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The Mestiere of the Crisis – Capture and Autonomy in Cognitive Capitalism

Notes from the Universidad Nómada

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1. Towards the end of the Renaissance…

Towards the end of the 15th century, a variety of what we would now call "creative clusters" began to appear in many Italian cities, in the *Comuni* and in the small states of the whole peninsula. Their *botteghe* were laboratories in which engineers, architects, designers, carpenters, masons and people of all different trades cooperated. Places which produced prodigious technical and aesthetic innovations, from the study of perspective to new construction methods. But they also posed moral dilemmas and broke existing social schemes. Crucial problems for modern philosophy arose in the midst of those creative workshops: from the possibility of analyzing cadavers in search of souls to the definition of a new framework for contrasting abstract and empirical knowledge.

These kinds of contradictions and innovations took place in a social and physical space, which was extremely peculiar for the time: the tremendous symbolic and material value of the artifacts which came out of those laboratories coexisted with the low social status of the *mestieri* (crafts), that is, those who worked in them. In some ways the very contrast which we see reflected in the stories of the great artists of the 16th century – recognized as geniuses, but excluded from the Olympus (and the corresponding privileges) of the Liberal Arts – already existed in the laboratories of the 15th century. It was a contrast which arose from innovations in the work done by popular classes and the bourgeoisie. Not only because of the aesthetic and intellectual originality of what was being built there, but also because of the invention of complex cooperative ways of organizing work: a crossroads between material and intellectual work which cast doubt upon the classical division between liberal and mechanical arts.

One paradigmatic case is that of Leonardo da Vinci, whose interests bound: "The customs of the *botteghe* of the 15th century [...] with a truly exceptional genius; however what was not exceptional at all among Florentine artists was the practice of mechanical arts. His implementations demonstrate this: *viti, molle, lime, leve, mantici*[1] and the like are in no way different than what must have been the standard baggage [of anyone working] in the Florentine *botteghe* of those times."[2] According to Paolo Rossi, [3] Leonardo da Vinci himself participated in public campaigns by artists to break this division and demand the inclusion of the new arts – especially painting – among the Liberal Arts, in order to access all the material and moral privileges of those arts which, in the Greek *polis*, were choices available only to free citizens: the same privileges enjoyed by philosophy, theology and in general, by

writing. "*Voi* [writers] *avete messo la pittura infra l'arti meccaniche; cierto se i pittori fussino atti a laudare collo scrivere l'opera loro come voi io dubito non giacerebbe li sì vil cognome; se voi la chiamate meccanica, perché è prima manuale ché le mani figurano quel che tenevano nella fantasia, voi scrittori disegniate colla penna manualmente quello che nello ingegnio vostro si truova*" (Da Vinci).[4]

From
our perspective, we can affirm that a struggle arose out of the *botteghe,* which – taking labor issues as a point of departure – attacked citizenship as a tool of governance and as the territory of class conflict: on the one hand, the Church, the aristocracy and the urban *haute bourgeoisie*, which bought the work of the artisans, and on the other hand, the children of the popular quarters of the city, the small traders, the *popolo* – who worked in the *botteghe*.

But perhaps the most important element in this conflict was the struggle over different ways of understanding how knowledge is produced. On the one hand, philosophical and theological knowledge was based on authority (of religious and philosophical writings), while on the other hand, the empirical, aesthetic, living, autonomous knowledge was produced in the material cooperation between minds, in the dimension of the *bottega.* With Da Vinci, Brunelleschi, and that generation of painters, architects, engineers and biologists, practical knowledge began to be put into writing – in the demotic and in figures, not in Latin – and openly to contradict the Knowledge written by the ancients. The struggle was a long one, and was shaped by structures far from what we would recognize as union struggles today, and yet it seems to have a clear and immediate echo in the struggles which, in the last decades of the 20th century, have emerged around the production of software, music and the network of networks; those struggles which recognize social cooperation and the autonomous form of

that cooperation as a determining element in the production of value.

