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What is This?

Power after Hegemony
Cultural Studies in Mutation?

Scott Lash

HEGEMONY IS a concept that has been around for a long time.[1] From the beginnings of cultural studies in the 1970s, 'hegemony' has been perhaps *the* pivotal concept in this still emerging discipline. Cultural studies has been perhaps primarily concerned from its outset with the question of power, and it is through hegemony – or an equivalent – that its analysts have understood power to be effective. In what follows I do not want to argue that hegemony is a flawed concept. I do not want indeed to argue at all against the concept of hegemony. Hegemony as a concept has I think indeed great truth-value. What I want to argue instead is that it has had great truth-value for a particular epoch. I want to argue that that epoch is now beginning to draw to a close. I want to suggest that power now, instead, is largely *post-hegemonic*. I want to suggest that cultural studies should look perhaps mostly elsewhere for its core concepts. I should also like to propose what some of these alternative concepts might be. I believe that these are not only concepts but also are the way in which power is beginning to work in a post-hegemonic age.

Hegemony was the concept that de facto crystallized cultural studies as a discipline. Hegemony means domination through consent as much as coercion. It has meant domination through ideology or discourse. It has meant symbolic power in the sense developed by the late Pierre Bourdieu. In classical British cultural studies hegemony has largely been understood in terms of resistance to such symbolic power. 'Disciplinary power' is, for these purposes, a way of understanding hegemonic power. In disciplinary power there is always a discourse (jurisprudence, psychoanalysis, etc.) that lies behind the disciplinary institution it supports. The institution then exercises power in the micro-instances of the capillaries of society. At the root of all this is cultural discourse and legitimate power. In between is a set of disciplinary institutions.[2] Thus hegemony presupposes symbolic

domination, legitimate power, viable institutions. Each of these three elements presumes that cultural power is largely addressed to the reproduction of economy, society and polity. This too moves into the background in a post-hegemonic order. If the hegemonic order works through a cultural logic of reproduction, the post-hegemonic power operates through a cultural logic of invention, hence not of reproduction but of chronic production of economic, social and political relations.

The treatment of the politics of hegemony in what follows is not per se one of Gramsci, or Laclau, or of Stuart Hall's earlier work. At stake is something that encompasses a more general regime of power that will be developed throughout the length of this article: what might be called 'extensive politics'. Below, what I will try to show is that such extensive power or such an extensive politics is being progressively displaced by a politics of *intensity*. I will trace the shift from hegemony or extensive politics to such an intensive politics in terms of: (1) a transition to an *ontological* regime of power, from a regime that in important respects is '*epistemological*'; (2) a shift in power from the hegemonic mode of '*power over*' to an intensive notion of *power from within* (including domination from within) and power as generative force; (3) a shift from power and politics in terms of *normativity* to a regime of power much more based in what can be understood as a '*facticity*'. This points to a general transition from norm to fact in politics. From hegemonic norm to what we will see are intensive facts. The fourth section will look at this shift through a change from an extensive (and hegemonic) regime of *representation* to an intensive regime of *communications*.

Language: Power becomes Ontological[3]

Hegemony is often understood to work through 'the symbolic order' or *the symbolic*. This presumes a great measure of domination through the unconscious mind. It presumes that when, as children, we enter the order of language with the resolution of the Oedipus complex, we become subject to the 'law of the father', which actually constitutes us as subjects. This law is the symbolic order of a given society. In this context, some authors advocate resistance to the hegemony of the symbolic through the imaginary. Others, such as Slavoj Žižek, suggest that resistance to the symbolic is situated in 'the real'. The real, unlike the symbolic or the imaginary, escapes the order of representation altogether. We – i.e. those who think that power is largely post-hegemonic – agree with Žižek (see Butler, Laclau and Žižek, 2000). We agree part way. We think that both domination and resistance in the post-hegemonic order takes place through the real. The symbolic, which is structured like a language and whose propositions and judgements contain this 'law', operates through what might be called 'epistemology'. Epistemological power works through logical statements or utterances, through propositions that are predications of a subject. The language of the symbolic through which hegemony is exercised in this sense, as mode of predication, that is also a mode of judgement. The real,

in contrast, is the unutterable. It is ontological. Power in the post-hegemonic order is becoming ontological.

Let us look into this a bit more closely. What is 'this symbolic' through which hegemony is exercised? What indeed in this context is a symbol? Žižek, like Julia Kristeva (1984), identifies the symbolic order with the law of the father. It carries out normalizing functions of domination. Kristeva contrasts the domination of the symbolic with the freedom of the 'semiotic'. Žižek contrasts it with a Marxist politics of the real. This is complex though. In Lacan (1994), there are several different positions. One – which was taken up by screen studies in Britain in the 1970s – pitted a sort of de-centred and ambivalent symbolic with the normalization of the imaginary. Then we have a Lacan in, for example, the *Four Fundamental Concepts*, in which the symbolic embodies normalization and law, and the real embodies the powers of resistance. And finally, and perhaps most interesting, is Lacan's sort of mathematization of the symbolic, not in the sense of a uniform and metric qualification, but in non-metric notions of topology and number. Here again the symbolic is a sort of site of resistance. This has been drawn on recently by Kittler, who stresses the influence of Alan Turing and non-linear cybernetics on Lacan. One should look here also to the mathematical ontology of Alain Badiou. Staying with the idea of the symbolic, we need to remember – as all of these authors of course are aware – that Freud's notion of symbol ran completely opposite to Žižek's and Kristeva's notions of the symbolic as a site of predication. For Freud, symbols worked not in the clear and distinct propositional language of law, judgement or the ego. They worked through the processes of displacement and condensation in the unconscious. Symbols were comprised of figures displaced from the instrumentally clear and distinct subject, verb, qualifier temporality of the ego. These figures were indeed condensed and even compressed into symbols. They were very opposite, really, to the space of judgement and law that is the ego. Now the ego, despite of course working in the idiom of instrumental rationality and the commodity, also works linguistically through predicative statements, through propositional logic: through the clear and distinct succession of subject, verb and object or qualifier. It works through a succession of judgements. Walter Benjamin (see Menninghaus, 1995) spoke of this kind of language as 'semiotic'. And this is I think what Saussure meant by semiotics. The unconscious with its symbols, displace-ments and condensations works in a way quite opposite to this. In the analytic situation language does not work in the sense that it does in real life of the ego. The analytic situation takes place in a room set apart from this world of judgement and logical proposition. It is a 'talking cure' that is profoundly *anti*-semiotic. Its figures are not clear and distinct but, as symbols, fuzzy and merging into one another. Freud's idea of symbol is drawn rather uncritically from his contemporaneous anthropology. Yet this is the way in which symbols have meaning, a way vastly different from the precise imperatives of the law. It was not, then, a large step for Lévi-Strauss to re-import Freud's idea. Thus myth and *la pensée sauvage* are

comprised of symbols built, indeed *bricolé*, through such displacement and condensation. Likewise, the surrealists drew on dreams and Freud's sorts of symbols to counter the propositional language of the ego and the dull commoditization of everyday life. Lévi-Strauss's and the surrealists' pose – against the ego's epistemology – an unconscious in ontological mode. The symbolic, which is at the same time mathematical and linguistic, can relate to objects in either epistemological or ontological mode. In the register of hegemony and classical cultural studies, the symbolic worked epistemologically. In post-hegemonic cultural studies the stakes are increasingly ontological

