: 163) argues, in a fashion that has influenced my argument here, that a 'stronger version would be that capital is nothing other than the *product* of the working class and therefore depends, from one minute to another, upon the working class for its reproduction'. For Holloway, the working class, then, is not an external force *outside* and *against* capital, but a force '*against-and-in*' capital.

24 That this position is compatible with Tronti's general framework is marked by Deleuze (1988: 89, 144) when he considers the later Foucault. At this point –

when Deleuze discerns that Foucault's resistance changes from a reactive practice to a 'folding' of undetermined force – he suggests that we see an 'echo' of Tronti's reversal of perspective; that is, Deleuze brings Tronti into the same framework of a rich understanding of the forces of politics.

25 As Marx and Engels (1974: 49) put it: 'the satisfaction of the first need (the action of satisfying, and the instrument of satisfaction which has been acquired) leads to new needs; and this production of new needs is the first historical act'.

26 This was at a time of a mass of austerity measures, instituted in 1976 by the Andreotti government and backed and often implemented by the PCI (which had control of municipalities like Bologna) and the unions. By the beginning of 1977 there was acute economic hardship, with 25 per cent inflation and unprecedented unemployment (1,700,000 officially). Giorgio Amendola, secretary of the PCI, wrote in 1976 of the austerity measures: 'it would be wrong . . . to view . . . sacrifices as "concessions" given to the capitalists and the government . . . On the contrary, the sacrifices are necessary in order to serve primarily the interests of the working class by pulling the country out of crisis: so that the young might find employment, for the betterment of the living conditions of the people etc.' (cited in *Semiotext(e)* 1980: 91).

27 According to Lumley (1990: 31, 209), between 1951 and 1961 77 per cent of the 1,439,013 rise in population of the Northern industrial triangle was the result of immigration. In stressing the importance of immigrant workers in the 1969 struggles, one member of Lotta Continua suggested that something like 75 per cent of FIAT's workforce were immigrant workers (in Red Notes 1979: 184).

28 FIAT, for example, used complex vetting procedures involving local police and priests to keep out troublemakers (Abse 1985: 12).

29 Platania (1979: 176) writes: 'I couldn't understand the Communist Party blokes in the factory. They made it a point of honour never to be faulted in their work by the foreman.'

30 This expression originated in one of the first big struggles of the mass worker to extend beyond the factory walls, the events of Corso Traiano in July 1969, when a union-organized strike in the Turin FIAT plants Mirafiori and Rivalta extended beyond its formal structure to end in a day of street-fighting. 'What Do We Want? We Want Everything!' was written on a poster on one of the barricades (cf. Red Notes 1978: 191–3).

31 One worker describes the process: 'it was enough that you struck for half an hour in the morning and the same in the evening to make the mechanism break down. When you strike, you go around as pleased as punch and you can't be stopped . . . When you are busy with a "chequer-board" action not even the gatekeepers manage to understand the comings-and-goings . . . The damage to the bosses was enormous, unlike in the case of pre-organized strikes of previous years . . . It was the expression of mass creativity and inventiveness' (cited in Lumley 1990: 228).

32 The diversity of experience of the *emarginati* is evidenced at a formal level by the myriad terms used to describe the socio-political position of these groups. Thus as well as the unemployed, feminists, and *emarginati,* Lumley (1990: 341) lists: emergent groups (*ceti emergenti*), proletarian youth (*giovani proletari*), minorities (*minoranze*), the unprotected (*non garantiti*), the precarious (*precari*), and plebeians (*plebe*). That we are clearly on a terrain of ambiguity rather than distinct identity is evident in an article in *Primo Maggio* in 1977 which stated that this group 'seems not to have any objective, material reality' and yet that it comes together precisely 'through a denial of its own material condition (the position of being casual labour, lump labour, students etc)' (in Red Notes 1978: 41).

33 Bologna reports that Foucault had some influence on *autonomia*: 'Certainly the '77 Movement and several of these intellectuals linked to Autonomia had read

Foucault, especially, with great passion. They identified more with Foucault, sometimes, than with Marx or Lenin, and this is obviously very important. A discussion was opened.' Foucault (1996: 93), for his part, expressed something of the *emarginati*'s position in a panel discussion in the early '70s: 'what if it is the mass that marginalizes itself? That is, if it is precisely the proletariat and the young proletarians that refuse the ideology of the proletariat?'

