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Jay-Walker. How can it be that jay-walking has become punishable by death?

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How can it be that jay-walking has become punishable by death? Making jay-walking a legal offense was part of the transition from colonial capitalism to industrial capitalism in the US. A 'jay' was someone from the country who walked in the middle of streets, fast becoming reserved for emerging automobile traffic. There was a public campaign to keep people from wandering in the street and thereby slowing up this traffic stream, this production line of cars. But when Michael Brown was shot down for jay-walking in Ferguson, Missouri, something had changed. Of course, it was also quickly pointed out that nothing had changed. But these two

statements cannot be understood without each other. Because what had changed made what had not changed even more unchangeable. I will try to explain what I mean in what follows. But I begin simply with this proposition. Today's logistical capitalism requires generalised access to us as never before but this unlimited access has a history amongst those who were both most subjected to it, and most liberated from it. I am speaking of course of the original logistics moment in capitalism, the slave trade, and its cruel cargo. But I am also speaking of history in which access has been not only denied but sabotaged and liberated. Michael Brown's jay-walking was an act of sabotage, and in the protest movement of Ferguson we see the liberation of access at work once more, in the jaywalking footsteps of the black radical tradition. Cedric Robinson famously said the black radical tradition is the critique of Western Civilisation. Here I want to inherit it as the critique of Western idea and practice of access to others, an idea and practice that requires first the denial of access of others to oneself, as Denise Ferreira da Silva shows us, and then the development of the right to access to others, especially to what Hortense Spillers designates as the indeterminate flesh of others.

In case you think I am speaking in metaphors, or speaking romantically, or with an optimism of the will. Yes, I am, but I am also speaking materially - more materially indeed than all of the misplaced calls to link race and class (on the contrary, they will never be separated). More exactly, I would like to say Michael Brown's sabotage was symbolically material. And in order to understand this we must have recourse to the way logistical capitalism has developed and why the denial of access and pursuit of other forms of movement comes into direct conflict (again) with this form of capitalism.

We will have to enter the hidden realm of operations management in the 1960's and 1970's, when industrial capitalism is beginning to shape shift into what we could not yet identify. We call it variously post-modern or post-industrial capitalism, globalisation or cognitive capitalism. But now we can see that one way to name it is as logistical. And by naming it this way we also come to explain how the long vicious history of state and extra-state violence against those who most embody this psychotic demand for access has now entered a new phase of intensity. This psychotic demand for more and more access has never gone away but it finds new life, and new life to suck, in the unlikely hidden abode of operations management.

Hidden abode

Two things happen to operations management in the 1970's. The first is *kaizen*. The second is logistics. By the 1970's the Japanese practice of continuous improvement, or kaizen, had become widely influential in operations management and the management practices it in turn influences. With kaizen the eye of management shifted its focus from the worker and the machine, to the assembly line. The assembly line was no longer the way to organise workers and machines, the workers and machines were there to organise the assembly line, which became an end in itself.

As Deborah Cowen rightly points out in her excellent book, The Deadly Life of Logistics, this is also the period in time when operations management notices logistics. The result will be a new understanding of how the assembly line is assembled, and as a result of this, in combination with kaizen, how it might be disassembled and reassembled through society to seek out continuous improvement through ever greater demands for access.

When I say operations management notices logistics what I mean is that until this point, operations management restricted itself to what it could oversee within the walls of the factory. It concerns began at the entrance dock and ended at the exit gates. But as workers put pressure on the factory (and movements put pressure on the state) operations management began to look at the problems of securing supplies at one end and ensuring sales at the other end. And they began to look at these problems as production problems, as extensions of the assembly line beyond the factory doors, as continuous improvement of a continuous line. One could say, although here again it would be symbolically material to say so, that operations management followed the workers in their exodus from the factory.

By beginning to regard all the materials coming into the factory not only as part of the calculation of production, rather than just as costs at the outset of production, but especially by believing this calculation could be itself subject to kaizen, operations management, as much as any capitalist science, gave birth to the social factory. But it also allows us to understand the social factory from another angle. To do this we have to stay with operations management just a bit more to see how it is also the origins of everything from private equity firms, to the derivative, and most importantly to the figure of the consultant, to whom I will return.

With the shift in attention from the worker and the machine to the assembly line itself value comes to be spoken about differently by management. Management now sees the assembly line not as a static cost - while the men and machines in combination are what will produce surplus value through relative increases in productivity - but the reverse. It is the assembly line that is dynamic. It is the process where value is to be found, and especially value is to be found in the potential of the assembly line. With this potential

comes speculation. (And of course the other obsession of management do not entirely disappear with the appearance of a new obsession. Indeed we could also see a speculative shift in the movement from personnel management to human resources management and from static book-keeping to dynamic forms of accounting in the continued attention to worker and machine – in both these shifting fields speculation, or the future right now, becomes the object of analysis.) This speculation on the production line is boosted tremendously by the incorporation of logistics and by advances in the algorithm.