Throughout the 16th century, painting – like architecture – came to be fully recognized as an art; the *Orto di San Marco* was established in which the practices of the back rooms, the laboratories and the *botteghe* were reproduced under the watchful eyes of Lorenzo the Magnificent. The *mestiere* becomes Art. Symbolically, perhaps the most interesting moment of this change can be seen in the reverence shown by Charles V as he watched Titian paint his portrait: he bent down to pick up the paintbrush fallen from the great artist's hand.[5]

In this gesture we can read other connotations: first, the emergence of the great Artist as author, emblem of the individual and from this moment on, keystone of the kind of artistic production which makes the *bottega* disappear: the *bottega*, which was a mesh of cooperation between forms of life, knowledge, autonomous forms of production and transmission of power, etc. Second, the recognition – or affirmation – of art as a sphere separated from political and moral contrasts, as a form of production of symbolic value already subsumed by power, such that the Emperor can bend down before the artist without putting his authority at risk.

What interests us in this brief and partial story is the contrast marked between living labor and the production of value. On the one hand, we see a process through which new social institutions like the *botteghe* were affirmed, with different ways of organizing production as well as new modes for the social, aesthetic and moral organization of life. On the other, the process of governing which acts upon these forms of life, attempting to capture and dominate any production which is organized autonomously. Here we will

turn the argumentation on its head: we begin with an analysis of the biopolitical governance of production in order to attempt to rethink monstrous vital and institutional forms which might be able to throw some of those forms of governmentality now dominant in Europe into crisis, putting particular emphasis upon those which affect what we might call – for orientation – "cognitive" or "creative" work.

We consider, indeed, that the current techniques for governing modes of production are more and more centered on a remote control of the processes of the subjectivation of the persons participating in production and the inclusion of every sphere of life within the domain of capitalist accumulation. A process of controlled subjectivation, which attempts to close all spaces still free of government, which is no longer content with governing life in the factory or with capturing inventiveness in the property rights of machines; a government, which attempts to bridle life, both as an individual experience and as a social *bios*. In the same way that the recognition of the Artist served to dominate the relations of cooperation in the *bottega*, likewise the contemporary construction of the "creative class" articulates its social narrative around two opposite poles, attempting to limit social cooperation to a profit-seeking apparatus.

How does this process of controlled subjectivation and profit-extraction work? On the one hand, by fragmenting and segmenting spaces for cooperation, differentiating the status of those who participate in them: not so much breaking the social and cooperative dimension of creative production, as putting spaces of equality into crisis by introducing economic hierarchies and legal differences, which polarize the inequalities and asymmetries present in cooperation itself.

On the other hand, and as a consequence, modulating the self-mobilization of the individual as a primary actor, an author, in competition with others, this *total (self-)mobilization of the individual* aims to break the bonds of (bio)political alliances within creative production and to separate creative production from the sphere of political production: ultimately it aims to maximize the marginal extraction of profits (the appropriation of the surplus value of each of the segments/individuals who participate in the production). Each person confronts the becoming-business enterprise of their own life, the social imperative to relate to others in an opportunistic and competitive manner, rather than organizing cooperatively against the power relations of production.

In summary, this strategy of control is developed as a double bind, a double obligation which establishes cooperation and competitivity as two faces of the same precarious life: a precarity constrained between the socialization of production and the individualization of hiring practices, between cooperation in the process of production and hierarchical competition in the organization of work, between the precarity of employment and the efficiency of work.[6] This reorganization of the forms of subjectivation of the productive social body permits the *specification* of the process of capitalist accumulation according to paradigms, depending on the processes of social cooperation upon which it is based.

Thinking about the specific dimensions of cognitive capitalism – the specification of the process of accumulation in these productive processes, based on knowledge and the cooperation of brains – we want to emphasize how this process of accumulation is (again) immediately *primitive*, in the sense that it directly subsumes social cooperative processes to the capitalist organization of production. Primitive accumulation – many authors have explained it, and not

only in relation to cognitive capitalism – becomes immanent. In the case of the production of knowledge, it is developed through a double privatization: on the one hand, the privatization of the *products* (the knowledge produced: patents, copyrights, but also the privatization of public space), and on the other hand, the privatization of the *processes* of production according to the norms of private interests (codes and software, education and research at the university, but also the open processes of metropolitan cultural production in the system of art, etc.) In other terms, this privatization is articulated through the individualization of property, through the definition of exclusive rights to use and exploit knowledge – the privatization of the *processes* of production, that is to say, the imposition of disciplinary norms upon the *quotidian practices* of social cooperation; an imposition which bridles the autonomous forms of organizing production, and which appropriates them for itself.

