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***Returning Life to Life:  
The Factory of Cine sin Autor***

by

María Bella Piñeiro

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Curatorial/Knowledge

Department of Visual Cultures Goldsmiths College  
University of London

Supervised by Stefan Nowotny

I hereby declare that the following work is my own.

María Bella Piñeiro

Corcubión, Spain: September 2019

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## ABSTRACT

*Returning life to life: the factory of Cine sin Autor* is an invitation to pursue the curatorial in its capacity to reorganize production and challenge the logics that the project of capitalism has established and expanded in work, and in life through work. In so doing, technology will play a necessary and fundamental role for readdressing both work and life in production.

Over the last centuries, emancipation has been paradoxically tied to production and production to economy and technology. Despite the strength with which production was introduced by political economy in early modernity as a power at men and women's disposal, today it seems that such a power ever more enfeebles us, as though it were not on our side. This research looks to the production that was once at our disposal but that today appears lost. It does so in order to recall its potential from within the field of art to intervene the paradigm that political economy set in modernity to benefit capitalism. In this research, production is instantiated by the factory and the factory is presented as the model that inaugurated an archetype in production that ever since has been reiterated and expanded by employing work for capturing life; even to the extent that today we lack the knowledge about how to live.

Through the artistic practice of the Cine sin Autor collective, and, more specifically, taking their proposal of an authorless cinematographic factory as the exemplary case study of this thesis, I problematize the archetype of production as determined by the industrial factory in modernity, reproduced and expanded today through the diffuse and the social factories. The Cine sin Autor model of production is presented and discussed in its capacity to intervene the modern factory archetype to reorganize production with the intention of returning life to life. Returning life to life means to be able to see life again, and in seeing life also recognize it, and in its recognition be able to take care of it.

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INTRODUCTION

**Enquiring the curatorial**

## **To read what was never written**

The opening title of this introduction is taken from Walter Benjamin's text 'On the Mimetic Faculty'. (2005 [1933]; p. 722) Alongside other investigations, Walter Benjamin contributed to the thinking of a philosophy of language by theorizing about language's transformative abilities. Among the notions with which he engaged in this field and at different stages of his life (e.g.: Benjamin, 1996 [1916] or 1968 [1923]) there is one particular preoccupation that lies behind the provocative encouragement with which Benjamin proposes 'to read what was never written'. Having to do with the loss of magic in language, Benjamin posed the problem by qualifying language as 'the highest level of mimetic behaviour and the most complete archive of nonsensuous similarities' (2005 [1933]; *ibid.*).

In texts such as 'On the Mimetic Faculty', 'The Doctrine of the Similar' or 'On Astrology', Benjamin (2005 [1932–33]) explores a language that he characterizes as 'prior to all languages' and 'done from entrails, the stars or dances'. (p. 722) A language not made to communicate information but to express, precisely, its own incommunicability. As such, 'to read what was never written' points towards the cultivation of that lost magic in order to reconnect with ways for communicating language's sensuous incommunicabilities. As part of what he considers to be a sort of forgotten 'linguistic expression', Benjamin reconnects the grammar behind nature and humans by exploring what he calls the 'doctrine of the similar' and 'the mimetic faculty'. Nature, he recalls, is constantly producing similarities and humans have the highest capacity to recognize and to reproduce them. As humans, we have a powerful compulsion to become similar and behave mimetically, and language is an excellent example of this. It is our capacity to recognize similarities that serves as a stimulant for awakening our mimetic faculty, which continuously responds to the similar by mimetizing it. However, in contemporary language we would expect to see 'a medium into which the earlier powers of mimetic production and comprehension have passed without residue, to the point where they have liquidated those of magic'. (*ibid.*)

In the astrological reading of the stars made in antiquity Benjamin finds an example of the magic capacity of this language, which is 'prior to all languages'. 'To read what was never written' is here performed by sensing the world and finding correspondences between human beings and nature, thus employing those powerful compulsions with which humans are endowed. But 'modern man', says Benjamin, 'seems to contain far

fewer of those magical correspondences than did [...] the ancients or even [...] primitive peoples'. (Benjamin, 2005 [1932]; p. 685) Indeed, we may no longer possess this capacity to read that which made us define ourselves in relation to the stars. 'Modern man can be touched by a pale shadow of this on southern moonlit nights in which he feels, alive within himself, mimetic forces that he thought long since dead, while nature, which possess them all, transforms itself to resemble the moon.' (ibid.) Yet, this disappeared magic, claims Benjamin, can be found in the newly born since they are still perfectly 'adapted to the form of cosmic being'. (Benjamin 2005 [1933]; p. 696) Indeed, this can be demonstrated by observing how, when playing, children tend to mimitize indistinctly a shopkeeper or a windmill, expanding their perception towards hidden, new, liberating and ever greater emancipatory mimitisms and similarities. This exception aside, Benjamin reaches the point where he calls into question the destiny of this fragile faculty: 'Are we dealing with a dying out of the mimetic faculty, or rather perhaps with a transformation that might have taken place within it?' (ibid. p. 695)

Today is a Monday in April of year 2017. I think that our compulsion to find similarities lies primarily and almost exclusively within the sphere of economy, something that might have transformed our mimetic faculty into one that acts only upon a compulsion to find similarities within the nature of commodities. It is my belief – as will become clear as this thesis progresses – that capital's intervention has modified our capacity to become similar and behave mimetically to only serve its own benefit. At the time of writing this introduction, with my thesis nearly completed, I can say that somehow my intention has always been to find ways 'to read what was never written'. As if we could recover the magic we have lost and reconnect with the mimetic faculty and the doctrine of the similar, as proposed by Benjamin. In this thesis, I am not proposing to read the stars and constellations as astrologers once did, but I will try to draw the archetype under which I think the project of capitalism intervened production, making humans produce and reproduce a reality devoid of magic as our only way of reading the world and mimitizing it. Furthermore, once this archetype of production is clearly rendered, I will propose the construction of a different archetype with which to rehearse our given faculties beyond capitalism. If I was able to consistently read what was never written, it would allow me to find other ways, beyond those defined by capitalism, for reading the world. To read the world according to the writings of capitalism is to read a world that is essentially economic. Much of the effort going into my thesis will be invested in the claim that our system of references has not only been – and should not only be – established exclusively

in relation to economic factors.

### **Under Jupiter's transit**

*The force of gravity that marks the trajectory of things slowly disappears. Things, freed from their references of meaning, begin to float and stumble without direction. From the outside, this scene could give the impression that things, by virtue of acceleration, are freed from the force of gravity. In reality, however, they escape from the Earth and move away from each other due to the lack of 'gravitation of meaning'... Things... are thus reduced to atoms that are lost in a 'hyperspace' empty of meaning.*

(Han, 2015; pp. 41, 42)

The period around the end of year 2011 and the beginning of year 2012 brought substantial changes in my life. In late 2011, I started taking the first seminars as a PhD student in Curatorial Knowledge, my very first steps in reflecting upon what so far had been an intensive curatorial practice. At the end of the same year, I stopped working as the main curator at *Intermediae*, a public artistic institution I helped initiate and for which I worked from 2005 to the end of 2011. In addition, at around the same time, I met the collective Cine sin Autor (CsA), the exemplary case study of this thesis. In January 2015, with a certain perspective behind me, I decided to review this series of events and processes, and enquire into their transformative potential. I reshuffled and settled them as the horizon of my enquiry with a view to theorizing alternative modes for organizing art – and not only art, but life – through production and beyond the limitations imposed by the capitalist project.

In 2015, an acquaintance, who happened to be spending New Year's Day with my family, introduced me to astrology and the tarot, and particularly the transits that influence our horoscopes; about which I knew next to nothing. Within astrology, everybody's birth chart shows the state of the heavens at the time and place of birth. The passages of the different planets over one's birthplace are called transits. Interpreting transits is one of the ancient astrological forecasting methods that purportedly reveal which of life's themes are likely to become important at any given time. The Moon, Mercury and Venus, for example, move relatively quickly, so their transits rarely correlate with significant periods

in our lives. Mars and Jupiter are slower. And the slowest transits are those of Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Through changes, all of the transit times of these planets indicate lessons to be learned. Jupiter's transit, for example, takes eleven years to exert its influence.

I haven't checked my astrological chart, but I could almost believe that Jupiter's transit exercises a certain influence over me, since I observe that a regular 'curatorial' cycle reaches a peak, transforming relevant aspects of my life, more or less every eleven years. Reviewing some personal academic data seems to support this supposition. I studied for an MA in Fine Art Administration and Curatorship at Goldsmiths University in 1999. Before that, I was an artist: after it, I became a curator. Around eleven years later, in 2011, I started my PhD in Curatorial Knowledge, also at Goldsmiths. In the intervening years, I rehearsed a curatorial practice that put into question, and even dissolved, the role of the curator and that of the institution.

One of the most distinct memories from my childhood is of a conversation with my father when I was aged around seven or eight. Probably, if I persist with my speculation, I was already under the influence of Jupiter. My father worked as an aeronautical engineer for the Military Air Force. That was something both big and awkward for me. I remember very clearly the ritual of the uniform in the morning and the same uniform in the evening. When my father was not wearing the uniform, it hung on the chair in the living room: the trousers slung on the horizontal bar, the jacket around the shoulders of the back, his cap on the seat. Inside his military cap it said my father was Capitan Bella. I once asked if a superior ordered him to do something with which he did not agree, was he obliged to do it? He replied yes, and I asked why.

Delving further into this mindset, I realise that whenever Jupiter was transiting through my birth chart, London – Goldsmiths more precisely – also exercises its pull on me. My bank account certainly reflects my tendency toward Jupiter, since money flows from my account into Goldsmiths' administration cyclically every eleven years, more or less. Between London's magnetism allied with Jupiter's pull, from 2001–11 it was an assessor from Madrid Arts City Council who put most trust in my experimental curatorial capacities. Working together with him for over a decade, I gained much of what I know about the functioning of public institutions. Like Jupiter, his name starts with a J and a U.

I stopped working under ‘JU’s’ supervision during a period that saw a general increase of concern regarding the rapid transformations taking place in social and cultural public institutions, at least in Spain, and which coincided with my own personal doubts about how I should be configuring my practice within them. What would ‘being public’ eventually mean for society? I still wonder. However, I knew that one determining factor of this crisis performed in our lives like the Men in Grey in ‘Momo’, one of the most influential stories of my childhood. The crisis stole our lives by making them all ‘financialized’. London was calling again and Jupiter was back. I was an artist the first time I came to London and I went back as curator. This time I came as a curator and I am still wondering how I will return. As a researcher? It seems so. Or maybe not. Am I going backwards? ‘You have to walk backwards and slowly to go forwards at walking pace’, Momo advises in order to beat the Men in Grey.

While the notion of the public remains on hold and some parts of society struggle collectively to regain their political rights, I seem to be going backwards and dissolving my power position as curator. And yet, what I have decided to do is to mobilize my thinking against the never-ending precarization of life, in relation to which I take inspiration from Nina Simone’s advice: ‘Y’all pushing. You pushing. You pushing. Just relax, relax. You’re pushing it. It’ll go up by itself. Don’t put nothing in it unless you feel it. Let’s do it again please.’<sup>1</sup>

### **A refusal to live that way**

2011 was a landmark, not only for me personally but for many communities engaged in political, cultural and social practices. This and the following year were marked by the expressions of refusal coming from popular ‘bottom-up’ movements (e.g., 15M or Occupy) and its synchronicities and recursivities – especially but not only – in Europe and America, permeating a global map with claims that searched for a reorganization of life. In a talk for SON[I]A Radio, the Italian Marxist thinker Franco Berardi (2015) interprets these movements as going further than political revolutionary instances. He sees them as a collective artistic body that takes pleasure in reconnecting with one another, offering new ways for imagining a process of liberation. He even associates these

<sup>1</sup> Nina Simone talking to her backing singers while recording the song ‘I Shall Be Released’, on the album *To Love Somebody* (1969). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-du8MDE8nk> last visited June 2017



events with the sphere of the curatorial, considering them to be the positive result of the ‘curatormania’ of the previous decade; as if all curators were ‘coming out of the museum’ onto the streets in a form of a curatorial insurrection. Were we all, people and curators, under Jupiter’s transit?

Going back again to the years before 2011, I should remark that my major concerns at that time – regarding my curatorial practice and, also, its contextualization in the public institution – were related to notions of sovereignty and forms of organization: a sort of sensitivity and preoccupation that have accompanied me since childhood. Indeed, if working at *Intermediae* had been so significant for me, it is due to the constant rehearsal I was able to perform for experimenting with processes for deconstructing two of the strongest actors, the curator and the museum, that have shaped with power and authority the history of art institutions. To some extent, this thesis is the result of having acknowledged more profoundly some of these explorations at *Intermediae*. Moreover, it contains the desire to achieve something I was not fully able to at *Intermediae*: to confront the curator and the museum at the highest level of deconstruction that I could conceive. That is, to a degree zero of enunciation, which is described by Maurice Blanchot (2003)[1959], in the literary context of the 1960s, as one in which the author ‘wants to destroy the temple before building it’. (p. 206)

It was only once I saw myself outside the framework of the public institution that I found the way to ‘destroy the temple’ and go beyond its walls in order to ‘build it’. By ‘going beyond’ I mean to take a step further and relate my curatorial practice directly to the tyranny of the everyday outside the artistic enclaves of the institution, those like museums that are often used for legitimizing our practices. In some way, I see myself as one of those curators that Berardi mentions ‘coming out of the museum’ and onto the streets, participating in a form of a curatorial insurrection against, not only art’s but also life’s enclosure. In addition, stopping work became a doubly symbolic action for me: I was coming out of the museum performing an exiting of the institution – refusing power – and also performing a refusal to work, in this case as a salaried person. It was the incarnation of these two moves – undoubtedly significant for my biographical path and for life itself, and through which I was certainly refusing both artistic and work production – that eventually led me to realise the limited empowerment that we as producers give to the potentials of production, the latter being – as I will defend in this thesis – a pillar for constructing our lives in common.

It is also when I realized that if I was to consider production as a major constituent for the organization of art and of life, I should be doing so to reconsider alternative modes for its reorganization. The task into which I had to delve concerned (work) production comprising as well (art and life) production. I certainly didn't want to address my research refusing production – even though refusing it had been my first and certainly the most extreme yet necessary place of departure – but by exploring strategies of radical affirmation. Just as Berardi (ibid.) described the movements of insurrection, I was willing to explore the future as a collective artistic body that takes pleasure in reconnecting with one another, looking at new ways for imagining a process of liberation and intervening production from my situated curatorial place of enunciation.

### **The Cine sin Autor (CsA) model of artistic production**

I met Cine sin Autor (CsA) for the first time at the end of 2011. They came to *Intermediae* in the months that I was preparing to leave. Their aim was to explore their practice as a model of production in a factory and to make it function in an art institution. Despite the crucial role that the concept of the factory would come to play in this thesis, at the time, the idea of creating one struck me as both obsolete and inconvenient, and lacking the potential to communicate any sense of liberation in terms of experimental artistic practice. However, despite my initial reservations I helped them introduce at *Intermediae* what was for me a highly seductive model of non-authorial artistic production. By the end, CsA's factory turned out to be a very fruitful experiment, despite only running for a year and a half. Even though *Intermediae*, like other institutions at that time, was rethinking forms of new institutionalism, it was still affected by the economic crisis of the previous years (2008/9) and could not invest more resources to realize CsA's continuation. Although temporary, the intervention was sufficient to unravel the potentials of CsA's artistic practice and for proposing a different model for organizing production. A model that, while initially proposed within the sphere of the arts, could, at least to my mind, serve to surpass the specificity of arts production. The authorless cinematographic factory challenged the organization of production at a wider level of enquiry, i.e. work production and beyond.