Soon management began to find value in the improvement of the assembly line not just in the factory, but beyond, in all the moments of supply, distribution, and consumption occuring outside the factory gates. And the best way to do this was to apply the growing capacity of the algorithm, first through implementing a series of management systems internally, and then by linking algorithms at work in logistics, in transport and warehousing initially, and then also in consumption, first in customer relations, and then in what would one day become big data. This culminates in corporations like SAP and in 4G Logistics companies, where the firm is basically gone, not into finance, but into the assembly line. The idea that there was always a better way to arrange the assembly line, to arrange the flow of the process, to improve continuously that process, is given tremendous confidence by the algorithm. This is because in part at least the algorithm enacts this exercise, working on itself, especially in so-called genetic and evolutionary algorithms. The algorithm gives the impression of never being satisfied with itself, and it appears to improve itself. Indeed it has no goal but this, and it propels the fantasy that the assembly line too should be its own goal – who works on it and how it is mechanised or computerised or indeed what it makes are all

secondary to its own goal of efficiency. And this idea of an assembly line that can itself become more and more efficient and therefore produce more and more value, produces a speculation on the assembly line. The easiest way to illustrate this is to think about these leaders who move from institution to institution or firm to firm. They may know nothing of the people or machines at work in these places. But it does not matter. They know how to make the assembly line in these place ever more efficient. This is their sole and only necessary qualification. At the level of the firm, this is what private equity claims too. They need not know anything about the product in the companies they are buying. Indeed they sell themselves precisely on an indifference to the product. They know how to get knew value out the assembly line. I hasten to add that even if we know this is not the whole story, the disavowal in the business world is almost complete in this regard. This is what I mean when I say there is a speculation on the assembly line – a bet or wager, an investment, that this line can flow ever quicker, ever more precisely, ever more creatively, indeed ever more, no matter what the product or goal.

Sunup to sundown

But what is new world of speculation for capital is a new nightmare of deconstruction for labour. I use deconstruction in its philosophical resonance. Derrida can be forgiven for not reading operations management but his unfinishing of thought has its parallel at exactly the same moment history in the unfinishing of work, of the labour process itself. While it has been remarked that this unfinishing is the property of new commodities - immaterial commodities - this describes only the surface of things. The class power that capital develops in logistical capitalism comes not from the unfinished commodity, or not alone, but from unfinishing

work, preventing its closure, haunting it with incompleteness, and indeed with the thought of an excess of value yet to be captured in every labouring moment, every assembly of the line. Not only Derrida, but Bataille then. Or Bataille through Derrida: the restricted economy of the factory encounters the general economy of the algorithmic society. Work is undone by its excessive potential which for management, though it may be dressed in the rhetoric of creativity at work, is in fact a very material matter of demanding more and more access by never agreeing to close or limit the labour contract. There is for management now always the potential, always the metric, to access more in order to quantify more. This is the meaning, to put it bluntly, of everything from the zero-hour contract for coffee baristas to the deregulation of coffee markets for coffee bean sorters, to the micro-tasking of Amazon's mechanical turk, to the private temporary butler 'app' called Alfred. It is true work never stops, nor does its mythology as Peter Fleming correctly points out in his new book. But it never stops because it is never finished. Or more precisely because the assembly line, and therefore its labour process, is never complete. Indeed the labour process is actively unfinished. And not only must this process constantly undone but it must be constantly reassembled. We now must assemble ourselves collectively in order to assemble the production line in the social factory.

We must assemble ourselves collectively to assemble the assembly line because the labour process is no longer formally the reponsibility of management (if it ever was informally). It is the responsibility of workers scattered through the social factory. And what is that responsibility? What form does it take? Connection, flexibility, availability, reorganisation on demand, translatability, in short, access, radical access to labour. But not just to labour, this means full and unfettered access to the earth, to all its organic and

inorganic matter, and indeed to capital, though usually in the form of debt, and therefore we might better say with Randy Martin's pioneering work access to financialisation, that is, a radical openness to being financialised.

The consultant

Of course there is both resistance to this logic and other self-directed logics and logisticalities at work in the undercommons. But this logic of unfinishing the labour process and requiring our assembly has a powerful bearer. I will call this bearer of the logic of logistical capitalism, the consultant. I do not mean by this designation strictly those who call themselves consultants. Nor do I mean even the act of offering consultation and producing consultative reports. I mean all those who carry and spread the virus of the algorithm of work. To speak of the consultant I have briefly to go back to the earlier figures of which he is both an heir and a frightening new advance in (extra-) legalized theft and violence.