Such dynamics of privatization mystify how cooperation functions in the production of knowledge. This mystification of cooperation permits the *imposition and legitimation of rules of hierarchical organization* upon living cognitive work, *abstracting* living labor. But in those circumstances, in which living labor is inseparable from life itself, this immanent primitive accumulation touches not only the waged sphere of work – that classic place of the abstraction of work – but rather envelops all the social spaces and forms of work in which knowledge are produced. It attempts to abstract life itself. The *creative class* as a sociological category permits the segmentation of the collective processes of production and the imposition of differentiated norms of capitalist organization, both with respect to the organization of work (production/exploitation) and in the dynamics of access to the knowledge produced (circulation/distribution).

The biopolitical governance of knowledge production, therefore, coincides with the attempt to construct new apparatuses for extracting profits through exclusive property rights and the regulation of cooperative knowledge production; a technique for governing life on an individualized level – through precarity and through the "becoming-enterprise" of the subject of self-mobilization – and on a social level – through the abstraction of autonomous practices of organization within the global semiotics of value. It is a mortifying governance of life, which reduces and throws into crisis the very possibility of *reproducing* the social conditions necessary for production, by artificially limiting the potency of cooperation and the access to the resources which would permit the cooperative processes of production to begin again.

What routes for escape might there be when confronted with this double bind which controls individual and collective life? We think it is possible to imagine lines of flight on the basis of analysis and of experiments in the new collective forms of organization which might confront these processes of dispossession, thereby resisting *and* opening new terrains at once.

Monster institutions as an antidote and an incantation

The contents which are articulated through utterances, through thought, through research and through theory are inseparable from the institutive vectors of their production. For this reason, we have been using the expression "monster institutions" within the *Universidad Nómada,*[7] for some time now in order to explain to ourselves how we might turn ourselves into a threat (a singular, local threat, but a reproducible one) to the governance of the knowledge factories and of cultural production.

There is nothing more difficult than a "theory of what we do." Seriously adopting the Deleuzian definition of philosophy as a radical pragmatic means, in this case, situating it within the landscape of political problems and the production of subjectivity of precarious intellectuals. In this sense, for the *Universidad Nómada,* the fundamental operation of singularization – inevitably intermittent, inasmuch as this is not an act of will nor the application of a set program, but rather something more like a situated ethics and a "asceticism of the self" – has, during these years, been the construction of a *line of flight* with respect to the figures of political neutralization of our activities. As much as the "Deleuze hype" has damaged and twisted the idea of schizoanalysis, we feel that it continues to allow us to think about the behaviors and operations essential to the self-making of subjectivity and the irruption of the (bio)political.

Thus we find it helpful to think about – and also to orient – the process of the *Universidad Nómada* as part of a line of flight, which is continually reformulated and which, like all lines of flight, consists of fleeing in search of a weapon, consists of subtracting oneself and drawing others along like a vortex, constructing alliances while fleeing, and redefining the "geometry of hostility" with unexpected movements. This is the determining behavior. Beyond any opposition or binary dichotomy, before offering a prototype of self-organization of intellectual work or even a new concatenation of theory and practice in the metropolis of the general intellect, we are trying to produce *tacit* knowledge which actively subtracts itself from its own profitability, its own recognition, its own "success," which tries to create incompatibilities, like that which might exist between a *form of life* and the demands of abstract labor, as written into the axioms of self-mobilization for (one's own) creative or cognitive project.

In this sense, the *Universidad Nómada* is one of the many results of a cycle of heterogeneous global struggles which have created a sphere of radical politics within the context of the global factories of knowledge. In this cycle, we have seen the emergence of different experiments, which have served to pose the problem of the political and institutional conditions of the production of knowledge. This is the insistent case of the dynamics of self-education and co-research (along the lines of the mythopoetic *conricerca* of Alquati and of the first *Quaderni Rossi*). In the last ten years, many of these experiences have grown out of similar parameters, compositions and political prototypes: from squatted social centers to the Euromayday, including Genoa 2001 and civil/social disobedience. Beyond the evaluation we might make of these experiments, which have been neutralized by the dynamics of permanent global war after September 11th, 2001 and transformed into history by the present systemic crisis since September 2008, we can find a few vectors of singularization in the *Universidad Nómada,* which permit us to understand this experience in some ways and situate it in our present once more.