　　Cultural studies, in its hegemonic paradigm, understood power largely as operating semiotically, through *discourse*. Serious speech acts, or statements, in their systematic articulation, constitute for Foucault a discourse. Such a framework of propositions is pre-eminently epistemological. The heuristic is very much Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Here cognitive judgements are at stake, which work through logical statements, or predications, whether the latter are analytic or synthetic. The presumption is that objects, whether physical or mathematical, cannot be known in themselves or in their being. Instead, we can only know things through their predicates, their qualities. For classical cultural studies, both power and resistance work in such a sense epistemologically. On both sides is a semiotics of predication. Ideology works like this, just the same as discourse: both capitalist and proletarian ideologies. It is discourse versus discourse. Discursive will formation, and the legitimating arguments for the propositions therein comprised, whether used in domination or resistance, is pre-eminently epistemological.

　　Post-hegemonic power and cultural studies is less a question of cognitive judgements and more a question of *being*. It is in this sense that Walter Benjamin, in his famous essay on language in general and the language of man, counters the epistemological and semiotic language of judgement with the ontological and naming language of creation and of criticism. He thus speaks of semiotic versus cabbalistic language, of physical versus metaphysical language, of extensive versus intensive language. Drawing on Heidegger, it is this sort of ontological language that is at stake in Giorgio Agamben's (1999) work. Language is still an important stake in post-hegemonic cultural studies. But it is less a semiotic or epistemological language than some dimension of ontological language. In Benjamin's early essay, the language of power would be epistemological: the language of criticism and against power ontological. Similarly in Agamben (1999), normalizing power is discursive and epistemological, and the language of *homo sacer* ontological. The same would go for Žižek, whose 'real' as site of struggle is surely not at all knowable through cognitive judgements. But ontology now goes much further than this: that is, it is not just resistance in our post-hegemonic culture, but also domination that works ontologically. There are traces of this in Benjamin's (1979) somewhat later, more materialist work, like in his essay on Karl Krauss and in *One-way*

Street. Here we have a shift from the focus on poetry of the earlier work to the materiality of the street: adverts, kiosks, dime novels, newspapers and movies, the arcades. We know of course that a politics of critique, as well as of invention, works through the more material (and less metaphysical) medium of such popular culture for Benjamin. But also they work as part of capitalist power. They do so not just as the simple commodity. And the abstraction of the commodity is very much on the lines of the instrumental reason of predicative judgements and what Benjamin called semiotic language. If the commodity works epistemologically, then the advertisement and the neon sign work for Benjamin on deeper, ontological levels. Thus he speaks of the power of meaning as lying not in the sign but in its 'dark reflection in the pool of water in the street below'. In post-hegemonic politics the stakes – whether through the prism of language or adverts or indeed new media – are no longer epistemological, they are instead ontological. Instead of the ontological being only a site of resistance to such abstract power, it now becomes an apparatus of domination itself. Power has become more sinister in a post-hegemonic age. In the age of hegemony, power only appropriated your predicates: in the post-hegemonic present, it penetrates your very being. Power, previously extensive and operating from without, becomes intensive and now works from within.

Two Types of Power

In the age of hegemony, there was essentially one type of power: power in the sense of the power that A has over B. Thus in classical cultural studies power is seen basically as power-over, the fashion in which individuals or collectives or structures made others do what they otherwise would not do. In a post-hegemonic age a second type of power emerges and comes to the forefront. This is what Antonio Negri (1991), drawing on Spinoza, calls *potentia*, which has more to do with power as force, energy, potential. In French *potestas* is *pouvoir*, and *potentia* is *puissance*; in German it is *Macht* versus *Kraft*. What is this *potentia*, this *puissance*? It is connected not so much to domination as to 'invention', as in Maurizio Lazzarato's (2002) seminal work on Gabriel Tarde whose title is *Puissances de l'invention*. Indeed, in post-hegemonic cultural studies the notion of invention, or 'performing the exceptional', starts to replace resistance, which comes to be rejected for its negative connotations. How can we get a handle on what is meant by this second type of power? *Potestas* or *pouvoir* works through external determination, like mechanism. *Potentia* (*puissance*), in contrast, works less like mechanism than like '*life*' and there is an important neo-vitalist dimension to post-hegemonic cultural studies. Where *pouvoir* (*potestas*) is conceived mainly as epistemological, *potentia* is fully ontological. It is the motive force, the unfolding, the becoming of the thing-itself, whether that thing is human, non-human or some combination thereof.

This *potentia* is at the heart of the theme of ontological plenitude in Heidegger. It is the multiplicity of being that – in all its colours – attempts to break through the mechanical greyness of semiotic predication,

law/judgement and the commodity. Heidegger's implicit or explicit idea of *potentia* is, in his early work featuring *Dasein*, at least residually humanist. Heidegger's notion, further, mostly understands *potentia* as residing in individual beings, in their unfolding. Thus it is strictly ontological or what I would call (in the best sense) metaphysical as opposed to the physical. This is because of the strong doctrine of ontological difference at the heart of Heidegger's work. Now post-hegemonic power works partly through an emergent collapse of metaphysics into physics, or a growing ontological indifference. Thus in Nietzsche, for whom what we just described as *potentia* is indeed life, or will to power, what Heidegger understands as such plenitude becomes a much more physical notion of energy.[4] An energy that also pervades non-humans and inorganic matter. At the same time, this energy becomes no longer internal to but transversal of all types of material beings (Colebrook, 2005). This was perhaps implicit in Spinoza, for whom nature is the divine and thus the physical already metaphysical. Hence the penchant of post-hegemonic cultural studies for the non-human, for the culture of things.