During the period of this experiment, the more I learned about CsA's artistic and political

proposal, the more I felt abstractly seduced by their challenging attempt. This was in part because, as I mentioned, my major contribution at *Intermediae* had been to question institutional practices by experimenting with new forms of artistic production. It was while collaborating with CsA, and having already refused to work that way outside the institution, that I began to feel the urgency to enquire how production had been historically organized in the modern factory and in what entanglement such organization had been crucial for shaping today's notions about life. I realized that some of the values that work had weakened through modern production, and which this thesis will address, were values that CsA were able to restore, precisely by challenging its organization. My interest began to be more focused on the ways that production inter-related work and life, and in understanding how CsA's practice was able to transform its mechanisms by valuing people's life experiences, something that led me acknowledge how much work had obscured them. Gradually, I was driven to consider production as one of the paradigms by which the toxicity of capitalism was introduced, has been sustained and is indeed propelled, a view upon which this thesis will elaborate.

When one refers to modern production, one usually thinks of Marx's labour theory of value, which unquestionably links production, its means, its goals and ends directly to economy. What I present in this thesis does not understand production in this line of theorization. My strategy has been to rethink the values that economy instituted in production, theorizing a mode in which 'economizing means taking care of life'. (Stiegler, s.f.; n.p.) This is a way of challenging capitalism by also using production, although, in this case, it gives visibility to the life that economy has subsumed. This thesis should be taken as a proposal to understand production not as a labour theory of value but as a theory to value the experiences of people's life. Therefore, I will be defending the claim that *Cine sin Autor* takes the same mechanisms that the factory employed for 'exploitation', transforming them into revolutionary potentials that could inform the bases for the creation of a new 'working/living' paradigm. This new paradigm will animate the composition of new figures of subjectivity that can challenge from within the arts and into work some of capital's toxicity. Although for *Intermediae*, or in history *per se*, CsA hasn't been the first or indeed the only case of an artistic practice that challenges authority, that breaks with the automatisms set by modern production or that tries to resist capitalism, their attempt is one of the most radical that I have ever seen and that this is why I dedicate a profound analysis and a deep theorization to unfolding the specificities of their case and what I consider to be CsA's uniqueness: to turn their artistic practice into a factorial

model of production for returning life to life.

### **The factory and the archetype**

*But the nature of capital is such that it requires a society based on production. Consequently production, this particular respect of society, becomes the aim of society in general. Whoever controls and dominates it controls and dominates everything.*

Tronti, (2005[1965]; n.p.)

The imaginary of production was re-conceptualized in modernity through the factory. With the First Industrial Revolution, factories concentrated the power of production using work for propelling great changes in societies and in life itself. Even though the first factories were initially celebrated as the reunion of a power 'shared' between nature, machine and human beings, Marx's critique of political economy soon problematized work in factories as an exemplary process of the estrangement or alienation of life. (Marx, 1996 [1867]) It is in the factory, claimed Marx, where nature is separated from human beings: men and women separated from their tools and instruments, and also from other workers as well as from their human condition.

Charles Dickens (2004 [1854]) called the factories 'fairy palaces' (pp. 63, 68 and 78), pointing to the existence of the power that palaces held and of a certain incomprehensible mystery denoted by the fairy legend. Even though he remained critical of work in factories, he described them with the same power and mystery that the name given to them performs: comparing the cotton machines with great elephants, the pipes of the buildings with forests and their smoke with spirals. His was a kind of fairy description for the palaces where workers were only hands in movement. From a present perspective, it is difficult to share Dickens' poetic viewpoint. Yet, as a worker, one might easily share some of Dickens' conflicting feelings for their fairy-like 'powers': feelings that are, on the one hand, rebellious toward work, yet, on the other hand, neither fully denying it nor capable of diminishing its delirious effects.

This thesis is constructed under the hypothesis that part of what was inaugurated with production in factories might not have been yet fully addressed: or if addressed, that it might still be worth reconsidering the scope and effects of what Dickens sensed as 'fairy

powers' in order to acknowledge their prevailing consequences. To delve into the power that production uncovers and obscures, in this thesis the factory is not only referred to as the space where work takes place but is rather conceived as the 'space of appearance'<sup>2</sup> of production. As such, the factory serves to call production into its full existence in order to analyse consistently its function of intermediation between work and life.

The first factories, the industrial factories, set a model of production that in this thesis is referred to as archetypal. An archetype is the very first model that determines certain patterns that are subsequently copied and reproduced, conscious or unconsciously. The archetype instantiates the mechanism through which production operates. It shows how production is articulated in the industrial factory and how it is reproduced successively in the diffuse and social factories by recalling the same archetype of production. The idea of the archetype and its reiteration in the diffuse and the social factory is made understandable by considering these factories, not as ruptures in production, but as continuities that reaffirm the model set by the industrial factory. The archetype continues expanding throughout the twenty- and twenty-first centuries across territories, while embracing more spheres of life. Its effects succeed in crossing over and dissolving subjectivities, disarming bodies, their souls, finally using work to put at risk all capacities at people's disposal for taking care of life.

The factory is presented as the space of appearance of production where an archetype is articulated under the imperatives of the project of capitalism, yet it will also be the space of appearance of a new archetype of production that refuses to be articulated under such parameters. Therefore, this thesis is divided into two parts, considering the factory as the space of appearance for production but distinguishing two different archetypes. There is an Intermezzo between the first and the second part that is a symbolic divide and a gateway to the new factory archetype, and which also informs us about CsA's history. The first three chapters analyse the modern archetype of production that is set up in the industrial factory, reproduced and expanded through the diffuse and social factories following the imperatives of the capitalist project, which employs work for life

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<sup>2</sup> 'Space of appearance' is a term used by Hannah Arendt (1998)[1958]. For her the space of appearance in the political realm is the public sphere where beings enter reality. The space where 'I appear to others as others appear to me'. (p. 221) Arendt extensively complements the character of this space. According to her the space of appearance is even neglected in work production due to the effects of alienation. However, my intention here is not to use it as the space of recognition and of relationality of the political being as Arendt conceptualizes it. I rather take it in order to signal the factory as the space of appearance of production. The space where production makes its appearance explicitly and, therefore, such an appearance will bring into the realm further complexities.

subsumption. Chapters five to seven propose a reorganization of production through the proposal of a new archetype.

The CsA factory is presented as an alternative to the model introduced and encouraged by the industrial factory. I have theorized the CsA factory as the space of appearance of production where life is empowered through work. CsA's proposal is an invitation to search for an 'outside' to subsumption that is found without exiting the factory and by transforming its archetype in an attempt to break with the old imaginary of production by proposing novel forms of industrialism.

### **Human-machine agency**

Technology has played a fundamental role in the constitution of factories and also in the definition of the modern archetype of production. Factories are not only sustainers and enhancers of a contingent relation between work and life through production, but also between workers and machines. This thesis considers that the contingency between work and life is endured due to the agency production imposes between workers and machines. Moreover, it is an account of how this same agency is constituted and rehearsed, that the paradox of always imagining a liberation is never made effective and that, in contradistinction, its negation is constantly actualized by employing technology. The form of relation that the modern archetype imposes between workers and machines in order to benefit productivity will be relevant in order to understand how the value of work is constantly placed against the value of life's transformation.

Machines are referred to in this thesis as actors that engage with workers in production. This agency is established as a form of subsumption of information that the worker delivers into the machine to fulfil the imperatives for maximizing production. Since the entry of the machine into the factory, economy has only determined a parasitic relation between them that is still reproduced with different types of machines, to which men and women always adapt to benefit productivity. The scientific and technological progress and the growth of economy have been intrinsically related to act as interleaved engines and the worker stands as the weakest in the process of production, serving economy and technology by working against life.

The history of work production has become a continuous struggle against work to defend life. In its evolution, the factory has only been considered as the space of alienation from which to escape in order to recuperate life. However, these processes have also shown that the attempts to 'exit' the factory have been turned into strategic modes to expand the precarization of life, making work even more intense and the domain of the factory larger. Marx and Engels claimed that work transforms life and the history of work's alienation confirms this. Ever since modernity, work has been defined according to the parameters of productivity set by the first theoreticians of mercantilism, which have increasingly 'enclosed' life until the point that surplus value, the rentability of the capitalist, is today obtained directly through living and in many cases without doing any (paid) work.

In this thesis I propose to use CsA's model of factorial production not only in order to readdress the potentiality that production has for recognizing life through work, but also for reconsidering the relation of engagement between humans and machines, and the role that technology can play in production.

## **Gestures**

In *Gesture and Speech*, palaeontologist Leroi-Gourhan (1993)[1964] gives continuation to constructing a model for understanding human thought, communication and action in prehistory by analysing early hominid technics and their material organization. In his work, one sees the methodology proper to his field, which, to a certain extent, is a rehearsal for reading what was never written. Given that primal human knowledge – that of early Homo sapiens – was not a written knowledge, human prehistory should be studied by reading the material objects that were produced.

In Leroi-Gourhan's expert readings of these objects, he shows how each of their forms are responses to the needs of our ancestors. He orders his observations chronologically so that the forms and the gestures that they resemble constitute a reading of human evolution. In many cases these objects were tools needed for survival. The gesture is explained by Leroi-Gourhan as a connector between the inner necessity and its exteriorization into the material world in the form of an object or a tool. The object therefore materializes such a gesture and helps give shape to a need that should be attended to. A knife, says Leroi-

Gourhan, resembles in its form the *need* for cutting things.

The function still represented in our society by the knife in the action of cutting any object is a remarkable example, for the palaeontology of the knife goes back without a break to the earliest tools. From the awkward, irregular small cutting edge of the Australanthropian chopper it developed into the blade of the heavy biface and that of the scraper. At the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic, the oval scraper was replaced by fine cutting blades, and the knife assumed a form that remained essentially unchanged until the emergence of metals. Its proportions have remained the same since the Bronze Age, which saw the completion of its functional evolution into a blade with a handle of which its blunt edge was the extension. (Leroi-Gourhan, (1993)[1964]; p. 302)

The new archetype of production proposed in this thesis is explained with the help of three gestures: the gesture of the authorless; the gesture of *parrhesia*; and the cinematographic gesture . Gestures are connectors between certain necessities and their material exteriorizations. Just as the knife resembles in its form the need for cutting things, and the gesture connects and helps to materialize its form, the gestures that I see informing CsA's practice will function similarly in the constitution of the new archetype that aims to transform production. The authorless gesture will connect the need to refuse power, which will then be materialized in the way language is employed by the *nosotros*.<sup>3</sup> The parrhesiastic gesture connects the need to refuse divisions in production and is exteriorized in how the assembly is constituted and rehearsed by the *nosotros*. The cinematographic gesture connects the necessity to refuse subsumption and it materializes by virtue of the intermediation of the cinematograph that helps in 'giving vision to life'.

Each of the final three chapters is dedicated to discussing one of these gestures following a certain order to provide a better understanding of their function and their counter correlation to the archetype of modern production. However, once the new logic of production transforms its space of appearance, this order of description is surpassed by the intensity of the practice that is constantly rehearsing its own constituency.

Since, as we saw with Benjamin, men and women have been granted the highest capacity

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<sup>3</sup> *Nosotros* refers in this thesis to the plural 'we' that is constituted once the author becomes authorless (*sin autor*) in the opening of the new production. The *nosotros* is sustained through the whole process of production.



for finding similarities and mimize them, these new gestures could also enter into the domain of their mimetic faculty: new actions with material expression that carry meaning and have the power to introduce and materialize new knowledge and contribute to the world around. The empowerment of changing the factory archetype lies in being able to cut off the mimetic performances introduced by capital into production by finding other gestures that employ work to recognize life. This thesis proposes three gestures with which to intervene the modern factory by introducing into production a path for life recognition, bestowing upon it a material expression and exteriorization. To change the gestures that have materialized the modern model of production and the modern conceptions given to both work and life. Today, we need to discover novel gestures and mimize them for returning life to life.

Look back with some perspective, and having theorised some of CsA's empowering capacities, I see this model as a grand metaphor, or even as a great rebellion if all art institutions were to turn themselves, however briefly, into factories for authorless cinematographic production. To see anew what another production has to offer for creating a whole set of values beyond those imposed by capitalism. Especially, nowadays, considering all the knowledge acquired through the experiences of the different practices and the recent instituent social movements.



## FIRST PART

### **A genealogy of the factory and the first archetype for production**

## CHAPTER 1

### **The industrial factory: rendering the archetype of production**



*The beginning of the modern world in the seventeenth century was marked by spectacular developments in the natural sciences. The last four centuries have witnessed the grand march of the scientific revolution, which includes the Industrial Revolution and the latest revolution in Information Technology. Flush with success and bolstered with its claim on absolute objectivity, the modern scientific community, beginning with the early modern period in Europe, 1500–1650 AD, lambasted and tore into shreds its mythical and mystical past, equating it with superstition, ignorance and an illiterate primitive mind, thus declaring it incompatible with the rational mind. Tradition could not save itself from the onslaught of modernity, which invariably led to a kind of rootlessness of the modern man, like a man without a shadow.*

Rosy Singh, 2004; p. 75

Rosy Singh gathers some of the paradigmatic changes of modernity marked by revolutions in the scientific and the industrial, or marked by the support to a new type of mentality; that of the rational mind. These gigantic changes, whose effects in many cases still linger today, deployed novel constellations that, in turn, transformed the understanding of fundamental notions. This research starts, precisely, in early modernity, engaging with some of these transformations, specifically those concerning the notions of work, life and technology. I consider them of special relevance, indeed essential to the understanding of two ideas that structure this thesis: the recognition of an *archetype of production* and of the *industrial factory* as its perfect representation.

It was in early modernity that the concepts of productivity and growth were for the first time elaborated under economic reasoning that fundamentally influenced the understanding of the notions of work and life. The *factory* was also introduced as the place par excellence to unite and manage the new hypotheses that became referential to the progress of society. New forms of labour organization were planned shaping the future's strategic actions that, in time, would entirely occupy life. The first factory trials were set down when manufacturing processes moved into the 'fairy palaces',<sup>4</sup> as Charles

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Dickens (2004 [1854]) referred to the factories, in this case to the cotton mills of the Industrial Revolution, as 'fairy palaces' in his novel *Hard Times – For these Times* (see pp. 63, 68 and 78). Despite the power that these places embodied due to their scale and mechanical constituencies that

Dickens called them: the large and diaphanous spaces where a combined workforce of humans and machines promised progress and wealth for the future. However, I will argue that it was only around 1900 – with the introduction of scientific management into production – that the *industrial factory* became accomplished in all its aspects and *the archetype of production* was fully defined.

