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Governmentality and Self-Precarization

On the normalization of cultural producers

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For some of us, as cultural producers[1] the idea of a permanent job in an institution is something that we do not even consider, or at most for a few years. Afterward, we want something different. Hasn't the idea always been about not being forced to commit oneself to one thing, one classical job definition, which ignores so many aspects; about not selling out and consequently being compelled to give up the many activities that one feels strongly about? Wasn't it important to not adapt to the constraints of an institution, to save the time and energy to be able to do the creative and perhaps political projects that one really has an interest in? Wasn't a more or less well-paying job gladly taken for a certain period of time, when the opportunity arose, to then be able to leave again when it no longer fit? Then there would at least be a bit of money there to carry out the next meaningful project, which would probably be poorly paid, but supposedly more satisfying.

Crucial for the attitude suggested here is the belief that one has chosen his or her own living and working situations and that these can be arranged relatively freely and autonomously. Actually, also consciously chosen to a great extent are the uncertainties, the lack of continuities under the given social conditions. Yet in the following, concern is not with the question of "when did I really decide freely?", or "when do I act autonomously?", but instead, with the ways in which ideas of autonomy and freedom are constitutively connected with hegemonic modes of subjectivation in Western, capitalist societies. The focus of this text is accordingly on the extent to which "self chosen" precarization[2] contributes to producing the conditions for being able to become an active part of neo liberal political and economic relations.

No general statements about cultural producers or all of those currently in a situation that has been made precarious can be derived from this perspective. However, what becomes apparent when problematizing this "self chosen" precarization, are the historical lines of force[3] of modern bourgeois subjectivation, which are imperceptibly hegemonic, normalizing, and possibly block "counter-behavior"[4].

To demonstrate the genealogy of these lines of force, I will first turn to Michel Foucault's concepts of "governmentality" and "biopolitics." We will not focus on the breaks and rifts in the lines of bourgeois subjectivation, but instead, on their structural and transformative continuities including the entanglement in governmental techniques of modern Western societies until today. What ideas of sovereignty arise in these modern, governmental dispositifs? What lines of force, i.e., what continuities, self-evidences, and normalizations can be drawn to what and how we think and feel as "self chosen" culture producers that have been made precarious in neo liberal conditions, how we are in the world,

and specifically also in so-called dissident practices? Do cultural producers who are in a precarious state possibly embody a "new" governmental normality through certain self-relations and ideas of sovereignty?

With the genealogy of the force lines of bourgeois subjectivation, in the course of the text I will differentiate between precarization as deviance, and therefore as a contradiction of *liberal* governmentality, on the one hand, and as a hegemonic function of *neo-liberal* governmentality on the other, to then finally clarify the relationship between the two based on the example of the "free" decision for precarious living and working.

Biopolitical governmentality

With the term "governmentality," Michel Foucault defined the structural entanglement of the government of a State and the techniques of self-government in Western societies. This involvement between State and population as subjects is not a timeless constant. First in the course of the eighteenth century could that which had been developing since the sixteenth century take root: a new government technique, more precisely, the force lines of modern government techniques until today. The traditional sovereign, for whom Foucault introduces the character from Machiavelli's *The Prince* from the sixteenth century as a prototype, and Hobbes's contract-based voluntary community of subordinates from the seventeenth century, were not yet concerned with ruling "the people" for the sake of their welfare, but instead, they were primarily interested in dominating them for the welfare of the sovereign. It was first in the course of the eighteenth century, when liberalism and the bourgeoisie became hegemonic,

that the population entered the focus of power and along with it, a governing that was oriented on the life of "the people" and making that life better. The power of the State no longer depended solely on the size of a territory or the mercantile, authoritative regulation of subordinates,[5] but instead, on the "happiness" of the population, on their life and a steady improvement of that life.