What Hardt and Negri did in *Empire* (2000) was to capture this idea of *potentia*, and read it into contemporary politics. Even in Negri's very early work on the 'labour process' of the early 1970s he insisted that it was labour as *potentia* that constituted capital as *potestas*. For Spinoza's metaphysics of single substance it needs always be *potential*, as well, that constitutes *potestas*. The *potentia* of concrete labour, which must be labour as difference, in which the labour of each is unique, constitutes capital as abstract homogeneity in which this difference is brought under the sign of equivalence, which then reigns over its constitutive difference. In *Empire*, this position becomes a more literal neo-vitalism, and the production of difference takes place not just through labour but also outside the sphere of work, in 'life' more generally. Here we see an older 'extensive' politics of *le peuple* and the proletariat. *Le peuple* were atomized citizens, each standing before the state and law as equivalents. The proletariat came together politically as equivalents as well as as abstract homogeneous labour. All this is displaced by an intensive post-hegemonic politics of what Hardt and Negri call the multitude, in which political individuals are more like monads than atoms, each different from the other. Organization in the older hegemonic politics had to come from the outside, whether it was the proletarian political party or the distanced political representation of classical parliamentarism. In post-hegemonic politics, there is organization from the inside: there is self-organization. It is no longer like *le peuple* or the proletariat-like mechanism with the brain on the outside, now the brain – or something like mind (Bateson, 2000) – is immanent in the system itself. Hence the classical Taylorist and Fordist collective labourer, becomes the '*cerveau collectif*', the collective brain (Lazzarato, 2002). The multitudes give self-organization in politics as well as self-organization at work. In both, life is such self-organization.

This is the *potentia* of post-hegemonic politics. Where then is *potestas*? If this is *puissance* then where is *pouvoir*? If *potestas* as power-over comes

somehow from above, then *potentia* and *potestas* come, not just from within, but 'from below'. In the post-hegemonic order, *potestas* or domination also begins to come from below. *Pouvoir* and *puissance* somehow begin to merge into one another – become somehow fuzzy and indistinct in relation with one another. The hegemon is above. It is outside and over. In the post-hegemonic order, power comes to act from below: it no longer stays outside that which it 'effects'. It becomes instead immanent in its object and its processes. No one describes this better than Foucault. For Foucault, there are two modes in which *pouvoir* works. In the first it normalizes *puissance* from above. In the second it takes the shape of *puissance*: of life itself. It is power that does not work through normalization. At stake are two modes of power-knowledge. The first is the power-over that Foucault talks about in terms of surveillance and discipline. The second is when power starts – in more contemporary times – to work from below. When it begins to circulate in the capillaries of society. In the second mode, power enters immanent to life and forms of life themselves. Each of these modes of operation of power is, at the same time, a mode of knowledge. These are described in the *Order of Things*. In *Les Mots et les choses* Foucault (1966) describes one episteme that he understands in terms of classification and representation, in which words are outside and above things and classify these things. These are succeeded by a modern episteme in which knowledge comes to grasp the things from within. In biology there is a shift from the classification in genre, species and order of natural history to a focus on life – physiological explorations of the interior of the organism. In economics there is a shift from the classical understanding of value in exchange to the more modern understanding of value in terms of labour, again constituting value from the interior. Classically, language was understood through the classification of subject, verb and object in the *Grammaire générale*, while in the modern period, language took on its own lifeblood in the national languages and philology studied by the Grimms and Herder. So knowledge, and indeed words (discourse), that once acted outside and above in the classical period now enter the object themselves. As knowledge enters the capillaries, i.e. the life, of language, the body and economic value (thus value of things) so does power. At stake is a shift from mechanistic to vitalist power. Life and *puissance* (*potentia*) now operate not through the equilibria of reproduction, but through chronic far-from-equilibrium production. We are no longer normalized: instead we self-constitute in difference. When power (*potentia*) starts to work immanently, power (*potestas*) enters into difference itself. *Pouvoir* was much easier to unmask when it worked from the outside as power-over. The critique of ideology of left-hegemonic politics could manage this. But when power enters into us and constitutes us from the inside – not through our normalization but through our difference, through partly producing (i.e. not reproducing) this now disequilibrate difference – it becomes far more difficult to unmask. Indeed, working no longer through a visual paradigm, but through the multiplicity of senses, unmasking is no longer at issue.

From Norm to Fact

The notion of hegemony of course comes from Gramsci, but it presumes a certain normativity.[5] Indeed, Gramsci's idea of the 'organic intellectual' was to provide this sort of normativity for the masses on the left. But ideas of normativity are ubiquitous in the age of hegemonic politics. Ideas, for example, of 'civil society' or 'global civil society' refer often to a global normative order that does not yet exist and might never exist. A cultural studies or a sociology that deals in the idiom of such normativity begins to lose track of the *facts*: of social and cultural facts. This can lead to very inaccurate description, so that we really do not get a grasp on what social forces are acting in a given time–space, but instead the state of affairs that we might (or might not) like to bring about. Some analysts have quite properly spoken of this as dealing in 'counterfactuals'. It seems to me that to understand how global capitalism might work, it is much better to work through facts than counterfactuals. These counterfactuals seem indeed to be norms. And not even actually existing norms, but norms that we might, in the best of worlds, think it desirable to have. Sociology, it seems to me, can learn a lot more from facts than from counterfactual norms in describing the mechanism by which today's global capitalism works. Cultural studies, for its part, will deal with facts as artefacts, as prisms through which to explore the relationships of cultural worlds. Again, this would seem to be much more productive than for cultural studies to focus on counterfactual norms. There is often such a focus on counterfactual norms in studies of global democracy. This is a highly normative notion and often corresponds to states of affairs that are not even realized in the West. Yet such ideas as the norms of global democracy are used as legitimizations by powerful Western states in order to install these norms – sometimes militarily – in far-away cultures. The discourse of global normative democracy is often not realized by the powerful Western states, especially in violating any notion of human rights through such activities as 'rendition'. Not only are the rights of sovereign states overridden, but there is little regard for the already existing facticity of on-the-ground social and cultural relationships in these countries. Universal, abstract norms, especially when they are brought in on the backs of bayonets and tanks and missiles, often tend to violate the grain of the facticity of social relations in that country they are meant to liberate.

Post-hegemonic politics leaves such normativity and enters into the realm of the factual. This does not mean breaking with ethics, though it does mean a break with abstract ethics.[6] But let us stay with facticity for the moment. What is a fact? For Max Weber it is something that stands in opposition to value. Emile Durkheim as well speaks of 'social facts'. The notion of fact, for both Weber and Durkheim, refers less to events or things out there in the world than to statements about the world. We recall *Dragnet* – 'I want the facts, Ma'am. Nothing but the facts.' Facts are the data that Sergeant Friday in *Dragnet* works with to solve crimes. To put together a case that will in court at a later date come up against the rather more

concrete norms or rules of the law. Facts here are such things as 'I saw a man running from the scene of the crime. He was white, in his mid-twenties, black greasy hair, sunglasses and a "hoodie". He was about six foot and was quite thin.' These facts are not about the being or substance of this man. They are about his qualities, his attributes, his predicates. They are objectively described. The police and the prosecuting attorney will put together a case from a large collection of these predicates, these facts. These facts are knowledge abstracted by our perception and understanding from the being of the man-himself. For Weber, these facts are abstracted by the sociologist from concrete social, political and cultural practices. They then, in their constellations, form ideal types. These ideal types then serve as guides for us to understand other complexes of social phenomena. Again, these are objective – surely in the sense that Kant understood objectivity – and we are again dealing with the predicates of individual and collective social beings. These are cognitive judgements. Even though individual subjects make them, to have any validity they need to be objective and meet a set of logical conditions. In Durkheim we have a similar state of affairs. In *Primitive Classifications* we see that facts come from the classifications of those whom anthropologists and sociologists study, and from what those sociologists and anthropologists select from all of this (Durkheim and Mauss, 1963). There is another side of Durkheim (1982) however. It is where he says that 'social facts' are *things*. Here he instructs sociologists to study social facts as things. The assumption is that everyday social actors also come up against social facts as things. Note that this is a major shift. Here, facts are no longer the characteristics, or qualities or predicates of things. They are those things.[7]