Capitalism has had many expressions through the ages, but it was in early modernity that productivity and growth became strategic for its project and the *factory* central for its implementation and later expansion through work and the occupation of life. The ambiguous appellation of ‘fairy palaces’ chosen by Dickens perceptively portrays the uneasy ambivalence of the *factory*: at times divine or magic, at others miserable and slavish, but always committed to the transmutation of work and life into lead, while, unfortunately, bereft of the empowerment of its alchemic function. The *factory* has always maximized productivity and growth with the help of machines and the application of strategies of scientific management, becoming, as we will see in the following chapters, the perfect model for expanding the capitalist project to all areas of society and to all the spheres of life.

Marx (1996 [1867]) was the first to fully explore the functioning of the mechanisms of capital’s production promoted by capitalists, who, according to Marx, owned the means and resources to organize production in factories. Most subsequent analysis of labour production has been articulated around Marx’s theory of value (i.e., post-Operaism, Autonomia or Marxist feminism). Taking some of these Marxist sources, my objective is not to discuss labour production as the production and reproduction of capital, but to see labour production processes under capital’s logic as processes organized for capturing life through work. I propose to frame production with a view to analysing how capital has organized work and life. Indeed, by opposing one another, work and life are the two fundamentals that were captured in production.

To think about the process of production in terms of the creation of capital – Marx’s point of departure – can be problematic since this might lead to the conclusion, as indeed happened to many of the ‘resistance movements’ of the 1960s and seventies, that to abandon the capitalist model would be extremely problematic without abandoning work: that is, without leaving the factory. At that time, certain post-Marxist thinkers proposed to disassociate the idea of life from that of work, something unthinkable for Marx, locating

generated astonishment, Dickens was very critical of factory work, notably because it stifled the inventiveness and creative development of humankind. See Moruno (2015; p. 65)

it somewhere other than the factory. Instead of thinking of production as the work in factories, they conceived it as the production of forms of life that would have to occur outside such environs, with the expectation that society would find liberation from work's alienation.

What happened was that capitalism itself managed to exercise its power over the production of our forms of life, while the *archetype of production* determined by the *industrial factory* expanded beyond its walls to embrace all spheres of life: firstly, with the diffuse factory, and later with the social factory. For this reason I consider it essential, both for the present and the future, to rethink work and life together within production, just as Marx and Engels understood them. If, as they maintained, work is the means to transform nature and life, then work should not be thought of as a form of production of capital but as a production that is capable of transforming life. And if so, this implies that the *archetype of production* set by the *industrial factory*, and later reproduced by the diffuse and the social factories, needs to be rendered clearly and then reconfigured.

In order to understand the process through which life began to be captured through work in modernity, in this chapter I explain how the *industrial factory* is put together for this end, understanding its different constituencies and how they are configured together such as to shape the *archetype of production*. It is a model that, as we will see in coming chapters, ensures its success by reproducing this archetype, through machines and the capacities of our bodies and minds, weakening our resources and ensnaring life, while caring only about increased productivity. The successive factories wherein work has been organized throughout history reproduce this same pattern for maximizing work against life. In those machines, our bodies and our values change but acquire and practice only one form of relationship, which always produces and reproduces the alienation of work and life.

By holding that there is an *archetype of production* that persists until today, I understand the factory as historical evidence of a process that keeps repeating itself, modelling work – and life through work – while perfectly suiting the means of the capitalist project captured so incisively by Marx. To change the *archetype of production* necessitates intervening in this process, which I will do from within the field of art by discussing the practice of *Cine sin Autor*. Moreover, the challenge of this thesis is to present *Cine sin Autor*'s production as a new *archetype* that succeeds, as its title suggests, in returning life



to life. This involves the task of rethinking resistance, not as a form of opposition, nor even as a refusal, exodus or exhaustion, but as a radical affirmation of a production able to recognize life through work.

Given that this research focuses on such a thing as the *factory*, and since factories have often been referred to as the culmination of the power of machines over human power – even Marx did so –, I want to make clear that I do not consider machines, a priori, as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’; nor do I consider them as neutral actors. My intention in this research is to position them as companions able to empower new visions for alternative modes of production. Moreover, I claim that in the agency between humans and machines (although only if we are able to build a positive relation of affection for production, as Deleuze and Guattari envisioned) resides a multi-faceted potential for transforming our future and for liberating production processes from the domination of economic wealth.

If Marazzi (2007; n.p., 2008; pp. 44, 116–17) is right when he suggests that today the factory is ‘inside us’, as I consider he does with his anthropogenic model of production,<sup>5</sup> then there is value in revisiting the factory that invaded our lives.

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<sup>5</sup> Marazzi refers to our present model of production as the production of ‘man by means of man’ in which the forces of production and the content of industrial machinery have now been transposed into our living labour body. (See Marazzi, 2007; n.p. and 2008, pp. 44, 116–17)

## **‘Enhancing’ work and life**

‘The constitution of modernity was not about theory in isolation but about theoretical acts indissolubly tied to mutations of practice and reality. Bodies and brains were fundamentally transformed.’ (Hardt and Negri, 2000; p. 74) To begin untangling the importance behind production with a view to understanding its archetype, it should be foregrounded that in modernity work and life were enhanced through production as new powers at men and women’s disposal while simultaneously cancelled out by productivity. Such an important event should be acknowledge as part of the constitution of modernity and traced, as Hardt and Negri suggest, as a theoretical act tied to mutations in practice and reality. It was in the passage from a feudal to a modern society that work and life were first envisaged and concurrently used as the carriers for shaping and spreading productivity. This affected drastically the existing conceptions about what wealth and growth meant, transforming the understanding of the value of life itself.

The first enquires into political economy (i.e., Smith, Ricardo, Malthus) that followed the increases of national trading as well as the moves towards the dissolution of the sovereign king and the formation of the sovereign state introduced possibilities for seeing life as a productive power. All of them were necessary to shape the beginnings of a changing model in which productivity was the consignment under which work and life had to be ‘enhanced’. Although these new tendencies were still incipient in this period, they were already setting up the basis of a new model of production and its archetype, thus ensuring the process for its evolution and success. Mass production in factories wasn’t yet a reality, but it is in the centuries immediately prior to the Industrial Revolution – i.e., in early modernity – that the conditions for its existence were woven by reorganizing work and life such that they could later be fuelled precisely by ‘employing’ them under the mechanisms of the industrial factory.

The construction of the modern notion of work, which would later also condition our sense of life, meant a change in work’s and life’s direct relation to growth and wealth, stealing their ‘natural value’ by transferring them to economy, market and commodities. The theoreticians of mercantilism like Baptiste Colbert were the first to promote a new reasoning by which productivity came to be seen as a main indicator of the wealth and growth of a nation. With a view to benefitting the nation, productivity was encouraged by awakening the capacity of the entire society – although in practice generally men – for

creating commodities through work. This is one of the major reasons why, over this period, a new sense of work needed to be naturalized by society and also why work would subsequently become a necessary tool to manage the world and its transformations.

Today, in a society whose essential structuring elements continue to be based on an ingrained sense of productivity, growth and wealth, it is difficult to see the scope of this major change clearly. The understanding of production as work and of its meaning as a universal category – homogeneous, precise and unquestionable – is a conceptualization born in modernity, powerfully erected as the fundamental condition for the progress of society, and for the definition and reorganization of life; and has remained so until today. Only when we look retrospectively at production, from even before Antiquity until the end of the Medieval period, does it become easier to appreciate the great paradigmatic change propelled by modernity: seeing production becoming work, we perceive better the dimension of that which we have inherited.

From before Antiquity until well into the Middle Ages there prevailed a ‘gendered and organicistic cosmology’ (Rieznik, 2001; p. 2) of production in which mankind did not intervene. A conception of ‘work’ did not exist beyond that expressed and found as fertility in nature, while wealth was not obtained through men and women’s production. Aristotle described nature’s capacity of production in his writings on biology in *Historia animalium* (343 B.C.) with remarks like this: ‘The Earth conceives by the Sun and of him it is pregnant, giving birth every year.’ (Aristotle quoted by Rieznik, 2001; p. 2) While nature was the producer, men and women encouraged the marriage between Earth and Sky and this union provided them with animals, plants or minerals. (ibid.)

In Antiquity, work was relegated to slaves, who were not considered citizens. They worked in agriculture, in the mines, the market or in the domestic environment. A free man did not work but engaged in activities that looked to the pleasure of their realization. *Labor* referred to the bodily chores one had to perform in order to maintain the life cycle and it excluded any purpose for transforming nature. *Poesis* referred to the free creation of the artist. And *praxis*, which was the highest form of human activity, meant the cultivation of language and oration as part of the social and political life. (ibid., p: 5)

Only when work became in men’s eyes a ‘distinguishable’ and indeed ‘valuable’ activity – at least apparently – did men enter production and women were relegated to

reproduction. It was along with early modernity that men discovered their own power and found the way to ‘occupy’ nature’s role in transforming production into the ‘Father Labour’ and the ‘Mother Land’<sup>6</sup> (Naredo, 2002; see also Petty, 1662; p. 40), both of them surplus values: ‘Mother Land’ valued in its privatization and posterior mercantilization through agriculture (see e.g., Federici 2009; pp. 62–67) and ‘Father Labour’ in the factorial model that is explored in this thesis.

The extensive privatization of the ‘Mother Land’ experienced in Europe as part of the moves that propelled the transformation from a feudal society into a modern and capitalist one were not only the cause of a widespread decomposition of the social cohesion (see Federici, 2009; p. 68). As Federici notes, it also meant a remarkable move of dispossession, one that condemned women in particular. The massive privatization of ‘Mother Land’ deprived women of their main resource for the ‘sustenance of life’, relegating their activity to reproduction (see p. 74). An almost total absence of economical perception created a chronic dependency on men. Above all, the labour production system rendered women’s role invisible. Federici (2009) emphasizes the relevance of this event with these words: ‘...women suffered a unique process of social degradation that was fundamental to the accumulation of capital and has remained so ever since.’ (p. 75)

What Federici’s statement also unravels – something that should be highlighted – is that the project launched in early modernity (led by a capitalist view in which life and work had to be ‘enhanced’) has necessarily been a field significantly defined, structured, theorized and contested, in most cases, primarily in the interests of ‘Father Labour’, while ‘Mother Labour’ was rendered invisible. In line with this, I want to advise readers at this early stage of the thesis that most of the sources and materials to which I will refer express male voices and perspectives, which ironically confirms Federici’s diagnosis. Although I haven’t approach my research from a feminist perspective, nevertheless I consider that to reorganize the archetype of production established under the modern paradigm by returning life to life through production is, undoubtedly, a way of intervening as well into the genderization of ‘Father Labour’.

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<sup>6</sup> Naredo (2002), in his text about the history of labour, refers very clearly to the gendered attributions given to labour and land in early modernity’s new theorizations on the notions of production and value that were being reconfigured away from Nature. In Willian Petty’s *Treatise of Taxes & Contributions* (1662) we can read: ‘That Labour is the Father and active principle of Wealth, as Lands are the Mother.’ (p. 40)

What formerly symbolized a power embodied by nature – or a punishment,<sup>7</sup> enslavement, sacrifice or low recognition if embodied by men and women – would significantly change with the help of the theorizations introduced by mercantilism in early modernity.

Production was re-conceptualized by making it vital for demonstrating the power of mankind over both nature and God. This move (un)ravelled man and women's productive capacity and its great 'value', but it also inaugurated what Stiegler calls the 'proletarianization of society' one that loses its 'knowledge about how to live.' (Stiegler, 2010; p. 33) Mercantilism transformed production by introducing into its sphere new governing politics substantiated primarily under reasons of economic interest – e.g., the invisible hand<sup>8</sup> –, which drastically affected the management of life in general.

The change of logic – from thinking in terms of growth in the Earth through the wealth of nature to thinking of growth in economy through the wealth of nations – was propelled by an extensive and intensive mobilization across the population, promoting their empowering possibilities through production in view of the benefit of their future and progress. Work was completely re-qualified and the new theories and ideology around productivity would be the ones that informed the ideals of the new universal modern man,<sup>9</sup> a kind of 'rootlessness man', as Rosy Singh termed him, 'like a man without a shadow'. (2004; p. 75)

But it was not only that production changed and conquered work, projecting freedom and power in a specific manner. It also implied the introduction of crucial measuring parameters, since not just any work would be considered productive. This is something that can be learnt from works like *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith (2007 [1770]). Considered to be one of the theoreticians who framed the ideological and theoretical perspectives of political economy in early modernity, Smith was the first to point out the distinction between productive and unproductive work. In general terms and, according to

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<sup>7</sup> In the Judeo-Christian tradition work is always tough and should not be considered otherwise because work is understood as the penitence that compensates for having committed the original sin. (Rieznik, 2001; p: 5)

<sup>8</sup> 'The faith in the existence of automatic mechanisms that, through the work and grace of the market, redirected individual egoism for the benefit of the community, was reflected in the famous "invisible hand" of Adam Smith. Trust in the market as a panacea came to replace what was previously deposited in Divine Providence: both promised to lead (especially) man on the right path as long as they respected their rules.' (Naredo, 2002; n.p.)

<sup>9</sup> The modern man is not only a productive worker but also a productive subject. This means that he produces – in all the domains of his existence and exceeding the domain of work – wealth, pleasure and happiness. He is a man who is docile, useful for work and ready for consumption. See Laval, Ch., Dardot, P., *La nueva razón del mundo. Ensayo sobre la sociedad neoliberal*. Editorial Gedisa: Barcelona, 2013, p. 329.

his vision, productive labour should be one that adds value to the object to which the work is applied and which lasts for some time after the completion of the work. In other words, it represents a quantity of work stored for use when it is needed. Subsequently, this object, or – what is effectively the same – the price of such an object, can put into operation a quantity of work equal to that which originally produced it. This work has, therefore, the full capacity to perform its value at a later time than the production process. (Smith, 2007, pp. 258–73)

This value obtained through man and women's productive capacity would come to be considered surplus value once machines entered the chain of production, raising the capacity of storage by virtue of a constant increase in productivity. This also meant the devaluation of life since as Marx (1844) declared, '...the worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he produces'. (p. 28) With time, as we will see, what is incorporated into the chain of production 'for raising the quantity of value stored' would no longer be only work but also life, which itself becomes 'surplus-labour' when surplus value ceases, as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari, to 'be localizable'; when it no longer requires 'doing any work'. (2005; p. 492)

Keeping in mind the changes that contributed to the re-conceptualization of work, one can imagine that life had to be affected if only because work was being 'enhanced'. However, it is important to understand that, in this period, the same 'positivity' that productivity induced in work was, indeed, introduced for 'enhancing' not only work alone, but also life. Generally speaking, only work is commonly associated with production, in great part because of Marx's project, as for him alienation separated work from life. However, Foucault did refer to life as becoming productive precisely in modernity when power found the way to manage it. It is important to highlight the tension that travels constantly from work to life and from life to work through production, and since modernity very much tied to productivity. Foucault's conceptualization of life as production can help clarify that the parameters encouraging work to be seen anew acted as well upon life, ensuring the connection between work and life through production.

In general terms, productivity embodied through work helped to improve the economy while increasing the availability of resources. Going some way toward alleviating the more extreme problems posed by hunger and epidemics, this meant that death ceased to torment life so directly. Therefore, one could argue that productivity intervened in matters

of welfare, making life more visible by diminishing its most evident tremors and on balance increasing its certainty. ‘Hiding death away’ was necessary for ensuring life as a ‘value’ within economy and growth.