In the course of the eighteenth century, governing methods continued to transform toward a political economy of liberalism: self-imposed limitations on government for the benefit of a free market on the one hand, and on the other, a population of subjects that were bound to economic paradigms in their thought and behavior. These subjects were not subjugated simply by means of obedience, but became governable in that, on the whole, "their life expectancy, their health, and their courses of behavior were involved in complex and entangled relationships with these economic processes" (Foucault 2004b, p. 42; own translation). Liberal modes of government presented the basic structure for modern governmentality, which has always been biopolitical.[6] Or, in other words: liberalism was the economic and political framework of biopolitics and, equally, "an indispensable element in the development of capitalism" (Foucault 1980, p. 141-42).

The strength and wealth of a state at the end of the eighteenth century depended ever more greatly on the health of its population. In a bourgeois liberal context, a government policy oriented on this means, until today, establishing and producing normality and then securing it. For that, a great deal of data is necessary; statistics are produced, probabilities of birth rates and death rates are calculated, frequencies of diseases, living conditions, means of nutrition, etc. Yet that does not suffice. In order to manufacture a population's health standard, and to maximize it, these bio-productive, life-supporting biopolitical government methods also require the active

participation of every single individual, which means their self-governing.

Foucault writes in *The History of Sexuality:* "Western man was gradually *learning* what it meant to be a living species in a living world, to have a body, conditions of existence, probabilities of life, an individual and collective welfare, forces that could be modified, and a space in which they could be distributed in an optimal manner (Foucault 1980, p. 142, emphasis I.L.). Here, Foucault describes two things that I consider essential: the modern individual must learn how to have a body that is dependent on certain existential conditions, and, second, he or she must learn to develop a relationship with his or her "self" that is creative and productive, a relationship in which it is possible to fashion his or her "own" body, "own" life, "own" self. Philipp Sarasin shows the emergence in the context of the Western hygiene discourse of the waning eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, of "the belief that the individual was largely capable of determining its health, illness, or even the time of death" (Sarasin 2001, p. 19; see also Bublitz et al. 2000). This idea of the ability to shape and fashion one's self never arose independent of governmental dispositifs.

In the context of liberal governmental technologies of the self, the attribute "own" always signifies "possessive individualism" (Macpherson 1962). However, initially, self-relations oriented on the imagination of one's "own," were only applicable to the bourgeois, then gradually towards the end of the nineteenth century, the entire population. At issue here is not the legal status of a subject, but structural conditions of normalizing societies: one must be capable of managing oneself, recognizing oneself as subject to a sexuality, and learn to have a body that remains healthy through attentiveness (nutrition, hygiene, living)

and can become sick through inattentiveness. In this sense, the entire population must become biopolitical subjects (see Lorey 2006a).

With reference to wage workers, such imaginary self-relations[7] mean that one's own body, constituted as the property of the self, becomes an "own" body that one must sell as labor power. Also, in this respect, the modern, "free" individual is compelled to co-produce him or herself through such powerful self-relations, that the individual can sell his or her labor power well, in order to live a life that improves steadily.

Therefore, in modern societies, the "art of governing"—which was another name given by Foucault (1991) to governmentality—does not primarily consist of being repressive, but instead, "inwardly held" self-discipline and self-control.[8] It is the analysis of an order that is not only forced upon people, bodies, and things, but in which they are simultaneously an active part. At the center of the problem of government ruling techniques is not the question of regulating autonomous, free subjects, but instead, regulating the relations through which so-called autonomous and free subjects are first constituted as such.

Already in the second half of the seventeenth century, John Locke, who according to Karl Marx, "demonstrated ... that the bourgeois way of thinking is the normal human way of thinking" (Marx 1999), wrote in *The Two Treatises of Government*, that man is "master of himself, and proprietor of his own person, and the actions or labour of it" (Locke 1823). At the beginning of the modern era, property acquired a supposed "anthropological meaning"(Castel 2005, 24) for both the bourgeois man as a prerequisite for his formal freedom as a citizen, as well as for the worker, who owns his own labor power and must sell it, freely, as

wage labor. It seemed to be the prerequisite with which the individual could become independent and free from the traditional system of subordination and security. With a biopolitical governmentality perspective, the meaning of property, however, surpasses the limited levels of citizenship, capital, and wage labor and is, in fact, to be understood as something entirely general. For in a biopolitical dispositif, relations of bodily ownership apply to the entire population as governmental self-governing, not only to citizens or workers.[9] The modern person is, accordingly, constituted through possessive individualistic self-relations, which are fundamental for historically specific ideas of autonomy and freedom. Structurally, modern self-relations are based—also beyond an economic interpellation—on a relation to one's own body as a means of production.