34 This position was not only held by the orthodox left. The British journal of the International Communist Current (which situates itself in some relation to the German, Dutch, and Italian left communist currents), expressed its opinion of this 'swamp' in no uncertain terms: 'Today people talk about the "Area of Autonomy" rather than Workers' Autonomy. The milieu has turned into a somewhat grimy froth composed of all kind of petty-bourgeois fringe groups, from students to street theatre performers, from feminists to marginally employed teachers, all of them united in exalting their own "specificity" and in frantically rejecting the working class as the *only* revolutionary class of our epoch . . . Contrary to what is written in the bourgeois press, these marginal movements do not represent the Hundred Flowers of a revolutionary spring: they are simply some of the thousand and one purulent snares of this degenerating society' (Beyle 1979: 20).

35 See Castellano in *Semiotext(e)* (1980: 229–30) for discussion of the tendency of elements in *autonomia* to develop a fetishized self-representation of exclusion and marginalization.

36 See Caffentzis (1975) for a detailed analysis of the changing composition and politics of American students as they similarly became more internal to the social factory.

37 Thus, Bologna (in Red Notes 1978: 97) writes: 'I do not at all share the definition of "marginalisation" which is being given to the mass of people who have been in the forefront of the struggle in the Universities this week. In particular I do not believe that there exists, in Italy, an area of society that is radically excluded from the relations of production.'

38 The possibilities for inverting the meaning of '*untorelli*' were not lost on the *emarginati*, who sought, in a sense, to affirm their 'plague-bearing' relation to the society of austerity and work (cf. *Recherches* 1977). This inversion of naming has not been uncommon amongst radical movements. A recent example is the appropriation of the word *casseur* (literally wrecker or hooligan) by the student and *beur* movement in France in 1994 (cf. *Nous sommes tous des casseurs* n.d.) which replicates the sense of the May '68 slogan used after the deportation of Cohn-Bendit as an 'undesirable German Jew': '*Nous sommes tous des indésirables*', '*Nous sommes tous des juifs allemands*' (cf. Rohan 1988: 110–11).

39 Virno's sense of the use of the resistance and desire of the '70s to develop a new regime of production is, then, different from Negri's in that he does not see this as a new plane of autonomous production.

40 This is an interesting example of the strong sense of complexity these groups embodied: 'The idea came up almost by chance. We were pondering over time, on the many types of woman's time: on work time and love time, on "free" time and "liberated" time, on research time. One of us put forward the idea of having an hourglass on the cover, an ancient instrument of time keeping. Then musical time came to mind, perhaps just by playing on words. Someone else suggested putting the score of a Schonberg piece on the cover, a piece called "All in due time". Later, we were not able to trace that score. In the meantime we had started discussing Schonberg, whom some of us loved, some did not, and others knew little about. It seemed that the contrasting readings offered on Schonberg were relevant to us: the drama of dissolution of tonality and the ultimate failure in the attempt to construct a new musical norm, said somebody. Others did not agree. Atonality and 12–tone music, breakdown of the old order and the impossibility of a

"spontaneous" and non-painful journey towards a new order of things' (cited in Magale 1980: 137).

41 The Wages for Housework campaign emerged with Lotta Feminista in the 1972 Programmatic Manifesto of Housewives in the Neighbourhood (cf. Bono and Kemp 1991; Edmond and Fleming 1975; Federici 1982; Fortunati 1995; and, for some of the heated debate about this current, Malos 1982). I am only considering the early theory of this campaign, as an aspect of the area of *autonomia*, not assessing its subsequent development.

42 This analysis resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's (*AŒ*) analysis of the family in the capitalist socius. Deleuze and Guattari argue that it is precisely when the family ceases to be an autonomous model of production and reproduction – as the capitalist socius comes directly to take on the relations of alliance and filiation as all identities become formed through the axiomatization of abstract flows – that its privatization and naturalization 'outside' of capital becomes most necessary: 'Precisely because it is privatized, placed outside the field, the form of the material or the form of human reproduction begets people whom one can readily assume to be all equal in relation to one another; but inside the field itself, the form of social economic reproduction has already preformed the form of the material so as to engender, there where they are needed, *the* capitalist as a function derived from capital, and *the* worker as a function derived from labor capacity, etc.' (263).