Poverty and potency of cognitive and creative work. A new punk pragmatics against the governing of creative individualization.

Beyond cultural studies, beyond pop mythologies à la Greil Marcus, beyond mere nostalgia and fetishism, the spectrum of punk gestures *avant et après la lettre* today have recovered relevance as a repertoire for the self-sabotage of the "self-as-project" required by the total cognitive and creative mobilization. Thanks to Foucaultian studies of *parrhesia* in Ancient Greece, and particularly the ethical and political values of the kind we rediscover in the practical philosophy of the cynics, we can now recognize, *mutatis*

mutandis, the intimate affinities between a figure like Diogenes of Sinope and the best of John Lydon. A punk continuum of self-sabotage and of becoming (obviously nothing to do with the serial lobotomization of the mohawks and personal debasement which have become an object of cultural studies and the sociology of urban tribes). Rather, we take the punk continuum to be an update of the "truth speaking (and doing)" against all "self-fulfillment" of the creative individual and its inevitable networked opportunism, which we take to be part of the repertoire of the becoming-monstrous of the general intellect; in the very flesh of the metropolis, in the "sentimental education" of web 2.0, as a gesture of *parrhesiastes.*

It could not be any other way. Perhaps because our genealogy is not made up of university profiles and academic experiences – though this is not a rejection based on a sort of "lumpen-cognitariat" populism – but rather an indescribable jumble of generations, academic positions, dropouts, activists and militants, intermittent and alternatively schizoid subjects, etc. Paradoxically, it is to this jumble that we must be loyal, because it is the main thing we have to guide us: capitalism and schizophrenia. We cannot normalize ourselves without undoing ourselves. We cannot work without sabotaging our own future "success."[8] All these discourses send us back to old topics: an intermittent form of collective intellectual life, impossible in the mid-term, can be formed in this way and sought after in these years.

In the end, it is a question of keeping alive those problematizations of shared doing which pop up with each attempt at expression and intervention, but which, in institutional experimentation, also serve as a sort of breath against the asphyxia which blocks us when we do not manage to turn the conjugated potencies we try to concatenate into effective machines for struggle – im-potence,

which can be felt with pain, the erosion of cooperation, like a group aphasia and willful flight away from the definitive search for a "leap of quality."

But don't be alarmed. We are not going to discover the innocence of becoming, nor dig up the apology for the beauty of defeat nor the aesthetics of failure. We are inside, but we are not "set up" within and against the "success/failure" binary, which only becomes meaningful within the "techniques of the self" of the creative individual subordinated to neoliberal governmentality that even today delimits the *non plus ultra* of what the body and mind of a creative/cognitive subject may do.

Today, in 2011, the line of flight within and against the "crisis operation," against the crisis as technique of the government in Europe, consists of a production of time and space against the neutralization of those affective relations which create surplus, which are excessive, and the binarization and impoverishment of the spectrum of the possible in collective action and in institutional figures: against austerity.

What is most difficult for us – something we have tested, but which is not exclusive to our experience – is precisely the matter of operating as a minority of becomings within the factories of knowledge. In reality, we have not yet learned which procedures to construct and communicate a structuring alterity in the field of becomings, in the midst of intellectuality, of research, of cultural production and in the landscape of institutions and companies, and their sticky, ambivalent governance. Creative "self-projects," dominant in cultural production and are generalized in all of what we might sociologically describe as "cognitive work," in which the emergence of possible worlds paradoxically lacks a face, minority, monster, obsessive *ritornelli*, which allows a true becoming-

minority and real corporeal othering to be "hooked," a creative transduction of worlds of suffering, the poverty of all minority becomings – an irreversible form of life.