Primitive accumulation, or what I would prefer to call slave and colonial capitalism is characterised by the emergence not of access – people have suffered from such demands so long as the history of the world has been the history of class struggle – but this radical, unceasing, psychotic demand for access. If you like this is the difference, in short-hand, between traditional practices of slavery, including in parts of Africa, and the first great horrible logistics – African chattel slavery. Total violence accompanied the insane demand for total access to the flesh of Africans, for labour and for sex. Prefigured or accompanied by a similar demand of aboriginal peoples and followed by versions of indentured and migrant slavery to the present day. This is the core of primitive accumulation. The

bearer of this insane demand for access was the settler. But of course the settler did not present himself as bearing this relation. He presented himself openly as the bearer of property and race.

With the rise of industrial capitalism – the settler does not disappear though he sometimes becomes the jay, or the farmer's daughter as we will see with the traveling salesman later – and we have a new figure of domination, the citizen. The citizen might be said to bear nationalist heteropatriarchy as capitalist social relations. In other words the class relations is established differently even if both capitalisms and both bearers overlap and persist in uneven ways. It is in this lineage that I place the emergence of the consultant. The consultant bears the unfettered, insane demand for absolute access, and this he does by hosting the algorithm. For this reason, both nationalism and property suffer new contradictions with the consultant, premised as they are on the restriction of access. (And indeed we might say some changes in the exclusive of heteromale privilege, although as with property and nation this is accompanied by a violent reaction to any new access, an access that is at any rate itself a form of violence, we should remember.)

The consultant is characterised by a two-fold character much like the previous and still operative settler and citizen. The consultant believes he or she is an algorithmic agent actively reorganising people, firms, institutions, and even countries. But the consultant is also a problem for the algorithm, an obstacle to that reorganisation, though the consultant is unaware of this, seeing himself or herself as a revolutionary agent. Far from it, however. If we take the consultant's origins in the traveling salesman we can see this two-fold character. The traveling agent literally becomes a problem – the 'traveling salesman problem' in the capitalist science of logistics. This problem is well known. It is about how to move a salesman, or an oil truck, or anything really, on a route that is most

efficient, but more importantly, in a way that can anticipate changes in what most efficient means. In other words, it is the search for an algorithm that embodies continuous improvement. Now the point is that the salesman is prone to human error and bound human time, as is the truck driver. It is the same with the consultant. Ultimately they are in the way of the algorithm, not is bearer. This is why it does not matter what a consultant does or says (as anyone who has listened to one will know). The consultant is a pattern experiment, an experiment now not in movement and delivery of goods, but movement and deconstruction of the labour process. The consultant is a like an agent used to dissolve something else, in this case an existing assembly line, and ultimately should then dissolve himself or herself when this job is done. This is why the consultant is, unknown to him or her, a problem, and a solution only in this other chemical sense.

Of course, the consultant, like the settler and citizen, has 'back-up.' What Fred Moten and I have elsewhere called policy, policy-making, policy implementation, policy hustling. This is the weapon of choice when the consultant meets resistance, when the consultant senses planning in the undercommons, another kind of access, another kind of assembling. The consultant and his policy-makers, his version of night riders remind us again why Nahum Chandler is right to insist on the continued importance of Dubois's term democratic despotism. Liberalism never separated the state and the economy except in ideology and neither has neo-liberalism. These figures of the consultant and the policy hustler in logistical capitalism are more intimate than ever with each other as they demand access.

Hands up

But this insane demand brings to the fore again primitive accumulation and its specific if equally psychotic demand for access to undifferentiated flesh and land in the colonies. With this, the figure of the slave, who never went away, comes back with renewed powers of inaccessibility, which is nothing other than radical accessibility to others. It makes all who carry the figure of the slave and its related histories of total access, all the indentured, migrant, female, queer figures appear as direct threats to the production line, saboteurs scattered along the social factory's assembly line. Logistical capitalism is accompanied by a state form that demands the same kind of immediate access. It does not call you out and by doing so make you a citizen. It just demands to see you ID, if it demands anything before it demonstrates access to your life with its violence.

To allow a kind of absolute access against and before these violent demands for access from logistical capitalism and its psychotic agents, to live as radically accessed, affected as Denise Ferreira da Silva would say, is to practice, indeed it is to illuminate the ongoing practice that Fred Moten and I have called hapticality, a open feel for being felt feeling. They could not see his hands up, but his hands were up, just not to them, but to us. They held us up, these hands up. It looked like a demon to them, too many eyes, too many tongues, too many hands. But to us it looks beautiful.