Durkheim's thing-like facts are getting closer to what is at stake in post-hegemonic power. That is, facts that once were abstracted as attributes of events and things are now not separable from the things and events themselves. In such a context architects and urbanists like Rem Koolhaas and Stefano Boeri put strong emphasis on facts. For Koolhaas (1995), there seems to be almost an obsession with sociology, and his books, and indeed his pitches in architectural competitions are pervaded by hordes of facts – about Lagos or Shenzhen or wherever else he is thinking of building, accompanied by bar charts and other graphs of distributions of such facts. But these facts, like Durkheim's, hardly come across as attributes or predicates. They seem to function almost like armies, crushing the reader (viewer or jury) with their omnipresence and sheer mass. The graphics are in compelling colours and shapes, transforming the usual greyness of factual analysis. Stefano Boeri and Multiplicity (2003) also speak the language of facts. They describe their political interventions into urban time–space in terms of the 'physical facts' of the city. There is a sort of political and social stake in this facticity. This facticity is physical, but it cannot be described as a 'built environment' or some such thing. At stake is not the completeness of something that is built, but instead something physical that is in process. There is no fixedness in Boeri's idea of the social and urban fact.

The thinker who introduced the term 'facticity' into modern discussions (*Faktizität*) is of course Heidegger. For Heidegger (1978) when beings, and especially *Dasein*, escape from the confines of technology as standing reserve into the space of existence, they enter at the same time the realm of facticity. This facticity is in the realm not of beings but of being. It is the Keirkegaardian dark night of the soul into which we are thrown, yet into which we must be thrown in order to project our being in its potentialities. There is no potentiality without this thrownness into existential facticity. Otherwise we are mere beings closed from any possible opening. For Heidegger, in the empirical–transcendental couple of being and beings, facility is not an empirical but a transcendental. Georg Simmel importantly foreshadowed Heidegger's thoughts. Though for Simmel fact was on the side of beings and *value* on the side of being. In the opening paragraphs of *The Philosophy of Money* (2004), Simmel separates value from fact. Facts are qualities of objects for Simmel. Values are not. Value is not a predicate, he says. If facts are qualities, then value has to do with being. If facts have to do with categories, value has to do with life. Thus value = being = life. It follows that use-value and exchange-value are not qualities of things. They are something else. They are not objective; i.e. they are not abstracted from objects. When a subject operates through categories and logically predicates, he is 'objective'. When a subject looks at the thing and views it as a microcosm of the world from the point of view of the thing, then in Simmel's sense he relates to that thing 'subjectively'. Value in this sense is subjective. Value has to do with the resistance of the thing to the subject's desire to have it. To have a thing is to, so to speak, merge with it as content. To use it, to eat it, to have sex with it. When we have a thing we no longer stand in a distanced or separated relation to it – either objectively or subjectively.

The rise of the money economy brings an objectification of this realm of value. There is a destruction of subjective culture through money. There is indeed a 'factification' of value. What was being gets parcelized and atomized. What was once life turns into mechanism. My subjective use-value becomes anybody's exchange-value. Yet what Simmel noted taking place was still in the age of hegemony. At stake in post-hegemonic power is less a 'factification' of value than, as it were, a 'value-ification' of fact. Fact takes on the logic of value. Money comes alive. Instead of facts being a dead abstraction, the factual comes alive. In the age of hegemony, the concept squeezed the life out of the thing in reducing it to its predicates. In the post-hegemonic age the concept is dis-intermediated and we come up against facts as raw sense data. In their rawness, facts come very much alive. Thus the 'positivism' of the age of hegemony gives way to post-hegemonic *empiricism*. This is an empirical that is even more immediate than sense data. It is the empiricism of the thing, of the event. Empirical data comes to life as transcendental fact. This is a more radical empiricism than even Deleuze's (2001) transcendental empiricism, which is an empiricism of the virtual. In this more radical, indeed *extreme* empiricism, the

virtual and the actual merge under the sign of life. This is the sort of facticity that is at stake in Koolhaas's and Boeri's urbanism. It is the way that money markets – if they are indeed markets – in, say, 21st-century Shanghai work today.[8] This is the grain in which post-hegemonic politics needs to work. It will find its ethical moment inside the factual itself. Post-hegemonic politics is a politics not of normativity but of such facticity.

From Representation to Communications

The psychoanalytic notion of the symbolic has its roots much earlier in the work of Émile Durkheim. For Durkheim, the symbolic is the *conscience collective* (i.e. the collective consciousness, and at the same time the collective conscience). For Durkheim, the *conscience collective* dealt with deviance or the pathological through its exclusion. The exclusion of the pathological through a healthy *conscience collective* guaranteed the reproduction of society. Durkheim's most effective critic was Georges Bataille. Bataille was on the side of the pathological. He was on the side of social classes and phenomena that were abjected by the functioning of the normal. This abjected pathological was understood by Bataille as '*excess*'. Today we would understand it as the real. This real of Bataille and, as we saw above, Slavoj Žižek, is a space of frenzy. It is the space of not the sex drive (reproduction) but the death drive. It is the space of the patricide and patrophagy of Freud's primal horde. The symbolic is in effect macro-sociological. It needs a micro-sociological counterpart in order to function. This micro-sociological counterpart is found in Marcel Mauss's notion of the gift. This is a process of reciprocal and obligatory gift-exchange. In this gift-exchange is the basis of the social bond. Hegemonic power works through the social bond. Bataille has another notion of the gift. For him gift-giving has little to do with re-inforcement of the symbolic. It has to do with agon, with waste, burning vast cornucopias of gifts, sacrifice. Bataille's agon of the gift, which has nothing to do with reciprocity, runs counter to the social bond. It instead guarantees the *destruction* of the social bond.