While ‘seeing’ life where death had previously been more prevalent enhances life, we find more profound implications about how life enters production through Foucault’s reasoning (1990, pp. 135–59) in his last chapter of *The History of Sexuality (Vol. I)*, entitled ‘Right of Death and Power over Life’. The text extensively elucidates the different forms in which new technologies for exercising power over life were introduced for the first time. Nevertheless, as Foucault advises, we should not think of these technologies as a substitute for the existing ones. Foucault (2008; p. 8) argues that the changes taking place in the seventeenth century were part of the introduction of a ‘new governmental rationality’ by which the laws that regulated the national interest – *raison d’État* – began to undermine the power of the crown.

In the Middle Ages, explains Foucault (1990, pp. 135–59), the king held sovereign power and with him lay the power of life and death. In early modernity, the negative precept through which the king imposed his sovereign power over the population, literally holding their life in his hands, was replaced with the positivity by which the state became the guarantor for not taking life but for having instead to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, regulate and organize it. (Foucault, 1990, p. 136). The right of the king will no longer be symbolized by the sword that slays. Power will modify its functions such that the role of a sovereign would now be that of taking charge of life. A life, of course, that, in exchange, had to prove itself ‘valuable and, therefore, productive’.

### **The ‘power’ of the industrial factory**

*Factory signifies the cooperation of several classes of workers, adults and non-adults, watching attentively and assiduously over a system of productive mechanisms, continually kept in action by a central force [...] excludes any workshop whose mechanism does not form a continuous system, or which does not depend on a single source of power. [...] In its most rigorous sense, this term conveys the idea of a vast automaton, composed of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs operating in concert and without interruption, towards one and*

*the same aim, all these organs being subordinated to a motive force which moves itself.*

Andrew Ure, cited by Marx in *Marx*, 1973; p. 618

Ure's description of factories acknowledges them as relevant inventions that introduced new and important adaptations in production affecting both work and life. This should be reason enough to delve into what this invention might have represented, if only to find out how the industrial factory placed technology for the first time in relation to work and life within the sphere of production. Later on, a closer investigation into the insights of the factory will clarify how its unique orchestration has been endlessly repeated until it became archetypal, conquering first production and later consumption. This should not be underestimated since, as I defend, this archetype has been obscuring any possibility for rethinking the organization between work and life, and also between humans and machines, in a manner different to the one that the factory itself inaugurated. For example, one in which work would have provided, with the help of machines, a form of caring for life instead of subsuming it.

As we have seen, in early modernity work and life came essentially to ensure the wealth and growth of the nation through production. Over the following centuries – the nineteenth and the twentieth – society faced the progressive introduction of machines and of specific forms of scientific management that culminated with, as Andrew Ure described, the 'vast automaton' of the industrial factory. The conveyor belt was the vast automaton that organized workers in an assembly line. Its origins lie in a slaughterhouse in Chicago, where carcasses were butchered by workers as they moved along the production line. The efficiency of one person removing the 'same' piece over and over caught the attention of industrialist William Pa Klann, who later introduced it into the Ford Factory in 1913. In factories, everything had to perform in efficient cooperation. Machines were only designed and introduced for the improvement they offered in productivity, and men and women were continuously exposed to an intense division and specialization of tasks in order to pair with the machinic capacities. The factory has, indeed, become iconic for representing work in modernity and beyond it, for its capacity to achieve ever higher levels of productivity.

The characteristics of the factory that I have presented are a very general and perhaps the most common way of describing this impressive 'vast automaton'. Yet, here I purposely



point to an ironic and efficient manner of seeing work organized through production that uses humans and machines for this means, and which finds expression through an institution – the factory – on behalf of national wealth. I have invoked the factory precisely at this historical stage (i.e., before it becomes diffuse and immaterial), since never again in the history of production, or in that of the factory itself, will this view remain as ‘heavy machinic, corporeal and touchable’ as it is in the industrial example. And yet, the incarnation of this model as archetypal meant that work, and life-through-work, was always to be subjected to subsequent automatons and to its forms of scientific management in production.

However, the factory should not only be iconic for representing work in production, since it should also be so for representing life becoming productive. Foucault (1990; pp. 141, 142), curiously, grouped in the same time period the entry of the machine into the factory and the entry of life into history, making both seem contingent. The entry of the machine into the factory was Foucault’s way of particularizing the disciplinary character of power, which in the factory clearly takes shape by disciplining work using technology. In the industrial factory, this discipline is mainly performed against the body. On the other hand, with the entry of life into history, Foucault indicated the productive character that life acquired when it became manageable. I claim that this entry is, precisely, the way to adapt life to work – being exposed to discipline and technology – in order to achieve a valuable result.

Like no other institution, the factory embodies the bipolar force distinguished by Foucault (Foucault, 1990; pp. 135–59, see also 2003; pp. 239–64) and introduced in modernity for making life productive. Foucault referred to an ‘anatomy-power’ that directs its force over the life of the body as an individual entity (a subject) and to a ‘bio-power’ that focuses on the life of the human species: ‘...a body with so many heads, a multiple body, population as a whole.’ (2003; p. 245). Hence, the factory alone cannot represent the set of institutions through which power is stratified –such as schools, prisons, hospitals or asylums (see Foucault, 1995; pp. 37–54) –, yet it is the most revealing in terms of analyzing the organization of this double and juxtaposed power over life –anatomic and biological – through work, while both were ‘enhanced’ in the name of productivity. Indeed, in an exemplary way the factory unites the exercise of discipline and biopower over the individual subject and over the population as a whole. It will do so by confronting machine and subject in order to maximize production, but also through the

reorganization of space, time and socialization that expands throughout history and across territories with the aim of spreading global control, having today reached a totalization.

Besides this, the case of the factory is unique to the understanding of the role of technology in production and in relation to work and life, all the more so if we look to the agency between machines, humans and value, and its becoming archetypal. In its industrial stage, the factory is the first expression for referring to discipline and normalization mediated through machines. It first exercised discipline over our bodies, and later over our thought and knowledge, finally capturing our souls, our sociality and our lives, as Berardi constantly reminds us in writings such as *The Soul at Work*. (see, e.g., Berardi, 2009a)

The drama in here cannot be reduced to thinking that in the factory the subject and society as a whole are disciplined. The hardest part of what this entails – and this is related as well to the reasons for thinking of an archetype – is to realise that while working we are producing and reproducing these forces over the life of the subject and of society. Production in factories has become archetypal so as to successfully favour the capitalist project. Hence, there is no possible exteriority. Life is captured by work and work only produces capital by deteriorating life.

Today, work, life and technology have revealed themselves as the most efficient constituencies for regulating and deregulating society through production. Working as employees – or even as free workers, i.e., the so-called ‘net slaves’<sup>10</sup> – has gone from the exchange of our abilities and knowledge in a fixed amount of space and time to the total precarization in which life is put to work 24/7: a life that is, a priori, already precarious.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Terranova describes the *net-slave* as a ‘free’ worker with no wages, whose activity takes place on the global net. They do work that companies have ‘externalized’ to the users of the web 2.0. It is an unpaid and undirected labour yet controlled: i.e., video game evaluation, beta-testing user or user technical assistance. (Terranova, 2010; p. 156)

<sup>11</sup> Precarity is an English neologism coming from the French *precarité* that has been in use since the 80s but expanded more recently with the use made by European activist movements and protests (EuroMayDay 2004: Milan and Barcelona) and 2005 (in seventeen European cities), Precarity Ping Pong (London, October 2004), the International Meeting of the Precariat (Berlin, January 2005), and Precair Forum (Amsterdam, February 2005) (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005) It has been used in order to name a general and progressive situation of deterioration and dispossession of one’s own life against changes in work conditions introduced since post-Fordist labour organization. Surpassing labour, which actually should be done since ‘life and work tend to get confused’, Judith Butler in *Precarious Life* (2004) and Isabel Lorey in *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious* (2015) have theorized about the term adding a notion intrinsic to life referring to precariousness. According to Lorey, who refers to Butler, precariousness is a condition intrinsic to life since our bodies, because they are finite, are precarious. This distinction accentuates the necessity of something external to us – others, institutions and or sustained and sustainable environments – ensuring in some way such a protection. A

This being our general condition more often than not, more than ever we have the right to claim that ‘life is what they owe to us’. (EZLN, 1997, see also Comité Invisible, 2015; pp. 49–55)

### **Human-machinic agency: technics and technology**

One of the challenges of this thesis is to render the archetype of modern production and show how the industrial factory has set up its basic patterns, ensuring that work and life were taken as hostages; work only increasing productivity by diminishing our capacity for transforming life.<sup>12</sup> An archetype should be understood as a model par excellence to which we generally pay allegiance in an unconscious manner and hence it exercises a ‘universalized’ force on society. In this research, to render the archetype means to give materialization to its fundamental characteristics and to understand better how it operates. And, in so doing, identify patterns that might resemble it without us noticing it.

From what has been said so far, it can be deduced that modernity is decisive insofar as it is the key period during which the power of production is transferred to humans. In return, they no longer have to worry about ‘surviving’, only about making life more productive through work. The ideal scenario for such an achievement is the factory, where machines enter with the promise of the perfect alliance to help men and women in this new resurgence. Below, we will see how the factory convened forces and relations and how these affected the subject, disciplining the body (and later language and socialization) by managing production through work and against life, and following the imperatives of productivity.

Consider the entry of the artisans into the factory, since this operation restructured many aspects of their previous work and life conditions. Moving production to factories ‘divorced workers from their means of production’, as Marx argued. (1996 [1967], Vol I; pp. 530–32) It untied artisans from their own work space, often part of their own living

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body, a life is precarious and needs protection and care for living through life. Precariousness relates not to life as a political ‘object’ but, more specifically, to the condition of its existence. (Lorey, 2015; p. 21)

<sup>12</sup> The importance of looking at work as a power to transform nature and life instead of reducing it to only a source of economic wealth was constantly defended by Marx and Engels. Engels (1996 [1895]) has a text in which he developed his own perspective and which we will visit in more detail later on this thesis.

space. It negated their autonomy to decide their own working schedules and also the possibility of managing their knowledge experience and relationality with the product they manufactured. The factory drove production, as Marx extensively detailed in his works (see, e.g., Marx, 1996 [1867]), under principles of alienation and punishment that are constitutive of a model of production that, I would claim, still persists today.

The thinking of philosopher on technology Gilbert Simondon (more specifically, his notions on technics and technology developed in the fifties and sixties) is of help in understanding in more detail some of the relevant aspects generated by the move into factories, and particularly in qualifying the new agency that came between the artisans who were becoming operators, the tools becoming machines and value becoming surplus value. Simondon's (2012[1961]) differentiation between tools – commonly used in workshops – and machines – as generally used in factories – would be explanatory for the formation of the human-machine agency and the role that each 'actor' played within it. Moreover and, as if it couldn't be otherwise, it would become clear how, in the factory, technology happens to be 'enhanced' by productivity.

In order to counter as well as to contextualize the value of Simondon's contribution, it should be said that, in general terms, the writings of the epoch that report the transformations of manual labour into the manufactured often emphasize the enthusiasm with which the introduction of machines was greeted due to their indisputed efficiency. As such, once machines became exemplary inventions they were mostly addressed in relation to their particular standalone abilities without considering what these transformations meant for workers or for mankind, especially with regard to how their implementation affected the workers technics for transforming nature, the world and their lives.

Descriptive works engaging with the activity in factories, like those of Charles Babbage, are examples of this kind of 'technological determinism'. In *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures* (1846 [1835]), Babbage explains how tools are more likely to be transformed into machines, and machines to be improved more and more, if divisions, simplifications and repetitions of tasks were to be incorporated in production. Although being a philosopher and mechanical engineer, Babbage's argument is clearly raised from a biased viewpoint that only takes into account the objectives of an efficient production. I include just one example of Babbage's concern with tools and machines. In

this passage we can see how he promotes divisions in production, which, in his view, were to benefit the transformation of tools into machines:

When each process, by which any article is produced, is the sole occupation of one individual his whole attention being devoted to a very limited and simple operation, improvements in the form of his tools, or in the mode of using them, are much more likely to occur to his mind, than if it were distracted by a greater variety of circumstances. Such an improvement in the tool is generally the first step towards a machine. (Babbage, 1846; p. 173)

Gilbert Simondon's (2012[1961]) contemporary analysis in 'Technical Mentality', certainly not driven by the mercantilist spirit of the industrial period, is thus illuminating because it opens up ways to reconsider and to point at some of the transformations that were then convened affecting both workers and machines. Simondon offers a perspective that focuses precisely on what happened to the relation between human and machine at the very moment that the later is incorporated into the new cycles of work production. This is indeed important since it allows for an understanding of the role that the machine came to occupy with respect to the worker.

Early modernity – already in manufacturing workshops – is when, according to Simondon (2012; p. 6), the birth of the technical object implies the inauguration of a continuous, 'parasitic' relationship between machine and human information. In order to explain this, Simondon elaborates his definition of a technical object looking upon the distinction of workers' relation with tools and with machines. His approach differentiates this relation throughout the type of transference of information that happens among them.

For Simondon (2012; pp. 6–8), in the work of artisans there is only one source of information composed by energy/force and knowledge/information that is transferred to the tools via their bodies, improving their knowledge through experience. When men and women began working with machines in the factory the source of information divided: nature provided the energy/force to the machine – an infinite reserve of considerable power – and workers provided the information – a dissociated information given at different times and by different individuals or groups.

Simondon (2012) identifies the very moment in which the technical becomes

technological with this division between energy/force and knowledge/information. The introduction of steam-powered machines exemplifies this bifurcation. Once machines were introduced into factories, workers had to pair with them, employing their knowledge, delivering it continuously and adapting it to the new speed of production. What Simondon points to deserves some clarification. It must be highlighted that men and women's technical being, that which is crucial for defining their capability to shape or transform, is disrupted – Marx would say estranged or alienated – by this apparently simple operation; one that, of course, only takes account of economic criteria. This entails complexities since in this move two things conflate: the interruption of our technical being and the moment technical objects become technological. The development of our technical being, which should have been *supported* by machines, instead finds itself aggressively *intervened*, forcing a relationship of economic and productive tyranny.