Excursus: Facebook as an example and model

Perhaps, in this instituent collective exercise, one point of departure might be breaking the affirmation of a moral ontological dualism between production – communication and solitude-creation, in those places where creating is made an individual matter, and organizing is reduced to a codified space of production. In this regard, Facebook can serve as an example: it again brings to the fore Deleuze's critique of communication. For him, this was precisely the weak point of the heretic Marxism of the *operaisti sociali*: "Maybe speech and communication have been corrupted. They're thoroughly permeated by money – and not by accident but by their very nature. We've got to hijack speech. Creating has always been something different from communicating. The key thing may be to create vacuoles of non-communication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control."[9]

Lamentably, the evidence of this diagnosis applied to the phenomenology of Facebook and by extension to all those things known as "social networks" is simply painful. And yet the monstrous condition lives in the immanence of production, the common is produced and reproduced in communication. If governing is the politics of relations, this is the very condition of government and, in some respects, its formal impossibility, which appears in the processes of governance as dislocated practices and a permanent crisis within the complexity of the productive social body. Against the binary of production-creation, there is the matter of locating and describing the concatenations of silence in

the immanence of communication, its conditions and ethical, political and institutional situations, as well as its semiotic, material, and specifically territorial operations, and the care and cooperative analyses of these.

Going back to the spectrum of punk gestures, perhaps we should put into practice and experiment with an ethics of "voluntary failure" – to paraphrase De la Boétie – conceived as a sabotage of the equalizing operations of cognitive and creative work, and its conversion into abstract work (relational benefits, cooperation, innovation), which are presented in the anthropogenesis of cognitive capitalism as inseparable from the project itself. This is the paradoxical definition of failure which we can give today: as the fate of a company, and not as a metaphor or as the moral evaluation of an individual existence, which is a more complex and delicate question. What remains of the generative benefits, the machinic surplus, its constituent (ambi)valences?

In this regard, it seems just as fundamental to mark the difference between this proposal and the variations on (post-)Heideggerian (post-)nihilism, from Santiago López Petit to Giorgio Agamben. These authors have abandoned the problem of potency, have succumbed to ambivalence, whereas we are always wrestling with a difficult, paradoxical, obstinate potency. With this, against the renunciation of potency, but also against the mode of equivalence and measurability of the "self-project," hardly anyone has picked up or even considered the validity of the Guattarian idea of a "choice of finitude" against the various wishful or decisionist *Entschlossenheiten* (determined resolutions).

Making politics with knowledge

So as we see it, the important thing when it comes to asking oneself how to "make politics with knowledge" lies in how to sabotage the sequences of capture and equalization of surplus value – whether of code or of machine, that is, of possible worlds – which cooperative activity inevitably generates, as the only mode of (political) existence given to us, given at all. There is no existential territory of creative and cognitive work without this "choice of finitude." As an immanent rupture in the life world in which the cynicism, opportunism and fear of the creative individual rule as the only practical virtues (as proposed by Paolo Virno). This "choice of finitude" digs into what Guattari calls a "problematic block," in which "potency" is decided: universes of affect and of effect, (problematic) incorporeal affects at the border between subject and object, narrowers of possible worlds, and hyper-abstract machinic effects which might inaugurate new diagrams of cooperation, decisive concatenations of collective utterances, human and non-human, contemporary and effective social war-machines, and artifices of the collective existence of a "we," which is transitional, transitivist, but resistant and irreversible in its ontological rupture.[10] The fabric woven by the "forms of life" of which we speak is none other than this. Ambivalence is presented here as problematic blocks and affects, which are fodder for malaise. The *ersatz* eternity which nourishes the project of the total self-mobilization of the creative individual, the radical separation from the potency which is inherent in that individual, are only broken in the chaosmosis of finite existential territories, cut-ups of a *being-for-ourselves* of poverty and precarity which constitute the only corporeal and worldly determination in the generative potency of the general intellect. This "schizoanalysis of finitude" of the general intellect is work which remains to be done, a coming appendix to the "Fragment on Machines" of Marx's *Grundrisse*.

So it is a matter of inventing processes of production which organize reproducible sequences, plans for intervention capable of generating new material relations – albeit precarious and experimental ones – of social reproduction. The daily construction of these lines of flight within and against the operation of the crisis includes generating different times (*ritornelli*) and different spaces. Practices which act radically when faced with the neutralization of overflowing or excessive affective relations, and which at the same time can seek out other paths beyond the binary reduction of the spectrum of the possible against which we bump not only in the constituted institutions of cultural and academic governance but also in collective movement practices.