That this social bond is in decline has been the subject of very large numbers of commentators on both left and right. More specifically, the social bond of the hegemonic order of the national manufacturing society is in decline. In the global information society, the social relation is reduced to the *communication*. Niklas Luhmann has most profoundly understood this. The social relation is the longer term, embedded and in proximity. The communication presumes the short term; it is disembedded (even when face-to-face) and is normally in some sense at-a-distance. The social relation operates in the logic of hegemony, in the reproduction of the symbolic. The communication occupies instead the sphere of the real. The space in excess of the symbolic. Bataille's excess is reminiscent of Max Weber's 'charisma'. Weber spoke of the routinization of charisma. In this sense the communication is the banalization of excess. The communication is at the heart of the post-hegemonic order. The symbolic is somehow national; the communication is in the first instance generic and global. It

may be site-specific, but it is global. The communication is 'lighter' than the symbolic. Hence it can travel faster and further. The communication is immaterial.

In large respect what happens is that the symbolic – iconic of hegemonic power – is collapsed into the order of communications. Into the profane banality of the everyday. The dualism of the hegemonic order disappears. Hegemony presumes *legitimate domination*. It presumes sovereignty. Sovereignty presumes a dualism of ruler, or mode of rule, and ruled. So does legitimation. The global information society is an order of not dualism, but monism, immanence. Now domination is through the communication. The communication is not above us, even as disciplinary power is. It is instead among us. We swim in its ether. When domination is through the communication, sovereignty, indeed democracy, must be rethought. Although it takes place increasingly through the media, domination was never so immediate. So unreflective. So without a separate sphere of discursive legitimation. When there is no separate instance there is only – as Lyotard said – legitimation through performance. Legtimation (Luhmann) *durch Verfahren*. This is non-hegemonic. It entails an immediacy to legitimation. Another way in which power is illegitimate follows from the way it works not in terms of reproduction but instead production. This is the chronic decisionism that is called for by such chronic change. Further, reflexive and autopoietic self-production is always more than just reproduction. At stake is not reproduction but the chronic production of society that is necessary in a fluctuating environment. Thus we can understand the contemporary importance of Carl Schmitt and his doctrine of the rise of the executive function and the 'decision'. We live in an age of such chronic decisionism: one in which legality as a mode of legitimation is displaced by performance.[9] Hegemony – and the symbolic – are effective through meaning. Communications work through performativity. Legitimation is no longer separate from what it is meant to legitimate, it becomes automatic.

The symbolic, and our values, were embedded in more or less linear institutions. In this context there has been a general institutional meltdown. This is internal as well as external. Internally there is meltdown of family, Church, trade unions, hierarchical firms, institutions of art. Externally there is meltdown of the institutions of international relations: the breakdown of the Cold War stability of US–Soviet relations that opened up the anarchic communicational space of international relations, or the replacement of international *relations* per se by the violence of communications. Thus we can understand 11 September 2001. The stability of the institutions is displaced by the violence of flows: of flows of communications and finance. The institutions of moderate 'Church' and international relations break down. Fundamentalism and networked communications rage. Thus a hub of world trade and not the institutions of the state were focus of attack. In war, the hegemon was the leader of a group of states – a *primus inter pares*; especially of Greek city states, for Gramsci. This presumes an institutional framework. With institutional meltdown and American Empire, this no

longer is the case. America not so much leads. It dictates. It does not act like a hegemon. US power is well beyond hegemony. In hegemony, the leading class or leading state works through an alliance. Communications do not cement. The USA sees no need to cement.

In this context Stuart Hall has rightly criticized Hardt and Negri for underestimating US power in their notion of Empire. The decline of hegemony and the symbolic makes all this US power possible. It is institutional meltdown both internally (decline of the national symbolic) and in terms of international relations institutions that makes the communications order and hitherto unsurpassed US power possible. Empire is what happens after the modern world system of nation-states. It is only after the demise of the modern world system – and of hegemony – that the US as sole hyperpower emerges. The Roman Empire worked first through a coordinated bureaucracy, which became the basis for the symbolic as institutionalized church. The American Empire is based less on institutions (and representations) and takes place more in the violence of communications. The social bond of Marcel Mauss's gift is the micro-sociological face of Émile Durkheim's macro-sociological collective representations. As the social bond attenuates, the collectivity fragments and so do its representations. Collective representations, that once gave solidity to the social formation from the heights of the superstructure, fragment and recombine in the infrastructure as communications. Unlike the serious speech acts of an earlier politics that needed to be legitimated through reasoned discourse, communications carry their legitimations inside them in their very performance.

Communications are extra-parliamentary. They don't need a social contract. They are what Max Weber called *nicht-legitime Herrschaft*. Domination in the global communications order is, many argue, through not discipline but control. The communication order's non-linear systems are such apparatuses of control. In the communication order, power is not just in the flows: it is in the emergent non-linear socio-technical systems that channel, block and connect the flows. Hence, literally, power through control. Cybernetic power works through command, control, communications and intelligence. Here intelligence scans the system's borders. It processes the rather amorphous stuff out there, the already somewhat patterned noise out there, into information. Guy Debord (1995) already understood in the 1960s this new power of control through cybernetic-like mechanisms. They are military mechanisms. They are a question of force and strategy. They have nothing to do with ideology or culture or hegemony or meaning. At stake is not meaning from the order of representation (and hegemony) but instead 'operationally'. Debord already gave us the way out. Not to resist but to *derive* (drift). 'Lines of flight' are the *dérive*. But the *dérive* is site-specific. It is site-specific and generic at the same time. To *dérive* is not exactly to resist. It is to evade. It is an 'exit', not a 'voice' strategy. The *dérive* moves slower than lines of flight. It moves from engagement to engagement.[10] *Dérive* says I don't like your logic: I won't contest in a class-versus-class struggle or through rituals of resistance. Those are voice.

Instead *dérive* says: I'll drift. Is *dérive* as the heart of 21st-century critique? The response to domination through interactivity is the 'interpassivity' of drifting. In the hegemonic order, we challenge power through contesting domination through discursive argument. Or through symbolic struggles. To *dérive* is to do none of the above. It is to slip out. It is strategy through movement.