In this broad sense of economy and biopolitics, the lines of the labor entrepreneur, "the entrepreneur of one's self" (Pühl 2003) as a mode of subjectivation, reach back to the beginnings of modern liberal societies and are not an entirely neo-liberal phenomena.[10] This type of genealogy of course skips over the era of the social, the welfare state since the end of the nineteenth century, and ties together, the for the most part compulsively constituting self-entrepreneurs in the current reconstruction and deconstruction of the social/welfare state with fundamental liberal governmental methods of subjectivation since the end of the eighteenth century. With the interpellation to be responsible for one's self, something that had already failed in the nineteenth century seems to be repeating itself now, namely, the primacy of property and the construction of security associated with it. Property was introduced in the early stages of bourgeois rule as protection against the incalculability of social existence, as security against vulnerability in a secularized society and the domination of the princes and kings.

Ultimately this applied to only a limited few, and at the end of the nineteenth century the nation state had to guarantee social security for many. However, it does not automatically follow that today the State must once again take on a more comprehensive social function of protection and security (e.g., Castel 2005). For this would quickly reproduce the utterly flexible, Western nation state nexus of freedom and security with similar structural inclusions and exclusions, rather than break through it.

Normalized free subjects

In biopolitical governmental societies, the constitution of the "normal" is always also woven in with the hegemonic.[11] With the demand to orient on the normal—which could be bourgeois, heterosexual, Christian, white male, white female, national—in the course of the modern era, it was necessary to develop the perspective of controlling one's own body, one's own life, by regulating and thus managing the self. The normal is not identical with the norm, but it can take on its function. Normality is, however, never anything external, for we are the ones who guarantee it, and reproduce it through alterations. Accordingly, we govern ourselves in the dispositif of governmentality, biopolitics, and capitalism in that we normalize ourselves. If this is successful—and it usually is—power and certain domination relations are barely perceptible, and extremely difficult to reflect on, because we act in their production, as it were, in the ways we relate to ourselves, and own our bodies. The normalizing society and the subjectivation taking place within it are a historical effect of a power technology directed at life. The normalized subject itself is, once again, a historical construct in an ensemble of knowledge forms, technologies, and institutions. This ensemble is aimed at the

individual body as well as at the life of the population as a whole. Normalization is lived through everyday practices that are perceived as self-evident and natural.

Additionally, the normal is naturalized with the effect of actuality, of authenticity. We thus believe, for example, that the effect of power relations is the essence of our self, our truth, our own, actual core, the origin of our being. This normalizing self-governing is based on an imagined coherence, uniformity and wholeness, which can be traced back to the construction of a white, male subject.[12] Coherence is, once again, one of the prerequisites for modern sovereignty. The subject must believe that it is "master in its own house" (Freud). If this fundamental imagination fails, then usually not only others perceive the person in question as "abnormal," but the person, too, has this opinion of him or herself.

Let's remain with the learned way of self-relation, which is so existential for the biopolitical governmental modern era, and which applies to the entire population in very different ways. This relationship with one's self is based on the idea of having an inner nature, an inner essence that ultimately makes up one's unique individuality. These kinds of imagined "inner, natural truths," these constructions of actuality, are usually understood as unalterable, merely able to be suppressed or liberated. Until today, they nourish the ideas of being able to, or having to fashion and design one's self and one's life freely, autonomously, and according to one's own decisions. These kinds of power relations are therefore not easy to perceive as they commonly come along as one's own free decision, as a personal view, and until today produce the desire to ask: "Who am I?" or, "How can I realize my potential?" "How can I find myself and most greatly develop the essence of my being?". As mentioned, the concept of responsibility of one's own, so commonly used in the course of neo-liberal restructuring, lies

within this liberal force line of possessive individualism and actuality and only functions additionally as a neo-liberal interpellation for self-governing.