43 It is notable in this context that Haraway (1991: 166) describes the contemporary global 'homework economy' – in a formulation not dissimilar to the general thesis of the social factory – as a now generalized 'feminization' of work.

44 See Comitati autonomi operai di Roma (1976) for two leaflets advocating autoreduction of service bills.

45 Lama and Cossiga were prominent union and PCI figures.

46 See Morris (1978: 70) and Red Notes (1978: 57) for two of these leaflets, and *É il '77* (1977) and Grimshaw and Gardner (1977: 16) for images of 'Metropolitan Indians'.

47 Such a move was not, of course, characteristic of the whole movement, and neither was it always popular. The intervention of A/traverso's Bifo in the September 1977 Conference on Repression (by letter from exile in France), which began with the expression 'We have to go against the stream even when the stream is going against the stream', was greeted by at least one of the audience with dismay, and an assertion of the need to communicate with the masses with simplicity and immediacy (cf. Kunzle 1980: 115–16).

48 See also the mao-dadaist parody of the 'right to work', 'Work makes you free and beautiful' (in Morris 1978: 70), and A/traverso in Guattari (1984: 238–40).

49 Downing (1980: 204) reports that in June 1978 there were an estimated 2,275 radio stations and 503 television stations spread fairly evenly across the population centres of the country. Radio Alice transmitted from 9 February 1976 until 12 March 1977, using an old military transmitter located in two rooms of an apartment building in a residential area of Bologna (cf. Cowan 1978; Grimshaw and Gardner 1977).

50 In his critique of the Movement of '77, Umberto Eco suggested that Radio Alice was not being quite honest about the avant-gardist and academic origin of its mao-dadaism (1977a: 116), that *Anti-Oedipus* and its 'metaphor' of desiring machines needed to be read seriously, not reduced to easy slogans (116), and that the workers did not really understand (1977b: 126) and were using a 'laboratory language' in a (by implication, dangerous) practical fashion (1994: 172). Bifo and Pasquini (1977) responded by insisting on the relation of their practice to the wider political movement and the refusal of work: 'In Eco's article, everything could be reduced to a little abstract game between Norm and Violation . . . But this is to forget that behind this transgression of the Norm and the gestural and linguistic

transformation there is a practical, collective, subject, which produced behaviour and signs capable of violating the codes of interpretation precisely because the social practice of the subject is capable of violating that productivist code of sacrificing a lifetime to an exploitative society' (cited in Morris 1978: 69). For Bifo and Pasquino (1977: 135) it was not the workers who did not understand (indeed, they argued that the workers were practising 'mao-dadaism' in their struggles at FIAT Mirafiori), but the bourgeoisie, or 'pale faces'.

51 'During the months of spring–summer '75, a new subject, the young proletarian, appeared on the scene, no longer with the old frames of reference of the avant-garde, a subject which moved in a certain transversal fashion through the separate orders, not reducible to the categories of politics, and therefore immediately reduced (by the reformists and fascists) to the categories of criminology, of psychiatry, of sociology, of spectacle' (Collectif A/traverso 1977: 89–90; my translation).

52 In this project A/traverso were directly influenced by Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the minor, and the Collectif A/traverso (1977: 67–72) collection includes a précis of the minor literature thesis. In turn, Guattari's experience of Radio Alice encouraged him to contribute to the development of free radio in France, though, without a similarly radicalized milieu, the movement was quickly subsumed in more molar media forms.

53 Guattari (1996a: 74–5) continues: 'We are far, very far, from the technocratic conceptions of the French partisans of *local* radio, who insist, on the contrary, that those who express themselves on radio represent their particular interests; or from the conceptions of the traditional left which is concerned above all that nothing more than the party line and certain mobilizing propositions be expressed on their wavelengths.' '[S]uch an assumption of direct speech by social groups . . . fundamentally endangers traditional systems of social representation, it puts in doubt a certain conception of the delegate, the representative, the authorized spokesman, the leader, the journalist . . . In these conditions, one can expect certain truths to find a *new matter of expression*.'

54 An article in *Primo Maggio* reported that no sooner had Alice come on air than it was able to mobilize 2,000 people for a musical jam session, and that it had an average listening audience of 30,000 (in Red Notes 1978: 41).