Cultural Studies: First and Second Wave

The observations above do not really do justice to the power-as-hegemony position. Hegemony was a powerful concept, and still is in the analyses of a great number of phenomena. The concept arose in the context of 1970s Marxism. This was in the context, indeed, of a certain Althusserian Marxism, as instantiated in the work of Jacques Texier and Christine Buci-Glucksmann and, fundamentally, Nicos Poulantzas in France, and especially Ernesto Laclau and then Laclau and Mouffe in the UK. At the heart of all this is the phenomenon of *social class*. This was particularly important in Britain, in which the phenomenon of social class, and a certain power of the English working class, was experienced with an intensity, on the level of everyday life, that was infrequently found elsewhere. Hence a generation of British sociologists, writing before the 1970s, already based their work in a sort of empirical, what was called 'Weberian' or, later, 'neo-Weberian', notion of class. The generation of their students was in its aggregate largely Marxist, and the fundamental text in regard to social class was Nicos Poulantzas's *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (1975). Other major texts that were of greatest influence at this point in time were Harry Braverman's *Labor in Monopoly Capitalism* (1974) and Eric Olin Wright's more empirical early work on social class. At stake was not yet a power-as-hegemony position, but more arguments that were directly about class power. And what really counted was what workers did in factories and the centrality of trade unions. Now cultural studies work, from the 'Birmingham School' was appearing in publications from the mid 1970s, but attained much wider recognition from the end of the 1970s. This was at the same time that Laclau wrote his early book on ideology and Paul Hirst his famous piece on the 'Ideological Apparatuses of the State'. This was the context of the power-as-hegemony position. It was one in which there was a shift from a focus on the economy and the factory to ideology and especially *culture*. The idea was that power was not just economic but also cultural. That capitalist state power was not just a question of coercion but of consent, again of ideology. In the work of Hall, Hebdige and McRobbie, popular culture came to the fore. The purveyors may have been of working-class origins, but this was not the space of the factory, but the streets or indeed often the art schools. And these kids were probably not going to work in factories, even if their parents did. So the idea of hegemony becomes prominent with the decline of a more fundamental Marxism, and indeed a decline in the importance of the working class in the factory. What Gramsci gave to this was the importance of consent and culture. If the fundamental Marxists saw power in terms

of class versus class, then Gramsci gave to us a question of *class alliance*. The rise of cultural studies itself was based on the decline of the prominence of fundamental class-versus-class politics – an abeyance of the fundamental structuring of society, economy, ideology and politics by the opposition of capitalist class and working class. Gramsci spoke of alliances of the working class with sections of the middle classes, under the umbrella of a sort of counter-hegemonic culture that opposed the dominant culture and could potentially aggregate the alliance of different classes. This was powerful stuff. Later, from the early 1980s, cultural studies would be influenced by Lacan and semiotics. With the accession of Margaret Thatcher to power, cultural studies gave us powerful analyses of her regime under the idea of authoritarian populism. But at the same time as the British working class was numerically in rapid decline, with factory closures everywhere and trade unions being decimated, social class began to decline at the same time in cultural studies analyses. The power-as-hegemony position began to talk less of socialism than 'democracy', and in many cases Marxism, any kind of Marxism, was left altogether behind, often rejected for a general notion of antagonism, which has owed much more to Carl Schmitt than to Karl Marx,

Yet in its heyday the notion of hegemony had a great deal to do with social class. Post-hegemonic cultural studies has much less to do with social class. In many ways its analyses are much the poorer for this. Post-hegemonic cultural studies is in many ways less political. It is more oriented to art, to science and technology. Yet phenomena of inequality and class disparities, especially on a global level, have worsened over these decades. Cultural studies needs to be able to address these phenomena. It does so now not at all sufficiently. Class is still with us, more than ever. Yet no longer being concentrated so much inside single nations and in concentrated places like factories, class has reconfigured, or more or less fragmented. Some global movements have attempted to remedy this, but the obstacles are major. Attention has, unhappily for social inequalities, largely turned elsewhere.

This is largely because of globalization and also informationalization. Thus technology and media have become much more central to social and cultural life. This is something that the power-as-hegemony position did not sufficiently address. More recent tendencies in cultural studies are much more attuned to what seems to be a more generalized militarization of social and cultural, indeed of natural life. On the one hand there is the, as it were, vitalization of power, which I tried to begin to address above in discussions of power as *potentia*. *Potentia* here is at the same time life. Thus can be understood the rise of a sort of neo-vitalism in the work of De Landa, Massumi and, as I mentioned, Negri. The point I wanted to make in this context was that not just resistance but domination itself works through such life or *potentia*. This is very different from a previously existing power that works through the dead labour of the commodity. Classical, hegemonic power worked through the abstract homogeneous and dead labour of the commodity. Indeed 'the *thing*' in the hegemonic order was paradigmatically

the commodity's dead labour. But things in the global and informational order – and the power-as-hegemony position dealt basically with a national and manufacturing society – now are no longer dead and mechanical, they have, as Arjun Appadurai noted (1986), taken on their own social life, they have come alive, they come alive and move, not 'mechanically' – in terms of external causation – as the commodity, but flow in their logic and indeterminately in their unintended consequences. These are the, as it were, 'neo-commodities' of the post-hegemonic order. These neo-commodities are in the information order things that think – in the words of the MIT Media Lab – as the old *res extensa* of the commodity becomes, at the same time, thinking substance, substance that thinks. Capitalist power itself though, global capitalist power, works through such thinking and, in an important sense, living matter, rather than the solely extensive matter of the commodity.

As important as the, as it were, 'vitalization' of power is this just mentioned mediatization of life. These are two interweaving processes. At the same time as power is being 'vitalized', life is being mediatized. Hence there is a new importance in cultural studies of media theory: from Friedrich Kittler to Katharine Hayles. I tried to address this partly above in what I argued was the rise of communications in the post-hegemonic regime of power. This includes a mediatized social life. Thus Ken Sakamura of Tokyo University has spoken of 'ubiquitous computing'. This needs to be taken one step further and we need to speak of ubiquitous media. At stake here is not just technological forms of life (Lash, 2002), in which forms of social life are technologically mediated. At stake is the technologization of life itself, the mediatization of life itself. Once we make the step from computing or technology to media, the question of content also comes to take centre stage, as does that of communication. When media are ubiquitous, interfaces are everywhere. The actual becomes an interface. People and other interfaces are connected by protocols that connect an ever-greater variety of interfaces with one another. It is such protocols that make communication possible. Most important is the ubiquity of code, of mediatic code pervading more and more regions of beings. First, the communication codes of human beings on the level of mind or the metaphysical level, the neural codes and network of biological human brains; then the genetic codes, of bio-media; and, finally, the coding in nanotechnology of inorganic matter. There is, further, the importance, even in the generation of content and perhaps especially the interactive content of coding itself, of the algorithm. Computer scientists understand algorithms in terms of 'rules'. But these rules are far different from the sorts of rules that human scientists have dealt with over the decades. Two types of rules have long structured the human sciences and human societies: on the one hand, what amount to constitutive rules and, on the other, regulative rules. The first type of rules is found in the constitutions of states or in the rules of games. Without them the game cannot exist. They let you enter the playing field of the game and a nation. Such rules are effectively a passport. Regulative rules are entities

that regulate your activity once you are on the playing field. They address at the same time how you play the game once you are there. But in a society of pervasive media and ubiquitous coding, at stake is a third type of rule, algorithmic, *generative* rules. 'Generative' rules are, as it were, virtuals that generate a whole variety of actuals. They are compressed and hidden and we do not encounter them in the way that we encounter constitutive and regulative rules. Yet this third type of generative rules is more and more pervasive in our social and cultural life of the post-hegemonic order. They do not merely open up opportunity for invention, however. They are also pathways through which capitalist *power* works, in, for example, biotechnology companies and software giants more generally. Power through the algorithm is increasingly important for media companies in digital rights management. A society of ubiquitous media means a society in which power is increasingly in the algorithm.