Basically, governmental self-government takes place in an apparent paradox. Governing, controlling, disciplining, and regulating one's self means, at the same time, fashioning and forming one's self, empowering one's self, which, in this sense, means to be free. Only through this paradox can sovereign subjects be governed. Precisely because techniques of governing one's self arise from the simultaneity of subjugation and empowerment, the simultaneity of compulsion and freedom, in this paradoxical movement, the individual not only becomes a subject, but a certain, modern "free" subject. Subjectivated in this way, this subject continually participates in (re)producing the conditions for governmentality, as it is first in this scenario that agency emerges. According to Foucault, power is practiced only on "free subjects" and only to the extent that they are "free" (see Foucault 1983).

In the context of governmentality, subjects are, thus, subjugated and simultaneously agents, and in a certain sense, free. This freedom is, at the same time, a condition and effect of liberal power relations, i.e. of biopolitical governmentality. Despite all of the changes that have occurred until today, since the end of the eighteenth century, this is one of the lines of force through which individuals in modern societies can be governed.

This normalized freedom of biopolitical governmental societies never exists without security mechanisms or constructions of the abnormal and deviant, which likewise have subjectivating functions. The modern era seems unthinkable without a "culture of danger," without a permanent threat to the normal, without imaginary invasions of constant, common threats such as diseases, dirt,

sexuality, or the "fear of degeneration" (Foucault 2004b, 101f.).[13] The interplay of freedom and security, self empowerment and compulsion, also with the help of this culture of danger, drives on the problems of the political economy of liberal power.

Against this backdrop, all of those who did not comply with this norm and normalizing of a free, sovereign, bourgeois, white subject including its property relations were made precarious. Furthermore, in the context of the social state, which was meant to guarantee the security of modern insecurity, not only were women made structurally precarious as wives, through the normal labor conditions oriented on the man. Also those who were excluded as abnormal and foreign from the nation state compromise between capital and labor were likewise made precarious.[14] Precarization was, accordingly, until now always an inherent contradiction in liberal governmentality and, as abnormal, disturbed the stabilizing dynamic between freedom and security. In this sense, it was often the trigger for counter-behavior.

Presently, normal labor conditions oriented on a male breadwinner, a situation largely accessible only for the majority society, is losing its hegemony. Precarization is increasingly a part of governmental normalization techniques and as a result, in neo-liberalism it transforms from an inherent contradiction to a hegemonic function.

Economizing of life and the absence of counter-behavior

The talk of "economizing of life," a discussion often struck up in the past several years, provides only very limited explanations of neo-liberal transformation processes: not only due to its totalizing rhetoric, but also because of the associated proclamation of what is

supposedly a new phenomenon. “Economizing of life” usually refers to certain simplified theses: no longer only work, but also life has fallen prey to economic exploitation interests; a separation between work and life is no longer possible and in the course of this, an implosion of the distinction between production and reproduction has also taken place. Such totalizing implosion theses speak of a collective victim status and distort the view of modes of subjectivation, agency, and ultimately of counter-behavior.

However, the thesis of the “economizing of life” makes sense from a biopolitical governmentality perspective. It points to the power and domination relations of a bourgeois liberal society, which for more than two hundred years now has been constituted around the productivity of life. In this perspective, life was never the other side of work. In Western modernity, reproduction was always part of the political and the economic. Not only reproduction, but also life in general was never beyond power relations. Instead, life, precisely in its productivity, which means its design potential, was always the effect of such relations. And it is precisely this design potential that is constitutive for the supposed paradox of modern subjectivation between subordination and empowerment, between regulation and freedom. A liberal process of constituting precarization as an inherent contradiction, did not take place beyond this subjectivation, it is an entirely plausible resulting bundle of social, economic and political positions.