Based on the division between energy and information, Simondon's description reveals the constituent importance that information is going to play in the organization of the system of production from the very beginning of the industrial factory and throughout all the subsequent factories in which production would take place. Simondon's division puts into question Marx's thinking about the new relationality between human and machine that was being inaugurated in the factory. Marx did not believe there could be any relation of continuity between tools, machines and workers being established by information. He didn't consider information as a source of alienation, something unthinkable today. Marx's analysis did not recognise information as a connector: rather, he saw it as something that is delivered once and forever at the outset, as he states in the chapter dedicated to machinery and modern industry in *Capital* (see Marx, 1996 [1877]; pp. 261–93):

The distinction between these tools and the body proper of the machine, exists from their very birth; for they continue for the most part to be produced by handicraft, or by manufacture, and are afterwards fitted into the body of the machine, which is the product of machinery. The machine proper is therefore a mechanism that, after being set in motion, performs with its tools the same operations that were formerly done by the workman with similar tools. Whether the motive power is derived from man, or from some other machine, makes no difference in this respect. From the moment that the tool proper is taken from man, and fitted into a mechanism, a machine takes the place of a mere

implement. Marx (1996 [1867]; p. 262)

One of the examples that Simondon uses in order to illustrate the divide of information operating in this transition of production is the potter artisan. As Simondon sees it, the potter is an anticipation of the industrial machine and as such can help counter Marx's understanding of tools and machines as something disconnected from the worker, rather sensing them as the agency they compose together. According to Simondon (2012; p. 6), potters were still considered artisans since both energy and information were delivered from their body. But if one thinks of potters sitting at their wheels using their hands as the source of information and their feet as the source of energy, the division can be clearly pictured as the projection of imminent and inevitable change. For the wheel read any type of machine: the industrial and mechanical power loom, or cognitive and electronic computer. When this single working unit – still (pre)machinic – is connected to a natural source of energy, and each particular operation gets simplified (division of labour), linked and set in motion by different individuals (assembly-line), one is picturing the industrial factory composed of workers and machines and the various sources of information.

### **Parasitism and punishment: enhancing technology**

*Technicization through calculation drives Western knowledge down a path that leads to a forgetting of its origin, which is also a forgetting of its truth.*

Stiegler, 1998; p. 3

Before discussing in next chapter how the archetype of the industrial factory expands and accompanies the different expressions of capitalism throughout our recent history, I will introduce and explain at least two other relevant characteristics of the archetype of production established by the industrial factory. In the previous section, I acknowledge how the agency between human-machine is constituted by the advent of factorial production. Recalling Simondon and Stiegler's quote above, I mentioned, in passing, that this new type of relation was a parasitic one: something that is of the utmost relevance and which needs further clarification.

Plugging the machine into an unlimited supply of energy and diverting the sources of information put in motion a whole set of consequences that will have an effect on the

composition of the information delivered by workers and on the workers themselves. We will see how the ‘*living information* of the worker turns into *dead information* crystallized by the machine’ (Marx quoted by Pasquinelli, 2011; p. 6) since its ultimate use is designed only to accomplish maximization in production. In factories, workers had limited control over the process of production and this substantially changed their experience and the development of their capacities, something that affected their muscular force, sensorial capacities, cultivation of experience, clear vision of an aim, the concrete materiality of their work, approachable scale, the relation between the act of work and the conditions of use of the product to be produced, and so on and so forth.

When the machine enters the factory, men and women are destined to develop a relationship with it based only on self-exploitation. For the artisans, their tool was an extension of their body, which meant that each of their singular gestures were also their tool’s gesture (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993[1964]; pp. 251–55). Humans and tools shared a ‘language’ that found completion in the satisfaction of a job well done.<sup>13</sup> In the factory, when humans work with machines they lose the trace of their own gesture, which gradually disappears while that of the machine expands. The tool has been transformed into a machine and the workers incarnate its prolongation. After all, this is the automaton of the factory, a gigantic set of machines plugged into a great energy provider, where complementary human organisms help to accomplish tasks.

More recently, German philosopher Byun-Chul Han (2012, pp. 9–10), in the prologue to *La sociedad del cansancio (The Burnout Society)* titled ‘The Tired Prometheus’, uses the myth of Prometheus to explain how the continuous exaltation of productivity only produces fatigue. Although this fatigue, Han claims, can be transformed into a healing process. A myth often has more than one version, and different versions of the Prometheus myth will help me to approach the transcendental meaning dwelling in the transformation of workers into machine prolongations and its consequences.

The ancient myth tells that Prometheus, knowing that humans were the weakest animals on earth, steals fire from the god Zeus and offers it to mankind to help in life’s struggle. Prometheus not only gave this gift to humans for protection but also taught them the skill of metalwork. The story explains that the Gods, as punishment for his betraying their

<sup>13</sup> Leroi-Gourhan (1993) in his essay ‘Gesture and Speech’ describes in depth how the evolution of the human species and the objects and tools it developed were continuously interrelated. Leroi-Gourhan’s thinking implies that objects and artefacts are a kind of an evolutionary memory in human transformation.



secrets, bound Prometheus to a rock far away in the Caucasus and sent eagles to feed on his liver, being the only organ able to naturally regenerate itself. So the eagles would return to feed ad infinitum.

Han explains how the present form of exploitation is actually a culmination of what Foucault described as a disciplinarian power, which began to be exercised, as we have seen already, in early modernity. Today such a power is not delivered from an external force but from within ourselves. Han interprets the eagle that eats the liver as Prometheus' alter ego. We have become our own enemy: an eternal punishment from which we cannot escape and which follows a regime of self-exploitation. We discipline ourselves as performing machines. This is, I would say, the ultimate expression of positivity applied in terms of productivity, concerning both work and life but also technology.

The ancient myth concludes by telling that Prometheus is finally forgiven, eventually released and redeemed by the gods. Yet, Han chooses a version put forward by Kafka<sup>14</sup> to conclude his story. Here, there was no forgiveness. Rather, the 'Gods got tired: the eagles got tired as well; and the wounds got closed of exhaustion'. (p. 10) Hence, Han finds a healing process in tiredness.<sup>15</sup>

In my view, Prometheus' punishment explains not only workers actual form of exploitation, but also the one performed in early modernity by the industrial factory. We can recall the wheel of the potter made machine in the factory. The machine needs our information to produce growth, and we are constantly obliged to renew this information. If the liver didn't grow, we would be able to end the punishment. But, it does grow, and its pain is a silent pain.

One of the other endings that Kafka (Singh, 2004; pp. 84–85 and Kafka, 1961) gave to the myth, lends further interpretations to the end of the story. According to Kafka, the eagles are unrelenting, the pain unendurable. Prometheus presses himself against the rock to which he is bound, increasingly penetrating it until he becomes this mountain rock. His becoming one with the rock reminds us of Marazzi's (2007 ; n.p., 2008; pp. 44, 116–17) idea of the body becoming a machine when the machine's functions are transposed to the

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<sup>14</sup> The modern version of Prometheus myth offered by Kafka ignores the ancient version in which Prometheus is finally forgiven, eventually released and redeemed by the gods. He offers a second, third and a fourth version to the original. See Singh, 2004; p. 84–85 and Kafka, 1961.

<sup>15</sup> This notion of exhaustion seen as a possible path to find cure in capitalism is explored by Franco Berardi, see Berardi, 2011; pp. 95–129.

body: at which point we become the machine and our life its surplus value. The production of ‘man by means of man’ (2008; p. 44) being the machine inside us, or rather, one with us.

Throughout the sixties and seventies, Deleuze and Guattari (1985b, 2005), in their theoretical project of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, made a valuable attempt to re-conceptualize the human-machinic agency and to liberate society from the restrictive archetype imposed in production by the industrial factory that always reproduces an enslavement to alienation. Their proposal was to look for a ‘technological vitalism’ (1985b; p. 409) where the biological and the technical converged to fulfil each other’s desire. They imagined the ‘mechanosphere’ and the ‘biosphere’ superimposing and interpolating, producing multiplications and concatenations, compositions and re-compositions, ‘materiality, natural or artificial, and both simultaneously; matter in movement, in flux, in variation, matter as a conveyor of singularities and traits of expression’. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1985b; *ibid.*)

It should be considered as a sign of permanence of an archetype that, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, Gerald Raunig (2008) finds the need to remind us in his symbolic book *A Thousand Machines*, and what Deleuze and Guattari proposed with a kind of insistence, that it ‘is no longer a question of confronting humans and machines to evaluate their correspondences, their extensions, their possible or impossible substitutions, but to make them communicate with one another, show how the man forms a part with the machine, or with anything else to build a machine’. (Deleuze and Guattari quoted by Raunig, 2008; p. 35; translation: Aileen Derieg)

This particular approach to the machinic is what the factory inaugurates as a potentiality – and this should be remembered for the analysis in coming chapters –, although it is also what the archetype of production cancelled at the very same moment. It cancelled rather than empowered it in the name of maximization and productivity since the potentiality conveyed by the factory, following Deleuze and Guattari, was never developed as such in the industrial factory; nor was it developed later, once workers were destined to end as mountain rocks. In the archetype of production, machines – as we saw throughout this chapter – ‘confront the worker as a pre-existing material condition of production’. (MacKenzie, 1984; p. 487) Humans become mere operators functioning as part of a larger system of management.

Since the tool became technological in the first industrialisation, labour processes have taken place through the relation of workers and machines driven by productivity. Such a relation has not been set up according to subjective objectives, neither has it been based on desire. As such, it hardly correlates with the machinic concept proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Quite the contrary. Our system of production is based on total alienation wherein workers invariably sacrifice their knowledge/information by ceding it to the machine – which is only external to them at the beginning, as demonstrated by the myth –, with which their knowledge/information does not bond in the search for a common desire or a synergy.

As mentioned earlier with reference to Simondon (2012; *ibid.*), the machine becomes a double parasite – of nature and of human beings – with only one function: to provide maximization, as Marx would put it. From this point on, the handing over of their tools by the artisans will be transformed into a relationship based on ‘punishment’. The potter’s wheel that becomes a machine for the workers is what the eagle became for Prometheus: a punishment against himself, a permanent debilitation that erodes but does not kill, a silent pain that allows to work but does not fulfil.

### **The technological lineage: continuities and discontinuities**

*The development of the means of labour into machinery is not an accidental moment of capital, but is rather the historical reshaping of the traditional, inherited means of labour into a form adequate to capital.*

Marx, 1973; p. 622

It is important to remember that the concept of the factory is that for which I consider the industrial factory introduces an archetype, and that this is very much based on the emergence of the agency between human-machine-value and its organization under parameters of scientific management where work and life invariably function under conditions of productivity alone.

After exploring how machines, by employing information ‘in a certain manner’, become central to such an organization, it is important to also acknowledge that with the industrial factory a technological lineage was inaugurated in modern production. And this is not, as Marx claims in the above quote, an accidental moment in history, but a form in which

capital adjusts production.

In previous sections, I have pointed to how the technical being of workers comes to be 'harmed'. But it is not the technical being alone, for once the workers enter the production process in factories they have to suppress their capacities for transforming the world due to the dominance of the machinic character inscribed in the agency between human-machine-value. However, to understand how the factory built its genealogy – and thereby gives continuity to the archetype of production, contributes to the deterioration of men and women's condition and also manages the means of technology – some attention should still be directed to the technological genesis of the factory.

In order to make understandable what a technological lineage means in relation to the factory, I will draw upon Simondon once again, with an idea I have borrowed from him. Simondon's approach for understanding the 'essence' of technology was important for Deleuze and Guattari in their attempt to 'constitute an immanent political economy' (Pasquinelli, 2011; p. 10), in which desire and a more relational approach to machines would have to be considered as forces in production. Simondon intended to sensitize society with the idea that any technical reality is also a human reality, a view that influenced the work of Deleuze and Guattari (see, e.g., Deleuze and Guattari, 2005; pp. 408–11).

In Simondon's work *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects* (1980 [1958]), and here the title already hints at what is to come, he first introduces the concept of the 'technical essence' in order that we can later understand what constitutes a technological lineage, since, as he says, 'the beginning of a lineage of technical objects is marked by a technical essence'. (p. 38) Simondon conceives the 'technical essence' as the very first invention, the 'absolute origin' of a technical object-machine. And once the absolute origin is determined, the technical object-machine improves 'by engendering a family'. Simondon gives the gas engine as an example of a first origin, and the petrol and diesel engines as its 'engendered family'. (p. 37) Simondon also explains the details that define an 'absolute origin'. He notes that it is distinguished by the fact that 'it remains stable all through the course of evolution and that, further, it not only remains stable but is ever capable of producing structures and functions by internal development and progressive saturation'. (p. 37)

If we also pursue Simondon's insight into the origin and progression of the technical object, recalling what was said earlier about the moment in which a tool becomes a machine, it is reasonable to conceive the early stages of the industrial factory as the 'technical essence' or the 'absolute origin' in the history of 'man' as producer. It follows that this factory is the one that 'engenders a family' by improving the series of technical objects that will come to constitute the technological lineage of production. The archetype of production set by the industrial factory, in which production is always organised around the machine, will remain stable as 'the absolute origin', although it will also produce structures and functions by internal development and progressive saturations.

If the 'absolute origin' is established when the sources of information are divided, as we have seen, this coincides with the moment in which information starts to be 'valorised' using machines and following the criteria of an economy based on productivity. Therefore, in this event two instances conflate. The first is the inauguration of a technological lineage in production made visible with the industrial factory. The second is information becoming the relay in production, not only between humans and machines, but also between the different technical objects that engender the family.

In his works dedicated to exploring the 'technical composition of capitalism', media philosopher Matteo Pasquinelli (2011, 2015a) points to these concerns with a particular urgency, which he makes explicit when highlighting the need to uncover the technological 'essence' of production managed by the capitalist project. In his words: '...there is a common ground missing between media studies and political economy, Turing machines and Marxism.' (p. 4) An agenda that he tries to address by building, or rather by making visible, the conceptual bridge between the notion of information in cybernetics and the notion of value in Marxism. He offers an explanation with further examples that reinforce the existence of the 'engendered family of technical objects-machines' that have been organising labour production in factories throughout history.

According to Pasquinelli (2011), the Jacquard loom was the first and the forerunner of the linguistic machines around which work will be organized in the diffuse factory. The Jacquard loom was invented in 1801 by Joseph Marie Jacquard and was the first machine to function with chains of punched cards almost identical to those that IBM will standardize as data storage devices in the second half of the twentieth century. (p. 3) Pasquinelli also raises the case of Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace, both of whom are

credited with inventing the algorithm in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Algorithms were employed in Babbage's Analytical Engine, which is regarded as the first computational machine. And algorithms are, in the words of Pasquinelli, today's best example 'of the inner machinic logic of information machines' and have been widely used for maximizing production in the social factory. (Pasquinelli, 2011; p. 20)

But if there is a lineage constituted by technical objects, and information is always the relay between them, why is it necessary to construct a bridge between the different technical objects as Pasquinelli seems to claim? Some answers can be found in Simondon's technical mentality. If the technical essence is the foundation, the 'absolute origin', what follows are what Simondon calls 'continuous inventions' – minor optimizations that take place as a progressive realization – and 'discontinuous inventions' – those occurring when there is a saturation in the system due to the accumulation of minor optimizations. 'This discontinuous invention,' explains Simondon, 'is that in which the technical object really "concretizes" itself as reality of a progress.' (p. 216) In other words, the reality of a progress is concretized only after saturation in the system occurs, and only then does it become visible as a perceptible change.

If we continue to consider the industrial factory as the absolute origin that engenders the family of technical objects that create the technological lineage of production, we have to assume as well that the history of the factory and its lineage will be constituted by 'continuous inventions' – minor optimizations that take place as a progressive realization – and 'discontinuous inventions' – those occurring when there is a saturation in the system. And this means that the archetype of production, as a technical reality and the absolute origin of the industrial factory, is a continuity that only concretizes after a progress caused by a saturation in the system of production made visible in the different factories, their machines and the agency organised around them.