55 The closure of Radio Alice was part of the general repression of *autonomia*. This repression took a complex path, and a full account is far beyond the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, a little needs to be said. In the judicial procedures and criminal prosecutions, the complex and mutating area of *autonomia* was converted into a hierarchical and organized body in a degree of efficiency that would no doubt confirm Debord's (1983: 19) assessment that Italy at this time was 'the most modern laboratory of international counter-revolution'. Central to the process was the deployment of the Red Brigades (BR) as a kind of consolidating 'agent' enabling the solidification of identity-forming regimes across the movement. The BR was always a rather orthodox workerist formation, and, with its movement from the factories to the politics of 'carry the attack to the heart of the State', it became increasingly spectacular and functional to the repression of the social movement. As Sanguinetti (1982) argues, the question of whether the BR was aided by the secret services – which would fit with secret state practice since the 1969–73/4 'strategy of tension' of aiding or even instituting fascist terrorism – is better left aside in favour of considering the reactionary *effects* of the BR's practice. Certainly, the BR's approach was far removed from the diffuse politics of *autonomia*, as is evident in the Metropolitan Indians' rather astute parody of the BR position with the slogan 'Carry the attack to the heart of the Papacy! All power to the armed vicars!' (in Red Notes 1978: 124). Nevertheless, with the pretext of increased violence, the vague historical links across the whole of the extra-

parliamentary movement, and no doubt aided by some of the violent rhetoric and practice of aspects of *autonomia* and the clandestine bands, the judiciary sought to 'expose' the subterranean links between *autonomia* and the BR, and prosecute the lot (though many 'repentant' Brigadists received large commutations for implicating, frequently in contradictory ways, elements of *autonomia*). The specific techniques of identification are described by Lotringer and Marazzi (in *Semiotext(e)* 1980: 19) as part of a process whereby the state assumed something of its adversary's form: it '*simulated* the fluidity characteristic of Autonomy'. In his consideration of the judicial procedure, Deleuze (1980: 182–4) argues that the prosecution overcame two fundamental principles of democratic law: that justice must conform to a principle of 'identifiable consistency' where the content and subject of the charge must have a precise and non-contradictory identity, and that in the committal hearings 'facts' must conform to a principle of 'disjunction and exclusion' ('Either A is the case, or B; if B, then it is not A'; 182). The judiciary thus presented not a distinct series of subjects (in Judge Calogero's theorem there was only one, Potere Operaio = *autonomia* = Red Brigades) but an 'orgy of identifications' that replicated *Anti-Oedipus*' inclusive disjunction with a principle of inclusion and accumulation of all contradictions. The fatal proviso was that the construction of the inclusive disjunctive plane served to produce criminal *subjects* of the law, as the total plane was subdivided into units with responsibility for the whole. Thus, everything from political actions, texts, and archive collections (all of Negri's works and files were trawled through and formed the basis of his prosecution – see Negri (1988d) for a sobering transcript of the process of the prosecution of ideas) to mysterious telephone calls (the BR's telephone call to Aldo Moro's wife was initially attributed to Negri), and, if we expand beyond Negri's case, to cartoons (a comic strip in *Metropoli* illustrating the similarity of position between the BR and the state was said to display knowledge of Aldo Moro's kidnap that only the BR could have – see *Semiotext(e)* (1980: 300–14) for the comic strip) were used as points of connection to *autonomia*/BR. Once 'connected' there was no need to maintain consistency in the charges – which took simultaneously serious, and vague and nebulous forms such as 'subversive association' and 'insurrection against the powers of the state' – since the specific content could not change the generalized guilt, hence the continual mutation in the charges against the defendants (in a kind of 'endless deferment' that would have made Kafka proud), enabled by the possibility of up to twelve years of preventative detention, the use of witnesses with contradictory testimonies, and the refusal to present the prosecution's evidence to the defendants (cf. Italy '79 Committee 1982; Portelli 1985; Red Notes 1981).