In this sense, the currently lamented “economization of life” is not an entirely neo-liberal phenomenon, but instead, a force line of biopolitical societies, which today perhaps becomes intelligible in a new way. The associated subjectivations are not new in the way that they are usually claimed to be. In fact, their biopolitical governmental continuities have hardly been grasped.

Were living and working conditions, which arose in the context of social movements since the 1960s, really in no way governmental? [15] Indeed, the thoroughly dissident practices of alternative ways of living, the desire for different bodies and self-relations (in feminist, ecological, left-radical contexts), persistently aimed to distinguish themselves from normal working conditions and the associated constraints, disciplinary measures, and controls. Keywords here are: deciding for oneself what one does for work and with whom; consciously choosing precarious forms of work and life, because more freedom and autonomy seem possible precisely because of the ability to organize one's own time, and what is most important: self-determination. Often, being paid well hasn't been a concern as the remuneration was enjoying the work. The concern was being able to bring to bear one's many skills. Generally, the conscious, voluntary acceptance of precarious labor conditions was often certainly also an expression of the wish for living the modern, patriarchal dividing of reproduction and wage labor differently than is possible within the normal work situation.

However, it is precisely these alternative living and working conditions that have become increasingly more economically utilizable in recent years because they favor the flexibility that the labor market demands. Thus, practices and discourses of social movements in the past thirty, forty years were not only dissident and directed against normalization, but also at the same time, a part of the transformation toward a neoliberal form of governmentality.

But to what extent are precarious modes of living and working, formerly perceived as dissident, now obvious in their hegemonic, governmental function? And why do they seem to lose their potential for counter-behavior? The following will offer a few

thoughts without any claims of presenting a comprehensive analysis.

Many of the cultural producers who have entered into a precarious situation of their own accord, the people of whom we are speaking here as a whole, would refer consciously or unconsciously to a history of previous alternative conditions of existence, usually without having any direct political relationship to them. They are more or less disturbed by their shift to the center of society, i.e. to the place where the normal and hegemonic are reproduced. That does not mean, however, that former alternative living and working techniques will become socially hegemonic. Instead, it works the other way around: the mass precarization of labor conditions is forced upon all of those who fall out of normal labor conditions along with the promise of the ability to take responsibility for their own creativity and fashion their lives according to their own rules, as a desirable, supposedly normal condition of existence. Our concern here is not with these persons forced into precarization, but those who say that as cultural workers they have freely chosen precarious living and working conditions.[16]

It is amazing that there are no systematic empirical studies of this. [17] The common parameters of cultural producers, however, should be that they are well or even very well educated, between twenty-five and forty years-old, without children, and more or less intentionally in a precarious employment situation. They pursue temporary jobs, live from projects and pursue contract work from several clients at the same time, one right after the other, usually without sick pay, paid vacations, or unemployment compensation, and without any job security, thus with no or only minimal social protection. The forty-hour week is an illusion. Working time and free time have no clearly defined borders. Work and leisure can no longer be separated. In the non-paid time, they accumulate a great

deal of knowledge, which is not paid for extra, but is naturally called for and used in the context of paid work, etc.

This is not an "economizing of life," that comes from the outside, overpowering and totalizing. Instead, these are practices connected with desire as well as adaptation. For these conditions of existence are constantly foreseen and co-produced in anticipatory obedience. "Voluntary," i.e., unpaid or low paying jobs in the culture or academic industries, for example, are all too often accepted as an unchangeable fact, and nothing else is even demanded. The necessity of pursuing other, less creative, precarious jobs in order to finance one's own cultural production is accepted. This forced and, simultaneously chosen, financing of one's own creative output constantly supports and reproduces precisely those relations from which one suffers and of which one wants to be a part.[18] Perhaps those who work creatively, these precarious cultural producers by design, are subjects that can be exploited so easily because they seem to bear their living and working conditions eternally due to the belief in their own freedom and autonomy, due to self-realization fantasies. In a neoliberal context they are exploitable to such an extreme that the State even presents them as role models. [19]