## CHAPTER 2

### **The diffuse and social factory: the archetype expands**

If there is a time specially marked by consecutive phases of adaptations in labour production processes that confirms the continuity of an archetype of production, it is our most recent decades. Throughout this chapter I present these decades, not so much in opposition to the forms of production of the industrial factory, as they were first enunciated by the thinkers of the Operaism (Panzieri, Tronti, Negri, Bologna and Alquati), but as examples that indicate how, precisely, the archetype of production determined by the industrial factory expands. We will see how it expresses its continuities in the ‘concretization’ of its discontinuities, firstly with the ‘diffuse factory’ (Lazzarato/Negri, 2001 [1994]; n.p.) and later with the ‘social factory’ (Tronti, 1962; p.9). This layout will serve to draw the technological lineage of the industrial factory and recognize the archetype in its ‘engendered family’, so making more explicit the necessity for re-thinking the organization of production.

The society of the 1960s and seventies has been historically recognized for being particularly active in contesting the alienating methods of work organization that the factory has imposed since the Industrial Revolution. Its claims obviously contrast with the illusion of the scientific and machinicistic thought that shaped the first factory. Exiting the industrial factory as a refusal to work became a movement of emancipation against the generalized dehumanization that involved the alienating work with heavy machines. However, moving from the materiality of the industrial production of commodities to the immaterial production of knowledge and services implied a ‘false liberation’ that has been problematized by many of the post-Operaist thinkers (Lazzarato, Negri, Berardi, Marazzi, Virno). The complexities of the fight to resist the dominant alienation imposed over the worker were channelled towards thinking that a ‘way out’ could be found if our intellectual capacities were ‘enhanced’ outside the walls of the factory and away of its heavy machinic determinism.

In fact, we failed to see that the industrial factory set a powerful archetype that put at stake the proper development of our technical being, which was then sacrificed by ‘parasiting’ our manual or body skills; an archetype that could equally behave against our intellectual and social skills. What the entry into the factory cancelled out, as we saw in



the previous chapter, was the possibility of building a non-parasitic human-machine relationship in production. What prevented such a development was, as I have also explained, the imposition of productivity and growth over work and life. The industrial factory is therefore a fundamental reference to this impossibility and indeed for that reason it represents an archetype. Wherever a human-machine relationship is reproduced under these conditions, the effects of the factory will be reproduced as well, even outside its walls. It does not matter what 'raw material' is put into the production circuit. It will always be information that men and women introduce and which the machine parasites. To introduce it, we use our bodies, our knowledge and our socialization, depending on the machine of each historical moment and the adaptations that suit its functionality, which will always be designed through specific forms of scientific management.

Lazzarato (2006 a; p. 105) criticized the workers' movement that led to the transformation from a Fordist to a post-Fordist labour organization for being unable to imagine a process different to that based on work, with which to transform the world. The workers' movement has come to represent the clearest example of work resistance that counters the effects of capitalism by various modes of refusing to work. Even today, when there is no longer work but life that works, the worker still resists and refuses life. This resistance to work has kept capitalism actively precarizing life until today. In it, production and consumption have become an economy that only erases their value as human activities. This holds true for workers that use their muscular force in the industrial factory, for those using their 'intellectual' force in the diffuse factory, as well as for the 'free' workers that use their lives to produce surplus-labour (labour without doing any work) in the worldwide social factory. As Steve Wright claimed, we still face the task of addressing the implications for a project that 'aims at escaping the capital relation altogether, rather than surviving within it as amenably as possible'. (Wright, 2006; n.p.)

If the industrial factory of Fordism put the emphasis on disciplining our bodies, the factory of post-Fordism will discipline our brains and spirits: our souls. (Lazzarato, 2006 a, Berardi 2009 a) I have already analyzed some of the specificities of production in the industrial factory, placing its birth as a necessary tool for the expansion of the capitalist project, the factory being the inauguration of a technological lineage. Since the seventies, production has overcome mutations and its lineage has operated variations through a series of 'discontinuous inventions', 'concretized' in the computational machine and the Internet. The regime of economy will use production for its ends transforming the

industrial factory into the ‘diffuse factory’ of knowledge production (Lazzarato/Negri, 2001 [1994]; n.p.) and eventually into the network ‘social factory’. (Tronti, *ibid.*) We will see through the evolution of a post-Fordist labour organization how the expansion of the factory totalizes by conquering all spaces of production, consumption, reproduction and life itself. (Tronti, *ibid.*, Marazzi, 2007; n.p., 2008; pp. 44, 116–17)

The whole lineage can be seen as a process of expansive alienation, over our bodies, our cognition, our souls and life. And we have yet to find liberation because production processes always remain subordinated to the logics of productivity and scientific management under the regime of machinic imperatives wherein the domain of the sensible and subjectivation will always be impoverished, favouring instead growth and surplus value. The recognition of the series of expropriations achieved by the capitalist project throughout the history of labour production will help explain how I consider that Cine sin Autor’s factory proposal changes the archetype set by the industrial factory in modernity. This model sees production as an empowering tool with which to restore the expropriation of life.

## **Exiting the factory as resistance**

*The fact that the strike had now extended to activities which had always escaped subversion in the past radically affirmed two of the oldest assertions of the situationist analysis: that the increasing modernization of capitalism entails the proletarianization of an ever-widening portion of the population; and that as the world of commodities extends its power to all aspects of life, it produces everywhere an extension and deepening of the forces that negate it.*

Viénet, 1968; n.p.

The process of transformation from a work production based on the industrial factory to one based on the ‘social factory’ is a progressive change that took from the end of the sixties until now to complete. As we will see below, the sixties and seventies showed quite clearly how the change from an industrial work organization concentrated in the physical space of the factory had to be performed in the attempt to exit the factory. Production would be reorganized in new factories and around new technological innovations. Later, we will analyze the introduction of computing machines in the seventies and eighties, and the expansion of the Internet in the nineties.

The years around May ’68 were a ‘synchronicity previously unheard of in human history’ (Berardi, 2009 a; p. 27) where masses of people – mainly workers and students – harnessed their energies against production and authority: ‘At Berkeley you would mobilize for Vietnam, while in Shanghai there were rallies of solidarity with the Parisian students. In Prague students were fighting against Soviet authoritarianism, while in Milan the enemy was the capitalist state.’ (ibid.) What made this synchronicity so unique were the alliances of sensibilities drawn together in the stand against power. Around the world the resistance of workers against a tendency towards precarization synchronized with student actions against conservatism and with other expressions of antagonism such as the anti-Vietnam war and Black Power movements.

This period saw a change that was incorporated in a global consciousness, as Berardi pointed out, even though the specificities of each country determined precisely how all these movements were manifest. My account of such a relevant period is achieved

primarily by exploring the theoretical ideas of some of the Operaism and post-Operaism thinkers in these decades. Unlike others, these observers embraced these historic events as part as their basis for a re-conceptualization of work – through Marx – with which to envision a revolutionary project against capitalism.

Mario Tronti, one of the Italian philosophers from Operaism, in a text written in the early sixties – “Factory and Society” (1962) – advanced the problem that had to be faced once the form of production of the capitalist project had reached all spheres of society, invading the entire network of social relations. ‘The whole of society,’ he wrote, ‘exists as a function of the factory and the factory extends its exclusive domination over the whole of society.’ (Tronti, 1962; p. 9) Tronti’s assessment of the factory was a clear projection of the future of production, and hence similar to Marx’s vision when he said that machinery was the historical reshaping of the means into a form adequate to capital (1996, [1867]; p. 147–78). However, these concerns were not completely acknowledged until more recently, when for example, Marazzi defined the anthropogenic model of production. (2007; n.p., 2008; pp. 44, 116–17)

The industrial factory inaugurated an archetype of production and expanded it, expressing its completeness once the means of production had ended up, as we will see, fully using the worker’s power as opposed to the workers fully using the machine’s power. This was shaped from the very beginning of the factory system as we have already seen in the previous chapter. But in order to achieve its maximum expression we need to walk the line drawn by the different factories in recent history.

The first symptoms of a crisis in the industrial model started in France and Italy in the sixties. At the time, Turin was the leading Italian industrial city and home to the country’s largest private company, FIAT. Industrial action against work and authority – which marked the change from a Fordist to a post-Fordist organization – lined up against the mode of production promoted by the model of the industrial factory, in the belief that by confronting machinic automaton and the demands to explore other types of knowledge – more cognitive and intellectual – possibilities for liberating society from the alienating conditions of labour organization in factories would open up. (Wright, 2002; pp. 76–101) Young people went so far as to choose poverty or begging over factory work. The statistics for strikes during those years reached previously unknown parameters. All the actions and revolts proclaimed the need to construct a society without classes, hierarchy,

authority and regulations. Open conflicts of all types – legal, illegal and in some cases even violent – were widespread, putting large production units at risk of paralysis. Work was constantly disrupted and the costs of such disruptions were astronomical. (Boltanski/Chiapello, 2005; pp. 169–77)

As part of the Operaist movement, the sociologist and activist Romano Alquati (1961) published a series of texts in *Quaderni Rossi*: coming out of his militant research at the Olivetti factory in Ivrea, these shed light on the principles underpinning the workers' struggles in Turin. He tells how at the beginning of the sixties new forms of labour resistance started to take shape, especially among the younger generation of workers whose demands were not concerned, as in previous years, with requests for wage increases. The workers advising the union officials said: 'OK, but don't pull a stunt like the one in '52 or '54.' (Alquati, 1962/63) The previous decades had been marked by wages increases but also by a deterioration in working conditions: union leaders were policing the workforce more than standing up for the rights of the workers. The sixties initiated a series of demands for more security and protection, more quality, satisfaction and 'freedom' against the imperative rationalization of work.

The passages that Alquati published in the sixties as conclusions to his visit to the factory show this change in attitude. Workers' claims were directly related to the impossibility of obtaining any satisfaction from a production process that was ruled by scientific efficiency and management for the mass production of commodities.

These struggles have already taught the comrades at Ivrea that the process of development, the increase in consumption, and the rise in living standards have not resolved the workers' problems. This is so not only because the bogus nature of status symbols etc. is revealed daily through the contradictions of the company system, or because the increase in consumption on a merely quantitative level has fallen apart, and the qualitative improvement that the system offers is not "human" but rather reified, alienating. More than this, it is so precisely because it is "realized" by a system of exploitation based upon the objectivism of calculation and upon techniques of rationalization. These fetishize themselves continuously in new value, because development leads the system to fuse [*fondersi*] with a rationalization that intervenes and dominates and characterizes every aspect of social life, where all relationships are shaped on company templates [*moduli*], so

that rationalization itself participates in the same charismatic power of the symbol of domination that remains its very soul: profit. (Alquati, 1962/63; n.p.)

May '68 has come to represent a historic alliance between the actions coming from young students already working or still in higher education and those of industrial workers. During the previous decades, a programme of mass education had been pursued by the welfare state. Enrolment at universities increased from 123,000 in 1946 to 202,000 in 1961, soaring to 514,000 in 1968. (Boltanski/Chiapello, 2005; p. 170) The end of the sixties came to represent a unification of students and factory workers<sup>16</sup> that forged a new mass cultural and intellectual class, also called the 'diffuse intellectuality'. (Vercellone, 2007; pp. 16, 26–29) This new social body fought against authority – 'The bosses can hardly pay more; but they can disappear' – and defended a wish for autonomy – 'abolition of wage labour, of commodity production, and of the state'. (Viénet and the Situationist International, 1968; n.p.)<sup>17</sup>

In the mid-seventies, industrial production throughout Europe had to deal with strikes, revolts and worker absenteeism, while the strikers' complains were equally focused on subjectivity, environment, discipline and regimented work. They were generally more intense in the car industries, where automation had a dramatic impact. During 1974 and 1975, the first large restructurings in the motor industry were taking place in Milan as a response to this social unrest. Massive layoffs and unemployment insurance helped reduce the scale of the factories. Within just a few years, only a fraction of the big factories remained, with the rest breaking into many small service companies or even sole workers that started giving shape to the "diffuse factory". (Lazzarato/Negri, 2001) In the remaining industrial factories, many of the workers' tasks were taken over by automatons, while others were outsourced. However, these transformations only appeared to

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<sup>16</sup> Among workers in the factory and within the debates of class composition there were some thinkers from Operaism, Bologna and Cialfoni who saw the necessity to encourage the inclusion of the specialized technician workers as part of the new diffuse intellectuality that was to form the new political subject. For, Bologna and Cialfoni, they were the link between technology and capital and therefore important for the revolutionary project that was being drawn in these years against, precisely, capitalism. (See Wright, 2002; pp. 76–101) I think these attempts, that were not settled, could have been enormously significant in the task of reconsidering the role of technology in production. This turns more radical if we consider that, according to the analysis of Comité Invisible (2014; pp. 42 and 43), today, the engineer – and not to the economist – is the key figure of capitalism.

<sup>17</sup> René Viénet was one of the intellectuals involved in the Situationist International, a militant intellectual movement created in 1957 that influenced the formation of the claims, revolts and events of May '68 in Paris. Viénet published a book and a Manifest with the same name – *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupations Movement, France, May '68* – in which he called up the international proletariats for the occupation of factories and public buildings throughout the country seeking a real transformation of life and fighting against capital's regime. The most known figures of this movement were Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem.

undermine the industrial factory, since its production relocated to developing countries where capitalism again sought to increase output.

*Refusal to work as a refusal of discipline* was the motto: ‘...workers refused the effort and repetitiveness of mechanical labour, thus forcing companies to keep restructuring.’

(Berardi, 2011; p. 86) The huge reaction against working conditions in the factory caused society to project the idea that its problems were contained within the factory and that an exodus from those ‘fairy palaces’ would provide a change in the organization of working conditions. They were right in thinking that the origins of their problems lay in the factories and their actions did result in reorganizations, but the whole problematic was very much deeper than was then believed. Contrary to the intentions of the moment, exiting the factory provided the perfect strategy to expand its archetype of production, over more terrains of life, using work as its means.

Regardless of the outcome, the events of these decades proved to be crucial for understanding the mutations that capitalism expresses throughout labour reorganization, which, as I have defended in the previous chapter, has become the major channel for managing society at large. Today we know, thanks to extensive conceptualizations about the behaviour and mutations of capitalism (ex. Holmes, 2002; n.p., Pasquinelli, 2008; ex. p. 18–30) that workers’ resistance is the key element in human progress and freedom, as well as an accelerator for achieving new technics of scientific management performed across the board in new technological adaptations.

The thinkers of the post-Operaism movement came to recognize the ambivalences and contradictions entailed in any exercise of resistance, since, while necessary for the transformation of existing conditions, it paradoxically functioned as the perfect alliance for shaping the new alienating conditions of work. Resistance was necessary in order to make visible the alienation that the worker suffered as a consequence of the organization of productive work. But, it was also its recognition and its exercise that served to channel capital’s responses through new adaptations to keep up productivity and growth. According to these two apparently unquestionable parameters the archetype of production was shaped in the very first factories and there it seems they are doomed to remain. Each factory adaptation is meant to drive production closer to the total capture of life through work, as Tronti recognized.