This leads us back to questions of ontology that have been so central to this article. I have spoken of a shift as we moved to the post-hegemonic power regime as hegemony from the symbolic to the real, from semiotics to intensive language, and most of all from epistemology to ontology. Here I have understood the symbolic, semiotics, representation, as basically epistemological and the real, intensive language, and the communication as basically ontological. Epistemology has to do with the understanding of the things we encounter, while ontology and the real have to do with the thing-itself that is never encountered. The thing itself, and the real, is never encountered – it is a virtual, a generative force; it is metaphysical rather than physical. I understand the epistemological order of power-as-hegemony to be fundamentally Kantian. For Kant, knowledge and experience are much more than a question of sensation as they were for the empiricism of Locke and Hume. Knowledge and experience also entail another faculty than the faculty of perception: the faculty of understanding. Understanding consists of categories. These categories deal with sensation in terms of predication. Perception or sensation are not enough. We experience and know only through predication.

The neo-Kantian Durkheim was acutely aware of this in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1995) Already Durkheim and Mauss's 'classifications are the same as Kant's predications through categories. In the *Elementary Forms*, as Kant did to Locke and Hume, Durkheim takes another generation of British scholars – this time anthropologists – to task for their empiricism. Thus Frazer, Tylor and Spencer are criticized for their theories of religion that are eminently physical and work from perception or sensation alone. For Durkheim, the primordial classifications of totemism are the stuff of religious cosmologies. That is, for Durkheim as for Kant, sense perception or sensation were not sufficient either for knowledge – philosophical, scientific or social scientific knowledge. Sense perception had to be brought under the orderings of the categories or classifications, which functioned through making predications about a substance or a subject. The point is that a transcendental is necessary for these predications.

This transcendental has two sides. For Kant, looking outward – in science it works through categories and is epistemological. Kant's transcendental is reason. And as reason it is two-sided: looking outwards, reason is what Kant calls the understanding (*Verstand*) and science: it is epistemological. Looking inwards reason is what Kant calls 'Reason' or *Vernunft*. *Vernunft* is ontological. Reason as the understanding works through categories and predication: reason as *Vernunft* works not through categories but ideas. These ideas do not predicate because they work with what we do not encounter. They operate in the ether of the metaphysical. Looking, as it were, inwards – in terms of ethics, religion and art – it is ontological. Looking inwards, it is being that is at stake rather than knowledge of the outside world. The Kantian philosopher looks at both sides – the metaphysical inside and the 'physical' outside. Though the Kantian philosopher knows that the ontological side of the transcendental is the condition of possibility of its epistemological side. Hence Kant's critique of metaphysics preserves a great deal of the metaphysical and the ontological. Durkheim, I think rightly, locates the metaphysical in the social. This collective effervescence of totemic religion is the substance, the ontology of religion. It is the primordial social ontology. The social, which is the cultural, is fundamentally religious. The substance of totemism looks inward, but its forms, which are those same totems that function as emblems of religious substance, become the cosmologies of classification as the tribesman looks out onto the profane.[11] Just as religion is basically not an empirical but a transcendental phenomenon, i.e. a metaphysical phenomenon, whose physical outside, looking out onto the profane understands this profane in terms of cosmologies, whose categories organize this profane into substances and subjects whose predicates come, as it were, from the outside as attributes or qualities. The same thing needs to take place in discursive thought, and in particular in the human or social sciences, for which again empiricism is not enough. Social science must work through transcendental categories to classify social sense material. The social sciences must identify the subject and then discover and indeed attribute these predicates.[12] These predicates are not, as in metaphysics, included in the subject. They are attributed by the social scientist. Again, the condition of possibility of this social epistemology is a social ontology that structures the moral life of modern society and its social scientists. This is Durkheim's positivist critique of empiricism. Like Kant's, it preserves the metaphysical: in Durkheim's case this becomes a social ontology.

   As Foucault understood in *The Order of Things*, and Max Weber had already addressed in his methodological argument on adequacy of explanation argument on levels of causality and meaning, man is an empirical–transcendental double. This empirical–transcendental double is the subject or substance that cultural studies and sociology must deal with. Unlike, classically in the natural sciences, in which the subject or substance is merely extensive, the subjects that the social sciences must predicate about are both extended and intensive, or thinking substance. We are

metaphysical–physical doubles. Once we are aware of the dual nature of the subject, we are aware of the fact that his or her predicates are often less a question of what we as social scientists attribute than intrinsic to the intentions of the subject. To the extent that those who social scientists study are metaphysical, the predicates are included in this human subject. Once we as human scientists are there, we can decide to deal with this human double either through classifications – as Durkheim and Weber chose to – or through values, ideas and interpretation, as Simmel and later the phenomenological tradition chose to. There is a third methodological choice for today's post-human and also post-hegemonic cultural sciences. This third choice is neither classification nor interpretation. It is a method of tracking or mapping – it is also topological in that it deals with virtuals as much as actuals. Or, more precisely, it deals with actuals as virtuals. It entails entering into the world of cultural things as a human thing, whose difference is that we may be marginally more reflexive than other things.[13]

This excursus was necessary in the sense of setting up again the counterposition of what we have been discussing as hegemonic versus post-hegemonic, or 'first-wave' and 'second-wave', cultural studies. First-wave cultural studies – whether Marxist or not – with its assumptions of representation and Saussurean semiotics, stayed very much within the epistemological realm. Typically this epistemology was decentred from positivism, as knowledge was contingent and indefinitely delayed. If there was an ontology, it was understood in an aporetic relation to the epistemological. This aporia was the unbridgeable chasm between the epistemological and the ontological that could not be sublated in Hegel's sense. This was an aporia – of freedom on the one hand and necessity on the other – that we were condemned to live with. Now what much of second-wave cultural studies does – and the first three sections of this article try to exemplify this – is to collapse the epistemological into the ontological. This is why writers like Lyotard and Deleuze have been so influential in recent years. Lyotard and Deleuze destroy the categories, destroy the predications, destroy centred and decentred positivism and go back to the original empiricism of Hume in their philosophy of 'sensation'. Traditional empiricism rejects – as we just saw in our discussion of Kant and Durkheim – of course any notion of a transcendental. But for today's philosophy of sensation, the transcendental is already there in the empirical. It is immanent in the empirical. So we have here an empiricism that is already ontological, in which empirical substance is not extended as in Descartes, but is intensive substance. The other side of ontology in such a philosophy of sensation is a reconfigured epistemology that is now inseparable and fused with the ontological. But it is epistemological and, in this sense, a question of logic. But this logic is neither that of deductivist predication nor of inductivist empiricism, nor even a combination thereof. The logic is not something that is applied, as in Kant and Durkheim,[14] to sense material. The logic, as broadcast in the titles of two of Deleuze's books, is there already in the sense material: the

logic is immanent to sensation. In this 'transcendental empiricism', the transcendental is collapsed into the empirical.