This situation of self-precarization is connected to experiences of fear and loss of control, feelings of insecurity through the loss of certainties and safeguards, as well as fear and the experience of failure, social decline and poverty. Also for these reasons, "letting go" or forms of dropping out and dropping off of hegemonic paradigms are difficult. Everyone has to remain "on speed" otherwise you might fall out. There are no clear times for relaxation or recuperation. This kind of reproduction has no clear place, which, in turn, results in an unfulfilled yearning and a continuous suffering from this lack. The desire for relaxation to

"find oneself" becomes insatiable. These kinds of reproductive practices usually have to be learned anew. They are lacking in any self-evidence and have to be fought for bitterly against oneself and others. In turn, this makes this yearning for reproduction, for regeneration, so extremely marketable.

As a result, not only the side of work, of production, has become precarious, but also the so-called other side, which is often defined as "life," the side of reproduction. Do production and reproduction therefore coincide? In these cultural producers, in an old, new way, yes. What they reveal is that in a neoliberal form of individualization, parts of production and reproduction are deposited "in" the subjects. Panagiotidis and Tsianos (2004/05, p. 19) also argue along these lines when they state: "The progressive vanquishing of the division of production and reproduction does not occur at home or at the workplace, but instead, through an embodiment of the work itself: a reflexive way of precarization!" Though what is materialized in the bodies, beyond the work, is also always the governmental life, as biopolitical governmental power relations function doggedly through the production of hegemonic, normalized bodies and self-relations.

The function of reproduction consequently changes in the present context of precarious immaterial, usually individualized work and "life." It is no longer externalized with others, primarily women. Individual reproduction and sexual reproduction, the production of life, now becomes individualized and is shifted, in part, "into" the subjects themselves. It is about regeneration beyond work, also *through* work, but still, quite often beyond adequately paid wage labor. It is about regeneration, renewal, creating from one's self, re-producing one's self from one's own power: of one's own accord. Self-realization becomes a reproductive task for the self. Work is meant to guarantee the reproduction of the self.

Presenting “precarized” cultural producers (that is, cultural producers who have been made precarious) in their entire heterogeneity in such a uniform fashion, it is possible to say that their subjectivation in neoliberalism has obviously been contradictory: in the simultaneity of, on the one hand, precarization, which also always means fragmentation and non-linearity, and on the other, the continuity of sovereignty. The continuity of modern sovereignty takes place through the stylizing of self-realization, autonomy, and freedom, through the fashioning of and responsibility for one’s self, and the repetition of the idea of actuality. An example of this is the (still) widespread idea of the modern male artist subject, who draws his creativity from himself, because it supposedly exists within him, there, where Western modernity also positions sex and has made it the nature, the essence of the individual. In general, for the cultural producers described here, sovereignty seems to rest mainly in the “free” decision for precarization, therefore, self-precarization. Yet this, in turn, could be a central reason for why it is so difficult to recognize structural precarization as a neo-liberal governmental phenomenon that affects the entire society, and is hardly based on a free decision. Cultural producers therefore offer an example of the extent to which “self chosen” ways of living and conditions of working, including their ideas of autonomy and freedom, are compatible with political and economic restructuring. How else can we explain that in a study of the living and working conditions of critical cultural producers, when asked what a “good life” is, they had no answer?[20] When work and life increasingly permeate one another, then that means, as one interviewee expressed: “work seeps into your life.” But obviously, not enough ideas of a “good life” seep into the work, whereby this could then, in turn, transform into something that could collectively signify a “good

life." The counter-behavior with the view to a better life, which has less and less of a governmental function, is missing.