Today, we have enough distance to recognize that the move from a ‘heavy’ to a ‘diffuse’ industry was the strategy capital performed through production and our resistance provided the next stage for its expansion. Curiously enough, and contrary to the post-Operaist thinkers’ motto for resistance, we have never truly stopped working radically, not even when it seems that capitalism is ‘abandoning work’ as a means of controlling society, once the stage where this can be accomplished directly through living has been reached. And it has been in the transition through the different cycles of resisting work in factories that workers have become subject to, not merely ‘machinic subjection’, but ‘machinic enslavement’. (Deleuze/Guattari, 2005, p. 457) While the worker of the industrial factory formed part with the machine ensuring the process of production and consumption. In today’s social factory, the worker is merely a component of the machine needed for the input and output. (see *ibid.*, pp. 458–89)

### **The diffuse scientific management**

*It is capital that seeks to use the worker's antagonistic will-to-struggle as a motor for its own development.*

Tronti, 2005 [1965]; n.p.

Despite the significant transformations that we are to see in work production in the transition from the industrial to the social factory, we must remember that the archetype created with the industrial factory has neither disappeared nor changed, but rather occupies all the spheres where life remains. Before we continue, it is worth summarizing the most significant components that define the archetype of production as set by the industrial factory. The archetype proposes a model of work in which the human-machinic agency is organized around the machine. Such an organization follows strategies of scientific management in accordance with the machinic abilities. These will always favour productivity and growth by using information as the relay connecting the human-machine agency and the different factory models expanding in a parasitic relation that weakens life through work.

As Simondon affirms, the technological lineage in production shows a line of continuous and discontinuous inventions, the later called ‘concretizations’, which inform the processes of actualization in production. Both, continuous and discontinuous



technological inventions point at the modulations and corrections that the system performs in response to saturations caused by any form of accumulation. In the sixties and seventies a 'saturation of the system' (in terms of social demands rather than market production) occurred and, therefore, in order to re-equilibrate the system once more, a new technical object-machine had to 'enter' the factory and, via innovation, fix the 'maladjustments', reconfiguring production in relation to the properties of this new invention.

Authors such as Pasquinelli (2011, pp. 8, 9) have given visibility to the contingency that exists in the relation between humans and machines once the industrial production condemned both to being the conductors that provide the next 'discontinuous invention' safeguarding the increase of productivity and growth necessary for the successful actualization of the capitalist project. Indeed, the passage from Fordism to post-Fordism is a moment of transformation in production in which such a contingency is made evident, although not resolved but reproduced. Men and women refused to work with the industrial machine due to the parasitic agency established in the formation of the archetype. A new machine will manage production in the diffuse factory, but the agency would again be parasitic. The rejection of the industrial factory model instigated the entry into the diffuse factory. However, this only readdressed how workers' force was to be employed: from now on, it would be deployed more intensively in its cognitive essence, thus demonstrating that the relations of acceptance and refusal that derive from the contingency established by the regime endorsed by surplus value not only persist, but are precisely what benefits capital's evolution.

The computational machine was the technical object introduced and employed in the diffuse factory. By the late fifties, computers were already being introduced in labour processes as – to use Simondon's conceptual vocabulary – the 'discontinuous invention' that 'concretizes' the technological lineage of production, readjusting the problems caused by saturations in the system. As such, the computational machine is the materialization of the series of different continuous inventions that confirm the reality of progress, replacing the industrial machine and ensuring maximization by reproducing the archetype set by the first factory in a new factory.

By the beginning of the eighties, the use of the computer as a medium of work was becoming standard, with rapid changes in technology allowing more sophisticated and

ever cheaper models to enter the home and office markets. In 1977, the University of Berkley, California had released a derivative of the Unix operating system, providing – at comparatively low cost – a set of simple tools to perform a variety of well-defined computational functions. The infrastructure provided through years of industrial production merged into a cognitive production that, via the workers' information, put the computational machine at our disposal in homes and offices, making them part of the new image of the diffuse factory (Lazzarato/Negri, 2001) that some decades later, with the arrival of the Internet, expanded into a worldwide network.

The specificity of the mechanical engine of the industrial factory encompassed force and motion, whereas the specificity of the computational machine of the diffuse factory relies on its capacity for processing and managing information. One works giving shape to things while the other gives shape to language and knowledge communication, although both use information as their relay. The computational machine introduced a numerical dimension that enabled the encoding of workers' knowledge/information into bits within a binary system, again maximizing surplus value through an ever stricter and more precise scientific efficiency. In order to achieve this, the new machine refused any form of existence that couldn't be accounted or ciphered. The new factory didn't produce objects; instead, it commodified data. The factory's appearance increasingly turned into an immaterial entity, with a virtual presence that was more invisible than visible. That is why the materiality of the industrial factory seems to me so useful, since it still provides the possibility of visualizing what the diffuse factory has come to hide.

The new factory organized production to transform immaterial resources into 'useful assets', offering, for example, services instead of products – information, ideas, knowledge, languages, code, affects, etc., – produced by a new range of job types: programmers, call centre workers and financial analysts. But, as Hardt (2009) clarifies, this transformation is a transition 'characterized by mixtures of manual and intellectual, corporeal and cognitive practices' (p. 24) and it should be considered that 'information, ideas and code, for instance, always have some material aspect'. (ibid.) But it is even more important to note that the new qualities that the diffuse production incorporates will gradually become dominant in the majority of work types.

The spectrum of productivity and growth expanded with this transformation by turning what before seemed to be unproductive labour into productive. Marx categorized as

unproductive those labours in which the product is not separable from the act of production: that is, activities without an end product. These are the same activities that now became productive and even ‘activities without work that produce something in speaking and affective performing’. (Lorey, 2016; p. 67; see also Virno, 2004, pp. 53, 54) Such a strategy is actually a continuation of one of the fundamental ideas introduced by the modern notion of work, and an extension of the logic Adam Smith applied to the manufacture of products. In this case, the worker manufactures intangibles by adding value to the ‘object’ into which the work is incorporated. And this demands that all workers in the new factory become commodity dealers of knowledge, language and affects.

Whereas the industrial machine was automatic and repetitive, designed for the automatization of a specific task in order to ‘liberate’ and even improve upon that which the body was able to do, the diffuse machine was analytical and operative (resolutive), designed to think logically as well as semantically in order to ‘liberate’ and improve upon that which the mind was able to accomplish. These forms of automatization have always been announced as promising ‘liberation’, an idea of liberation that Marx (1996 [1867], p. 271) also projected on machines in the workplace. But whatever the intention, the results show that machines have constantly subsumed the worker’s capacities.

The computation machine has reorganized the division of labour in the assembly line of knowledge production, compressing time (duration) as well as expanding through space (the factory is the global network). It is unique not only in being able to make calculations more efficiently, accurately, faster and cheaper than the human brain but also in being able to process, interpret, combine, break, distribute and recombine data and metadata: above all, it does it in real time. Through programming, the computational machine automates the process of subjecting data to analysis, demonstrating its unique analytical capacity by undertaking tasks impossible to accomplish with our brains. And the result of this analysis also helps to automate decision-making, based on the results of previously assigned tasks. All this has generated radical consequences in the sphere of speculation in the stock market, as we will see. Today, technological computation is broadly applied to trading,<sup>18</sup> empowering the financial market as the most successful economies.

<sup>18</sup> The Nasdaq computerized trading system was initially devised as an alternative to the inefficient ‘specialist’ system, which had been the prevalent model for almost a century. The rapid evolution of technology has made the Nasdaq’s electronic trading model the standard for markets worldwide. Nasdaq was created in 1971 by the National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD) to enable investors to trade securities on a computerized, speedy and transparent system. In 2007, it combined with the Scandinavian exchange group OMX to become the Nasdaq OMX group, which is the largest

The task of the performative body eventually disappeared when the factory refurbished and changed its industrial machinery for computation machines, also called ‘linguistic or cognitive machines’ by post-Operaist theoreticians such as Berardi and Marazzi. Actually, the decades that demonstrated the power of virtuality and immateriality transformed the process of material production into processes of verbal communication in which non-verbal forms – gestures, facial expressions, body language, etc., – had no space of reference. The only parts of the body that retained their importance were the fingers to type, the mouth to perform ‘idle talk’<sup>19</sup> and the eyes to see the screen (but not to look at others).<sup>20</sup> These organs mainly functioned as the means with which to work in agency with the machine. Other than that, their function was residual. After all, discipline was not exercised against the physical body but against our mental being. ‘Economics are the method. The objective is to change the heart and the soul,’ declared Margaret Thatcher in an interview held in 1981 for the *Sunday Times*.<sup>21</sup>

Workers adapted to manufacturing intangibles with the mechanisms of the new machines and their assembly lines. The new discipline was characterized by a constant flexibility that helped to mesh with the computing machine’s ability to increase efficiency and maximization. Fragmentation and decentralization distributed employees in small specialized service companies or working as autonomous free employees who were offered maximum flexibility packaged as part-time work, the flexible week, staggered holidays, adjusted retirement, etc. In managerial terms, the disciplined division of labour was substituted by a ‘disciplined’ flexibility that, under the regime of productivity and growth, put to work all the capacities that the ‘diffuse intellectuality’ claimed for their future: the potential for social innovation, creative imagination, free initiative and autonomy.

These values were welcomed onboard and carefully intervened under ‘novel forms of control’ (Boltanski/Chiapello, 2005; p. 432) – less directly and more distributed – based

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exchange company globally. Source: <http://www.investopedia.com/>

<sup>19</sup> According to Virno (2004) in *A Grammar of the Multitude*, idle talk is characteristic of post-Fordist production. It is ‘a contagious and prolific discourse without any solid structure, indifferent to content, which it only touches on from time to time’. (p. 88) In Chapter Five we will see how language is reconsidered in production in view of Cine sin Autor alternative methodology. Virno’s reference to *idle talk* will then be explored in more detail and also in its relation to Heidegger’s use of the same notion.

<sup>20</sup> The screen will be addressed in Chapter Seven as a constitutive element of the cinematographic gesture in CsA’s factorial archetype. The proposal will be to use the screen to recuperate the eyes’ capability for paying attention to others as a way of introducing as well the presence of the body against its disappearance.

<sup>21</sup> See: <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104475>

on administrating flexibility that at first seems to liberate but actually obliges us to accept what is on offer. As such, it was exercised, not by the authority of the bosses, but through self-control and workers against workers. Also, by new market strategies that disguised the appreciation of differences in order to confuse autonomous desires and enslave consumer imagination, as well as by computerized manipulation that allowed real time control from a distance. (ibid.) Creativity turned into ‘creativity on call’ and autonomy into ‘smart self-marketing’. (Von Osten, 2007; n.p.) Against the absence of personal expression, everything had to be touched by self-expression for a self-realization that soon lacked the particularities of the very self whose subjectivity was continually excavated to meet market demands

Today, it can be seen more clearly where the call for exploring everybody’s autonomy and creative capacities went. The idea of liberating the masses – a compact unity constitutive of the Fordist working classes – by empowering the multitude – a group of singularities that despite their differences are able to act and resist collectively, and who are constitutive of the post-Fordist working class (Virno, 2004; pp. 21-3) – was exhausted once it became a strategy, taken and adapted to the regime of productivity in labour production. This entailed each consumer becoming creative and particular only in order to become part of the production process or part of the process of appropriation of surplus value, adopting first the role of a co-operator and collaborator, and finally becoming a consumer that produces and a producer that consumes: the whole of society navigating in an endless circle of production and consumption, just as Tronti predicted.

As we can see, the factory did not disappear in the transition from Fordist to post-Fordist labour organization. Actually, it proved crucial to an understanding of the adaptations that the factory accomplished in order to perpetually favour productivity and its expansion of the process of subsuming life through work. I should recall once again one of the ‘mottos’ of this thesis, that the factory is the archetype of production of the capitalist project, the original model that serves as a guideline to imitate, reproduce or copy.

### **Art entering the factory**

*May '68 has many meanings, but for me the central meaning was the irruption in the public life of elements of the cultural life.*

Touraine, 2008; n.p.

Besides the incorporation of innovative new machines and the accommodation of workers' routines to new scientific management in relation to the qualities of these new machines, there is another element contingent to the processes of discontinuous adaptations that each new factory accentuates. As we saw in the previous chapter, when craftsmen entered the endless divisions of the industrial factory it negated the possibility for improving their specialized skills, while removing any opportunities for producing outside the parameters set by the economy. What happened with the craft-worker in earlier modernity happened as well in the 1970s to the 'diffuse intellectuality'. Moreover, this was destined to happen cyclically in each subsequent adaptation of the factory model whenever workers enter a production that reproduces the archetype defined by the capitalist project. We will see it happening again in the 1990s and in the second decade of the present century: in the latter case, especially regarding the media-creative body.

We saw earlier that for a long time nature embodied the power of production, but that in modernity this was granted, in a very articulated way, to men and women -and specially to the homo faber- through work. Cultural thinker Raymon Williams (1983) explains that the power of making or producing was originally the power of creation in the hands of God, the first creative producer. In *Keywords. Vocabulary for Culture and Society* Williams accounts for the historical evolution of today's exhausted use of the term 'creative' in an attempt to understand its forgotten and most profound meaning rooted in the domain of the divine. (p. 82)

Create came into English from the stem of the past principle of rw. *creare*, L. – make or produce. This inherent relation to the sense of something having been made, and thus to a past event, was exact, for the word was mainly used in the precise context of the original divine creation of the world: creation itself, and creature, have the same root stem. (ibid. p. 82)

It is relevant to note that only in the eighteenth century did 'create' and 'creation', as in 'production', start to be consciously associated with Art. Before this period, the arts qualified as the perfection of a skill in any domain. As Williams signals, it is in the eighteenth century that art began to be a form of production circumscribed to the fine arts and the artist specifically. (ibid. p. 41) As it has been discussed, the modern notion of work was celebrated as the capacity to produce in order to increase the wealth and growth of nations, attending to the needs of the capitalist project deployed through the evolution

of factorial production. However, the moment in modernity that production was put in 'men's' hands as work, Art began to delve into creation developing its own model of production with no relation to the one being settled in factories. The role of the artist would become, as Williams explains, 'with the force of the divine breath' to create, to 'imagine and make things beyond Nature'. (ibid. p. 82)

In modernity, the project of capitalism used production to capture work and life through work, while the creative production remained outside the domain of the factory. The introduction of artistic qualities to propel the scheme of the scientific management of work in factorial production is postponed until the decades of the 1970s and eighties. The concurrence of a creative and a factorial production should be considered paradigmatic since until then the artistic had remained away from the regime imposed by the archetype of the industrial factory (except for the case of cinema that will be analysed in the coming chapter). As such, art benefited from its condition as a meaningful enclave for experimenting with a different conception of production, regardless of its internal specific contradictions. Hence, it is interesting to explore how in the passage from a Fordist to a post-Fordist labour organization art as a creative production entered into the productive cycle of the factory and how this affected the internal structure of the artistic and cultural sphere itself once it fell trapped as part of the archetype in the expansion of the diffuse factory. The relationship that was then established between these two spheres – art/culture and work/production – introduced greater challenges in the world of art and cultural criticism.

As we will see, our major task within the field of the arts and work production today is to accept the industry in which we find ourselves and to discover ways of transforming the archetype of production in order to regain the life subsumed by productivity and growth. In other words, to find out how, under our actual conditions, the artistic production can still be of use to society. This is crucial for me, since this thesis proposes *Cine sin Autor's* factory as an exemplary case for changing the archetype of production through the empowering capacities of the arts.