56 Negri's presentation here helps mark his sense of the rather dramatic change in the regimes of contemporary production. It does, however, display a very different sense of the meaning of 'the refusal of work' to his earlier work, and to how I have elaborated the concept in this chapter. As I have argued, the refusal of work is a cramping mechanism for the refusal of workers' plenitude and a compulsion to political activity immanent to capitalist configurations, not a simple 'Luddism', or a refusal of 'command' (as something exterior to work itself). The refusal of work in an age of general intellect and the social individual – when, for some, affect, communicational competence, and technical expertise have come to the fore – would not be a 'suicidal' self-destruction, but a critical engagement with the axiomatizing relations immanent to these formations as they are born of, and functional to, capital. There is no reason that the refusal of work is not still valid for this configuration – so long as one does not see work itself as an expression of autonomous self-production, as Negri seems to.

6 Conclusion: the strange joy of politics

1 Explaining his early mode of engagement with the philosophical canon, Deleuze famously wrote 'I saw myself as taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous' (*N*: 6).

2 The Internationalist Communist Group (1987: n.p.) put it like this: 'there is no such thing as a "democratic ideal" or, to be more exact . . . the democratic ideal is just the ideal image of the reality of capitalist dictatorship'.

3 In his critique of the 'worthless' thought of the 'new philosophers', Deleuze (1998d: 40–1) shows how such thinking in the grid of electoral politics serves to close down alternate possibilities and reintroduce a certain state philosophy: 'whatever their position regarding the elections may be, they inscribed themselves perfectly well on the electoral grid. From that position, everything fades away, Marxism, Maoism, socialism, etc., not so much because real struggles would have made new enemies, new problems and new means arise, but because THE revolution must be declared impossible, uniformly and for always. This is why all the concepts which were beginning to function in a very differentiated manner (power, resistances, desires, "the plebs" even) are globalized anew, regrouped in an insipid unity of power, the Law, the State, etc.'

4 Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 98–9) write: 'The immense relative deterritorialization of world capitalism needs to be reterritorialized on the modern national State, which finds an outcome in democracy . . .' Showing the essential complementarity of democracy and capital they further challenge any philosophy conceived in terms of 'democratic conversation' as essentially producing concepts as commodities: 'Of course, it may be tempting to see philosophy as an agreeable commerce of the mind, which, with the concept, would have its own commodity, or rather its exchange value . . . If this is what is called philosophy, it is understandable why marketing appropriates the concept and advertising puts itself forward as the conceiver par excellence, as the poet and thinker.'

5 The passage continues in a discussion of rights and theories of democratic consensus, and, for the force of its argument, is worth citing at length: 'Rights save neither men nor a philosophy that is reterritorialized on the democratic State. Human rights will not make us bless capitalism. A great deal of innocence or cunning is needed by a philosophy of communication that claims to restore the society of friends, or even of wise men, by forming a universal opinion as "consensus" able to moralize nations, States, and the market. Human rights say nothing about the immanent modes of existence of people provided with rights. Nor is it only in the extreme situations described by Primo Levi that we experience the shame of being human. We also experience it in insignificant conditions, before the meanness and vulgarity of existence that haunts democracies, before the propagation of these modes of existence and of thought-for-the-market, and before the values, ideals, and opinions of our time' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 107).

6 As an example, Bill Ayers' (2001) autobiography of his days in the Weather Underground is a fascinating insight into the increasingly self-sacrificial and monomaniacal tendencies of 'militancy'. Driven by the compulsion to stop the war in Vietnam and to 'Bring the War Home', the constituent elements of the Weather Underground moved from a relatively diffuse political and countercultural form in the movement around Students for a Democratic Society to an ever more obsessive urban guerrilla activity which increasingly presented all outside the group – and all those in the group seeming to lack enough commitment – as failing the cause. At the height of its racket tendencies Ayers describes a benzedrine-fuelled stifling atmosphere as 'the collective assumed the stance of an eagerly policing superego' in

an accelerated process of the most 'brutal and excessive criticism sessions', a 'purifying ceremony involving confession, sacrifice, rebirth, and gratitude' (154). Attachments to anything unmilitant, such as emotional relations with lovers or a fondness for the poetry of Brecht, were seen as 'the dead hand of the romantic past' (155), in contrast to the need, as Ayers put it, to 'hurl myself into war in solidarity and sacrifice' (198).

7 Deleuze and Guattari (*AŒ*: 373) consider Marx's work as driven by a similar humour and fascination: 'Marx's black humour, the source of *Capital*, is his fascination with . . . [the mad capitalist] machine . . .'

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