Apparently, the belief in precarization as a liberal governmental oppositional position can be maintained with the help of contradictory subjectivation, between sovereignty and fragmentation. However, in this way, continuing relations of power and domination are made invisible and normalization mechanisms become naturalized as the subject's self-evident and autonomous decisions. The totalizing talk of "economizing of life" only contributes to this by causing hegemony effects to disappear from view and with them, battles and antagonisms. One's own imaginations of autonomy and freedom are not reflected on within governmental force lines of modern subjectivation, other freedoms are no longer imagined, thus blocking the view of a possible behavior contesting the hegemonic function of precarization in the context of neo-liberal governmentality.

What is the price of this normalization? In neoliberalism, what functions as the abnormal? As the deviant? What can't be economically exploited in this way? Rather than focusing on the messianic arrival of counter-behavior and new subjectivities, as Deleuze rhetorically formulates with the question: "Do not the changes in capitalism find an unexpected 'encounter' in the slow emergence of a new self as a centre of resistance?" (Deleuze 1988, p. 115)[21], I believe that it is necessary to continue to work further and more precisely on the genealogies of precarization as a hegemonic function, on the problem of continuities of bourgeois governmental modes of subjectivation, also in the context of notions of autonomy and freedom that look upon themselves as dissident.[22]

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[1] ‚Cultural producers' is used here as a paradox designation. It refers to an imagination of the designated subjects: that of their own autonomous production and of fashioning their selves. But at the same time it is about the fact that these ways of subjectivation are instruments of governing, thus functional effects of biopolitical govermental societies of occidental modernity. Therefore the term 'cultural producers' has a contradictory, not coherent meaning and does not in first place concern artists. With this conceptualization I also refer to the definition by the group *kpD/kleines postfordistisches Drama* (little post-fordist drama) which I belong to along with Brigitta Kuster, Katja Reichard, and Marion von Osten (the

abbreviation KPD with all capital letters stood for the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, the German communist party; translators note). “We employ the term “cultural producers” in a decidedly strategic way. With it, we are not speaking of a certain sector (cultural industry), nor of an ascertainable social category (for example, those insured by artists’ social security in Germany, which is a health, pension and accident insurance for artists and writers) or of a professional self-conception. Instead, we are speaking of the practice of traveling across a variety of things: theory production, design, political and cultural self-organization, forms of collaboration, paid and unpaid jobs, informal and formal economies, temporary alliances, project related working and living.” (Kleines postfordistisches Drama 2005b, 24)

[2] There is no single English word to describe the ongoing process of becoming precarious; this is an attempt to do so.

[3] By lines of force, I understand formations of actions or practices that have homogenized and normalized in time and place through decades or centuries and ultimately are hegemony effects (see, also Foucault 1980; Deleuze 1988).

[4] With this concept, in French „contre-conduite“, Foucault describes struggles against the specific modes of government he calls “governmentality”. See Foucault 2004a, 292f.

[5] Mercantilism was also oriented on the growth of the population, but oriented more in terms of quantitative aspects than quality of life “of the people.”

[6] For one of the few places in which Foucault points out the inseparability of modern governmentality and biopolitics, see Foucault 2004b, p. 43. On biopolitical governmentality as a socio-theoretical concept, see Lorey 2006a.

[7] Following Louis Althusser's thoughts, these imaginary self-relations cannot be separated from "real living conditions," which are here the governmental techniques for ruling the population which, for example, materialize in the constitution of bodies.

[8] I assume that it was not first under neo-liberalism that self management shifted "inward" and replaced a regulatory principle. Regulation and control are not techniques that were first established under neo-liberalism to oppose discipline (different Deleuze 1992; Hardt/Negri 2000). Particularly when reproduction technologies along with hygiene and health are attributed a central biopolitical productivity of (gendered and raced) bodies, then for the bourgeoisie the introduction of these practices of subjectivation must be positioned at the beginning of the modern era, at the end of the eighteenth century, at the latest.

[9] This biopolitical subjectivation is, conversely, differentiated through gender, race, class affiliation, religion, and hetero-normativity, which I cannot go into in detail here. Generally, the text focuses solely on these force lines of bourgeois subjectivation. It is not aiming at a comprehensive look at the problem of ways of subject constitution.