In other words, acting from a problematic block means situating oneself within a universe, trapped by power relations and orders, but also crossed through with multiple fields of constituent possibilities, in which one must combine the occasions of practice in a finite and strategic affirmation – in a plan which embodies the lines of flight within the material complexities of the daily, within and against the power relations of the crisis, within and against the processes of capture and individualization – a materialist practice capable of challenging the absolute present of the crisis and the process of dispossession by capital of the spaces of daily life.

One first element, which we feel is useful to refer to, is the construction of networks as spaces. Following Gerald Raunig,[11] we think about networks as abstract machines which function by combining diverse experiences, struggles arising from different places – that is, networks as a practice of coordinated action, and at the same time, as one of unpredictable hybridization. But we understand networks not as a deterritorialized machine, but as a material experiment in collective action within the institutive process of new social, institutional and technological territories.

This is as much the case of the virtual space as of the network of the European dimension – today, more than ever, there are points of flight against the intentional scarcity of the national economy, of the State, and the rhetoric of good capitalism and bad capitalism. But it is also the case with the metropolitan networks constructed every day to generate political spaces from the analytic and affective militant intelligence, capable of escaping the pathologies of a classic articulation of organization. These spaces of machinic composition, such as n-1.cc, eipcp.net, edu-factory, noborder, Euromayday or projects like Wikipedia – as well as the spaces of encounter and projection which arise from the affirmation of political processes on a European scale – university struggles, struggles against the borders of Schengen Europe, etc., and those processes of metropolitan intervention which are capable of generating unpredictable concatenations, opening connections, constituting alliances, in order to challenge with unpredictability the geometries of hostility which trap us, the dimensions of the daily micro-fascisms of the crisis.

In the production of this novel space, the network of networks is not constituted as an other territory but rather as an "ulterior" territory, from which to intervene in and to re-assemble quotidian spaces and times without renouncing them. The network, then, as a socio-machinic territory, determined by technologies, social relations, pasts, bodies, etc., but also the network as an experience which permits us to "augment reality": acting in daily life by overcharging pre-constituted power relations with the unpredictable flows which arise from collective processes of composition, concatenation, reproduction.

It is from this place that it is important to think about networked political practice as a practice of composition. It is a matter of going beyond the representative dimension of the differences which

our identities enclose, and "network" as a compositional and expressive practice "in the ruins of representation" to take up an image suggested by Dimitris Papadopoulos.[12] Here we find useful the suggestions which come from the political practices of translation studies, which manifest the crisis of "articulation" as a reductive practice for the organization of difference, and propose a heterolingual direction for translation as a practice of material composition of the possible, as a specific search for parts to be composed, and as a collective definition of strategies for action. Practices of material composition in which the collective practices of common speech[13] arise as collective processes of utterance and not as a theater in which predefined words are performed. This is the possibility of inventing a collective practice which intervenes in the present, which produces concrete modifications in the daily life of a collective body through encounter, juxtaposition, translation, discussion, fabulation, rumors and love which launch groups beyond themselves, towards possible worlds, lit up with choices of finitude. And which produces them, too, through the molecular metamorphosis of the subjects involved in the processes of struggle or affected by the events arising from these practices of connection, communication, coordination and exchange.

On the other hand, in order to think about this challenge, we believe it is necessary to focus on the processes of concretion and reproduction of these experiments in time: breaking the vacuum of the present, configuring perspectives capable of constructing continuity between the present and a (very near) future of institutive experiments. Challenging the closed time of the crisis consists of this: shifting from the absolute present to a *continuous present* – a continued present. The time which is passing as a diffuse and syncopated rhythm of enunciation, which challenges the linearity of the modern capitalist doggerel again and again and

which throws capitalist time into crisis as a development process (exclusively for the survivors of austerity), and a syncopated rhythm which permits us to break the silence at the edge of the abyss, which helps us to orient ourselves in the dark. Autonomous sequences which permit us to get out of the crisis as the despotic dimension of a viscous quotidian, and out of austerity as a moral technology which represses the expressive capacity of the subject. Ultimately, it is a matter of reinventing the time of crisis as the time of autonomy.