Why is this second-wave cultural studies, this post-hegemonic cultural studies so suggestive to today's generation of students? Because it speaks to the world that they encounter. If the empirical is informational, then it is already knowledge: it is already transcendental. If the empirical we encounter is mediatized, then it is already transcendental. If an earlier sociology and cultural studies – as we saw above in Durkheim, Weber and Foucault – saw man as an empirical–transcendental double, second-wave cultural studies also understands *things* as such doubles. An empirical that is already transcendental is what we deal with at work, at play, in science and in art. Second-wave cultural studies and its transcendental empiricism speaks to us because we encounter a world of transcendental–empiricals. Thus science encounters a world of bio-media. And art deals in (video and information) materials that are already mediated in addressing a transcendental that is equally mediatized. And in all these cases it is a question of ontology and epistemology. Being is mediatized, as is knowledge. And the two stand less in a relation of radical separation than of fusion.

Conclusions

If power has become ontological, intensive, factical and communicational, then what are the implications for cultural studies? Culture – that was previously somehow outside of the profane everyday – is now inside it. Culture, previously in the realm of value, was a place from which critique could be launched. Culture was a site for critique of the commodity and indeed of industry. But, as culture comes no longer to have that separation, as it becomes itself part of the realm of fact, as it enters the profane order of communications, then what was cultural studies is no longer easily separable from industry (McRobbie, 1998). Cultural studies, and what many of us now call cultural research, comes in many ways to be indistinct from culture industry. Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) of course foresaw this many years ago, as the final twist in the tail of the dialectic of enlightenment and the triumph of commodification. Yet the increasing overlap of the cultural and industrial principles – of fact and of value, as we saw above – is not necessarily, as Adorno said, the industrialization of culture: it is at the same time the 'culturification' of industry. On the one hand, the deadening abstract homogeneity of industry suffocates the being, the life, of culture. On the other, culturification brings life and indeed ontology to the mechanism of industry. What this means in practice is that cultural studies must engage with the culture industries: with art, the media, architecture, design, information and communications technology, software and protocol design, and urbanism.[15] It must engage with the sciences and technosciences as well. This is partly because these sectors are expanding and are increasingly destinations for our students. But also because of the critical interventions that need to be made there.

As discourse of value, cultural studies and cultural critique become pervaded by the facticity of practice; cultural studies must engage with such practice and train its students in theoretically infused hands-on work in new media, art, architecture, cultural policy and politics. In education we must engage with practitioners. In research, project-networks of practitioners and theorists will work in laboratories and studios and produce outcomes that are, at same time, also practical. These labs and studios will produce not just scholarly articles and books but also exhibitions, software, designed space, media experiments and prototypes. Classes and a more organic social body were host to what Gramsci called organic intellectuals. There was a longer-term solidity and stability to this order. This is far less the case with today's 'inorganic', even crystalline intellectuals, who work less as an organ in the body of a social class and more as coders, writing algorithms, as designers and the like. Replacing the *longue durée* of the social class or village or factory is the ephemerality of the project-network. Yet power in the post-hegemonic age grasps us in our very being. It is, then, the task of cultural studies, not to be less political, but to be more political. Indeed, in the hegemonic order, politics was once confined to a set of more or less clearly defined institutions. After hegemony and the meltdown of the classic institutions and their regime of representation, politics leaks out. The post-hegemonic order is not just an era of ubiquitous computing and ubiquitous media. It also bequeaths to us ubiquitous politics.

Notes

1. The idea for this article began in a conversation in 2001 with David Oswell, who suggested that hegemony was the central concept for an earlier generation of cultural studies, but that this was no longer at all the case. In a subsequent conversation, Nancy Fraser noted that I was arguing not against the *concept* of hegemony, but instead that contemporary politics no longer worked through its prism. In January 2002 I delivered this as a short paper at Melbourne University. Many thanks to Scott Maguire and Nikos Papastergiadis for their comments. Let me say here that I have the utmost respect for the originary foundation of cultural studies by and in the tradition of Stuart Hall. Indeed, Professor Hall himself has in more recent work used newer concepts, not present in and at points breaking with his positions of the 1970s to grasp contemporaneous phenomena. The present intervention, though breaking radically with notions of hegemony and normative power, is only possible given a paradigm established by Stuart Hall. Finally, I would like to thank Nick Gane for his comments on the full draft of this article.

2. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's (2001) idea of hegemony is specifically not a theory of institutions. It is hence an exception here. Laclau's idea, and indeed Stuart Hall's use of the concept in the context of Margaret Thatcher's political power in Britain, are not at all institutional. They presume already the decline of the classical institutions of working-class politics. The influence on Laclau here of Peronism in his discussions of populism and also institutions is striking. In many ways Laclau and Mouffe's work describes a transition from hegemonic to post-hegemonic power. Indeed, cultural studies itself – and Hall's work – needs to be

seen as situated in this transition. What this article is arguing is that 25–30 years on, this transition has gone a lot further.

3. I am indebted to Sebastian Olma for this idea.

4. See the fascinating interpretation of Nietzsche in Heidegger's *Nietzsche* (1991). Heidegger reads Nietzsche's more physical energy indeed as plenitude.

5. I am indebted in this to discussions with Jeff Alexander and Francisco Carbello.

6. Spinoza's ethics work through this sort of facticity.

7. Predicates may be connected to the things – most likely, we don't encounter things without predicates any more than we have ever encountered men without qualities.

8. On the construction of markets as non-linear, processual social (and cultural) institutions, see the exemplary work of Harrison White (2002).

9. *Legitimat und Legalitat* is from Carl Schmitt. Legitimation *durch Verfahren* is Luhmann's Schmittianism that Lyotard picked up in *The Postmodern Condition*.

10. Cf. Lyotard's famous *Dérive à partir de Marx et Freud*.

11. Durkheim systematically used the language of substance and form in *Formes élémentaires*. Substance always came first. I think the book should have been entitled 'The Elementary Substance of Religious Life'.

12. This sort of method is introduced in the work of Appadurai and Latour. Celia Lury and I have attempted to develop it in our *Global Culture Industry: The Mediation of Things* (Lash and Lury, 2007).

13. See Lash and Lury (2007).

14. In his case of course a 'socio-logic'.

15. Stuart Hall's work in the 1990s and first years of the new millennium – with INIVA and the Stephen Lawrence Foundation – exemplify this.

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