[10] Foucault (2004b) on the contrary, speaks only in connection to the formation of neo-liberal governmentality in the U.S. of the self employer; as does the research based on his work (a.o. Bröckling 2000; Pieper/Gutiérrez.Rodríguez 2003). Lemke et al. (2000) argue, for example, that first when the liberal regulation of "natural freedom" transformed into that of "artificial freedom," was it possible to detect "entrepreneurial behavior of economically-rational individuals" (15). Yet what is this "natural freedom" other than the effect of governmental techniques and social struggles? And what, in contrast, is "artificial freedom"?

[11] In his genealogy of governmentality, Foucault does not draw any explicit connections between the normal and the hegemonic. In order to understand the dynamic and meaning of governmentality, normalization mechanisms must be viewed explicitly in connection with the production of hegemonic discourses and the related battles. On the connection between Foucault and Gramsci, see Hall 1997; Demirovic 1997.

[12] On the connection of imaginary wholeness and whiteness, see Lorey 2006b.

[13] Biopolitical governmentality structures modern societies in a specifically paradoxical way. "It enables," as Cornelia Ott so succinctly states, "people to come to understand themselves as unique 'subjects,' and at the same time, brings them together as an amorphous, unified, 'population mass.' ...Hereby, the flipside is always the 'right to life' rather than the exclusion or annihilation of life." (1997, 110) On the connection between biopolitical sociation and colonialism, see Lorey 2006b.

[14] On this broad understanding of precarization see also: kpD 2005a; 2005b and Mecheril 2003.

[15] Boltanski/Chiapello (2001), in contrast, assume an appropriation. According to their study, the changes in capitalism since the 1960s can be traced back to a specific integration and strategic reformulation of an "artistic critique," a critique that complains of the uniformity of a mass society, a lack of individual autonomy, and the loss of authentic social relations (see also Lemke 2004, pp. 176-78).

[16] On self-precarization in the context of migration, also beyond "culture producing" practices, see Kuster (2006) and Panagiotidis 2005.

[17] Initial approaches can be found in Böhmler/Scheiffele 2005; the study by Anne and Marine Rambach (2001) on precarious intellectuals in France; the theses by Angela McRobbie (2004) on the functionality of artists for the new economy; or the study by kpD (see note 1 and 18; kpD 2005 b).

[18] The performer Jochen Roller thematizes precisely this dynamic in his pieces.

[19] See, for example, the Schröder/Blair paper from 1998, or the interpellation of – among others – journalists, academics, and artists in the context of the Hartz-IV reform in Germany to act as "the nation's professionals." (www.bundesregierung.de/artikel-,413.445340/Bundesregierung-richtet-Steuer.htm; 10/21/05).

[20] As part of the film project "Kamera Läuft!" ("Action!" Zürich/Berlin 2004, 32'), at the end of 2003, the group kpD (kleines postfordistisches Drama, see note 1) interviewed fifteen Berlin cultural producers (including kpD) "with whom we work together for a specific form of political practice in the cultural field or whose work we use as a reference. ... Our questions were based on those from Fronte della Gioventù Lavoratrice's and Potere Operaio's questionnaire action carried out in early 1967 in Mirafiori, 'Fiat is our University,' which among other things, also asked about the ideas of a 'good life,' and organization. ... With regards to a potential politicization of cultural producers, we were, however, also interested in collective refusal strategies and in the associated wishes for improving one's own life, the life of others, and ultimately, social change. The only thing that was present at a general level in all of the interviews was the suffering from a lack of continuity. ... We, too, found almost no alternative life concepts in our horizon of ideas that could counter the existing ones with

anything
clear or unambiguous.” (kpD 2005b, 24f.; s.a. kpD 2005a)

[21] Extreme example of a current messianic idea is naturally the end of the book *Empire* by Hardt/Negri (2000), but also, although different and in a greatly weakened form, Foucault (1983) with his demand for new subjectivities.

[22] Thanks go to Brigitta Kuster, Katharina Pühl, and Gerald Raunig for critical discussions.