In this regard, it is interesting to go back to the anecdote we began with. If during the 15th and 16th centuries, making the *mestiere* into art worked as a tool for governing this productive space and for separating creation and politics, this procedure comes to its crisis in the 18th century. "Chambers has read books, but there are things which can only be learned in workshops" writes D'Alembert discussing the Encyclopedia. Diderot and many others began trotting all over France to organize a process of *inchiesta,* which would question and modify the social diagram of knowledge hierarchies, as well as the power relations of production.

"We speak to the most capable artisans of Paris and of the kingdom; we take the time to visit their workshops, interrogate them, write out what they say, develop their ideas, learn from them the terms of their trade, define them and draw up tables using them, converse with those who provide memoirs and (a nearly indispensable precaution) rectify in long and frequent interviews with some of them those things which others had explained imperfectly, unclearly or inaccurately." The encyclopedic practice is not a representation of reality, but rather an expressive process born of social dynamics. A practice of *inchiesta* which generates a political and material space, a space of analysis and empowerment,

but which especially opens up a space and time of "antagonism," articulated out of autonomy and experimentation.

Thus, on the one hand, a cartography is recognized and constructed, describing the ways of doing in the *mestiere,* which are still relegated to the lowest levels of society. On the other hand, a materialist ecology of society is drawn out in the analysis of the cycles of the production of land, conditions of labor, transmission of knowledge. A collective practice is invented which affirms its own – *autonomous* – capacity for reproduction as an antagonistic point of departure, contrasting with the aristocracy and the Church. In this same way, lines of flight are drawn, capable of opening up time, of experimenting. A practice of the expressive and productive potency, which is still being translated and reinvented every day in Wikipedia-space, that is, in the reterritorialization of the practice of *inchiesta* and of the autonomous production of encyclopedic knowledge in the contemporary socio-machinic context.

To be able to think about revolution, possible spaces of autonomy must be opened and situated, at the same time, within the problematic blockage of a choice of finitude, while thinking the present as a threshold of historical emptiness, as a constituent tension, open and contingent, toward an unpredictable future, in which experimentation is a practice of conflict and transformation. We believe that in this play between finitude and potency, between the *inchiesta* of the quotidian and the strategies of transformation, incarnate alterities may emerge which permit us to confront the processes through which the crisis is governed, which are based on the dispossession of the commons and the discipline of cooperation – making the art of crisis a shared and daily *mestiere*.

[1] Screws, springs, chisels, levers, bellows...

[2] Anna Maria Brizio: *Leonardo: Saggi e richerche,* 1954, p.278

[3] Paolo Rossi, *I filosofi e le macchine,* 1962, pp.45–55

[4] "You [writers] have set painting among the mechanical arts; though of course if painters were as deft as you are at praising your own works in writing I doubt they would be found deserving of such a low name; if you call it mechanical it is because it is above all manual, inasmuch as the hands give shape to that which is found in the imagination, just as you writers manually draw with the pen that which is found in your mind."

[5] Paolo Rossi, *I filosofi e le macchine,* 1962; Antal, *La pittura fiorentina e il suo ambiente sociale,* 1956.

[6] Andrea Fumagalli, *Bioeconomia e capitalismo cognitivo* 2008; Tiddi, *Precari* 2002.

[7] www.universidadnomada.net

[8] As a reference and important historical precedent, see the parabola of experience of the French CERPHI, neutralized and dissolved once it had to fit itself within the academic structures of the CNRS (though we must not fail to take into account the depth of the crisis and the subjective impoverishment of *gauchisme* after 1968 to explain this and other dissolutions).

[9] "Control and Becoming," Gilles Deleuze in conversation with Antonio Negri, *Futur Anterieur,* 1, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1990, cited

in *Conversaciones*, Valencia, Pre-textos, 1995 [English version: http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpdeleuze3.htm].

[10] Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. Trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995. Trans. of *Chaosmose*. Paris: Editions Galilee, 1992.

[11] Gerald Raunig, *A Thousand Machines*, Semiotext(e), 2010.

[12] "In the Ruins of Representation: Identity, Individuality, Subjectification", *British Journal of Social Psychology,* Volume 47, Number 1, March 2008, pp.139–165 (27).

[13] "In common speech is expressed the fact that language, as it satisfies social necessities, is an instrument not of the individual but of the society." (Rossi-Landi).