As we have seen, the revolts taking place in Europe in the sixties instigated by the working class against the extreme rationalization of work – and due to the machinic alienation in the system of production – merged with a similar rebellion originating from the generation of students that occupied the universities. May '68 in France is the best

known reference<sup>22</sup> of this *liaison* in which workers benefited from the ‘free’ spirit of the students. For the latter, the protests voiced an awareness of the future that awaited them. Culture showed its willingness to play a crucial role in labour resistance movement and this in turn propelled culture towards an incorporation into the coming labour reorganizations.

The decade of the late sixties and seventies not only revealed capital’s extremely antagonistic capacity for using resistance to overcome itself and expand, but it also showed how the artistic production – perhaps by holding its experimental capacities as its virtue – got trapped into the sphere of work productivity. During the decades to come, a conjunction of strategies arising from both sides – art and work – overlapped, posing more questions than answers, at least with regard to art’s role, many of which still remain uncertain.

The artistic proposals of the sixties and the seventies mirrored the urgency behind the social resistances and looked for ways to project the new desires for the future. Land art, Conceptual art and Performance art were all practices that reflected a tendency toward immaterial, open ended, site specific and more discursive approaches. Collective work and authorship or even intentional anonymity started to channel the sense of refusal to authority in which the influence of literary critique and structuralism proved axiomatic. The clarion cry of the ‘death of the author’, initially Roland Barthes’ but taken up by a generation of literary critics and philosophers, opened up the question of authorship in other artistic fields as well.

If we seek for a transposition of the ‘death of the author’ into the visual arts, the term ‘relational aesthetics’ as coined by curator Nicolas Bourriaud in 1996 marked a breakthrough towards this decentralization. Coined rather late in the day, this acknowledged the already existent desire to ‘open the autonomous and private symbolic space of the arts taking as its theoretical horizon the sphere of human interactions and its social context’. (Bourriaud, 1998; p. 14) Over the intervening two decades, many different collective and socially engaged art practices have taken this proposal to heart, exploring collaborations that succeed in abolishing the distance between art and life by searching and sharing with others.<sup>23</sup> We have seen a quantitative, but especially

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<sup>22</sup> As a reference of these student movements see the occupation in London of Hornsey College of Art in May ’68 which led to a six weeks of intense debate around education and the social role of art. See Tickner, L. (2008). *Hornsey 1968. The art school revolution*. London: Frances Lincoln Limited

<sup>23</sup> Maria Lind in her text ‘The Collaborative Turn’ made an interesting ‘glossary’ of the different



qualitative, increase in participatory and collective approaches that have helped to finally define this concern as constitutive and necessary to the present stage in the evolution of art.

The problem with this move was that life, precisely at this moment, was being cornered, especially due to the expansion of work production towards more spheres of life, once the worker exited the industrial factory. Therefore, art, in its attempt to abandon its traditional spaces and its classic places of enunciation, and searching for ruptures within its own limitations, entered into an 'unsafe' domain: the very domain that was being increasingly captured, though in less recognizable ways, by the sphere of work productivity. Here it was facing a similar situation to what happened when capitalism trapped the artisans' production by calling them out of their workshops and into the factory. In this case, capitalism trapped art's production and creative capacity while art was leaving its 'house' and entering the street: an 'outside' that was being filled with proposals of 'other forms of life' that were eventually transformed, above all, into work productive life forms.

The main question here is whether art, in opening itself to life, was able to expand its virtues or, alternatively, whether work subsumed and expanded art's values throughout society under its own logic, debilitating the empowering capacities that art might have brought to the transformation of life. This is of importance since these events – art becoming life, art entering capital's domain and work conquering life – might suggest that the bringing of art closer to society was in a way hijacked by work productive interests distorting – necessarily – art's initial intentions. The arts 'exiting the museum' can be seen as a move to take it out of its reverie and elitism, but it is symptomatic that, if true, in the long run it also seems that this very fact has not succeeded in helping to increase, on the broader scale, society's sensible resources and modes of subjectivation.

The entrance of art into the core of labour production organization took place through a two-way operation, and as a 'response' to the cultural critique of the sixties fostered by the 'diffuse intellectuality' focused mainly on the demands referred to earlier as well as the introduction of the factory archetype into the sphere of art and culture. Art, in trying to abolish the distance with life, ended up becoming work. Art not only looked into ways for broadly expanding its qualities, but in so doing the diffuse factory found a way to legitimized its management by introducing novel forms of control. Also, within this

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collaborative practices, focusing her essay on the varied artistic methodologies drawn by working together in these decades. See Lind, M., 2007; pp.15–31.

restructuring operation, the factory expanded its domain over art, incorporating it in the regime of productivity and its model of precarization. 'In France, the number of people employed in cultural industries (museums, cinema, theatre, dance, street art, etc.) has matched, from that time on [from the seventies], the auto industry.' (Lazzarato, 2006b; p. 1)

There is an important problem here that has to be accounted for before we can consider the losses as well as the challenges that remain active in overcoming the crises of that moment and which still affect the present state of art. On the one hand, art's success in engaging with others coming from outside its sphere has also been the route through which to enter the factory. Art's experimental modalities helped, without really willing to do so, to increase the market scores of alienation by showing ways to reach to broader publics. This has finally blurred art's singular capacity of representation, transforming it into a mere leisure activity. On the way, it is true that art did manage to redefine itself through participation, cooperation and collaboration, but the absorption of art into work's regime has, in many cases, captured art's pure desire.

Following this logic, the so called processes of participation are not free from suspicion: they can easily flip over and turn into training processes for self-entrepreneurship, animated by the economic spirit that floats on society.<sup>24</sup> What if the artist, who was a marginal, even unproductive producer for the economy, together with any collaborator and participant, becomes a 'creative' self-entrepreneur? Does the relation between art entering life and life becoming work implode in her/his own self if s/he not only takes her/his artistic ability to market, but also, in 'her/his artistic independence, constantly sells her/his whole personality?' (Lorey, 2015; p. 67) In the coming chapters I will go into more detail about the opportunity to transform production through a reinterpretation and actualization of 'art becoming work' and 'work becoming life', changing the archetype set by the factory with the help of *Cine sin Autor* artistic practice.

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<sup>24</sup> In this sense see Wuggenig's text 'Burying the Death of the Author' (2004), which is an actualization of Roland Barthes' known claim to recognize the role of the reader in his text 'The Death of the Author' (1967). Wuggenig actualizes Barthes by questioning the consequences of his claims when put in the hands of economists. Wuggenig's text focuses on giving evidence of how the cultural production, following the imperatives of the market economy, have endorsed what he calls to be the 'consumer sovereignty', a mechanism by which participation is paradoxically transformed into a form of dictatorship, treating him or her under the logics of consumerism. The way Wuggenig ends his essay is especially significant: 'Now that a huge measure of energy has been invested over the course of years and decades in deconstructing the author or producer and in revaluing the customer, the consumer and the audience, it seems appropriate today to devote at least a portion of this energy to the deconstruction of the recipient, certainly in conjunction with a strategic revaluation of the cultural producer.'

## **For a lead role in a cage**

In September 1975, Pink Floyd released their album *Wish You Were Here*. Its lyrics contain symbolic references to the period and may shed some light on the most important new adaptations that the factory would be implementing at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties. Songs like *Have a Cigar* and *Welcome to the Machine* are critiques of the music industry and its manipulative managerial system, while *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* and the eponymous title song concern absence and alienation, and carry a specific reference to Syd Barrett, whose mental breakdown had forced him to quit the band: that is, a tribute to mental fragility, a sign of our times as thinkers like Berardi constantly remind us. (Berardi, 2003a, 2009, 2011)

Symbolically, the cover image announces the changes that were about to take place. The cover shows what appears to be an industrial polygon (in fact, the Warner Bros. studio complex in L.A.) with two businessmen, in suits and carrying cases, shaking hands. One of them is on fire, disappearing.

The image is quite apposite if we accept the interpretation that the man on fire is there to culminate the completion of the logic of self-entrepreneurial management: what Kafka's legend symbolized with Prometheus becoming one with the rock. As such, this becomes referential for two of the main adaptations incorporated by the factory system. The man on fire and who presumably disappears is the material body of the boss, the real figure through whom sovereign power was formerly exercised; the capitalist, as Marx would call him. He is the one with whom we used to sign our contracts as salaried workers: in this case the contract is sealed with a handshake. As he disappears, he extinguishes all the possible signs for tracing alienation. The passage here in managerial terms is from disciplined flexibility to the maximum possible expression, through the apparent complete absence of a sovereign power.

Power isn't exterior to us any more, neither is it exercised by the 'other'. We now exercise it over ourselves through self-realization and self-optimization, in competition with the rest and with ourselves until exhaustion, depression and death: the point that, according to Berardi, will lead us to an unconscious refusal to work. Meanwhile, what we do is offer our lives, becoming individual self-sovereigns. 'We obey to our own desire

and to the Other that talks silently inside us, all are the same.’ (Laval/Dardot, 2013; p. 332) We are the company, the institution and the capitalist. We become our own competitors. We are the factory with its archetype completely ingrained within us.

The power that disciplined workers by managing them through their bodies, and then their minds and souls, eventually colonizes us entirely by, as the Prometheus legend illustrates, becoming one with us: inside us, as the ‘Other’, pairing with our own desire, one with the rock. But it is not only the boss who apparently disappears, since we perform this role ourselves: and the machine, in agency, also becomes one with us. Is that why the man in the picture is signing the contract of his eventual disappearance? The agency between body-machine is no longer an agency composed of differences; it is only one since the others have been erased. Body and mind have lost their own specific capacities after a long process of their being at the disposal of production. And that is why we are exposed to mental fragility. Body and mind have ended up melting and fusing with the machine. We have lost not only our bodily presence and eroticism, but also our own language, since we have adopted that of the machine: numbers, codes and algorithms.

Power is no longer exterior and recognizable since it is inside us. Life is impossible to distinguish from work, since there is no contract or boundaries in time and space for distinguishing one from the other. Our human qualities are put to work seemingly already machinic.

As the song says:

And did they get you to trade  
Your heroes for ghosts?  
Hot ashes for trees?  
Hot air for a cool breeze?  
Cold comfort for change?  
And did you exchange  
A walk on part in the war  
For a lead role in a cage?

*(Wish You Where Here. Pink Floyd, ©1975)*

## **The social factory or surplus value without doing any work**

But what are the events that might make us wish not to be, as Pink Floyd sang, ‘lost souls swimming in a fish bowl, year after year’?

Recalling Simondon again and the factory’s technological lineage of production, the worldwide expansion of the Internet was the discontinuous invention that propelled a new cycle of adaptations that led to the ‘social factory’. In the early 1980s, the suite of protocols known as TCP/IP -Internet transmission and control protocols- were developed and included in most UNIX servers. UNIX was the most outspread operating system in those years. By the end of that decade, the control of the Internet was still in hands of the United States government agency NSF (National Science Foundation), and was only used to support the research of specific network communities in education and for military proposes. In 1995, the NSF transferred control to commercial telecommunications communities. (Galloway, 2004; p. 6) Almost immediately, computers and data packages instantly travelled all around the worldwide net, putting us at the disposal of work, any time, anywhere.

The same strategy with which the industrial factory expanded the archetype of production into the diffuse factory was reproduced with the implementation of the Internet. If in the seventies, post-Fordist labour reorganization dissolved criticism by providing all that criticism demanded, it is easy to imagine this being repeated. More divisions and more managerial strategies were applied to the constituted knowledge production society for which information had always been the base for ensuring production and reproduction. At this time, we saw rapid increases in computing power, storage capacity, Internet bandwidth, as well as the introduction of easier interfaces on smaller and smaller (mobile) devices, all of which helped to blur the distinction between working and free time.

As Berardi described, in this transition the factory grew to invade ‘the social brain and the private and public domain with corporate media flows, and finally reduced the international cycle of labour to an infinite ocean of micro-fragments of nervous connection’. (Berardi, 2011; p. 128) Making producer and consumer workers at the same factory, enslaved to the machine that orchestrates more and newer divisions. Workers are encourage to talk, share and exchange information to provide more and newer data. To

deliver subjective information, even private, into the public domain of the worldwide net, which the machine uses in the name of production. We are the communication providers. Everybody is welcome in order to be colonized. Computers are able to ‘think’ faster than we do and therefore we are encourage to provide.

The bubble of the dot coms gave shape to the new scientific management that promoted more extreme entrepreneurial attitudes. It started at the beginnings of the nineties coinciding with the decision of NSF to suspend the ban on the commercial use of the Internet and the introduction of the first Web protocol. At this time, there was a revival of the call for creativity, ‘similar’ to that of the seventies’ cultural industries, but this time conquering the emptiness of the novel net-sphere by opening millions of micro-innovative business. The new creative people, again looking for more freedom and informality, largely came from the world of programming, web design and social relations. Their shared ideal was ‘Get big fast’. This motto was dictated by the value of rapid growth for many of the investors that used the dot coms to feed a stock market ruled only by speculation.

On many occasions the art world has been an ‘experimental laboratory’ (Gielen, 2014; pp. 38–47) and an inspiration that contributed to shaping the adaptations of the newer factories. As in a reoccurring nightmare, the creative class of the net-sphere became the ‘experimental laboratory’ that accompanied the process of financialization<sup>25</sup> of the economy – the so-called New Economy –, helping to set up the form of a ‘New Network Economy’ (Terranova, 2010) in the world of the Web. ‘Dot coms were the training laboratory for a productive model and for the market.’ (Berardi, 2003b; p. 4)

At the turn of the new century, crisis hit this bubble that had come into being mainly through fluctuations in financial speculation, and propelled a change of mentality that found expression in the motto ‘Get large or get lost’. This change of modality needed to

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<sup>25</sup> The financialization of economy is the process initiated after the collapse of the Bretton Woods agreements in 1973 and that has characterized the spirit of capitalism in the last decades. This collapse propelled the liberalization of economy and the growth of international financial markets generally managed under the interest of the private sector that uses the state as a ‘mediating agent’ to intervene economy under private interest. As social and political thinker Robert Meiser (2015) has defined, financialization follows a process of manufacture of economy that uses the very same strategy of the labour theory of value that has been put into practice throughout the history of capitalism. This manufacturing process is highly sophisticated and in it we can see how our entire life is economized by trading with our promises through debt, mortgages, loans, insurances, etc. In this phase of capitalism, the engines and the functioning of the social factory indeed play an important role as information in combination with the notion of risk introduced by the economy to speed up the functioning of the stock market.

happen so that the factory could start subsuming all the revived creativity produced by the media-entrepreneurs in the 'free' world of the Web. There were major restructurings that propelled the formation of a new order ruled from then onwards by large enterprises such as the paradigmatic Facebook, Google and Amazon, each of them addressing different 'necessities'. The success of this model was based on the ability to attract mass users, for whom the Internet was at that time being re-constituted as the user generated content web (web 2.0). In a familiar move – and this is what the archetype is for –, the system transformed subjectivity into depersonalized fractals that are incapable of creating a common narration or of orchestrating any possible re-composition: mere atoms of time available in the net-sphere, useful only in terms of productivity and growth.

As Terranova (2010) explains extensively in her essay 'New Economy, Financialization and Social Production in the Web 2.0', '...what happened in the financial markets after the year 2000 was an intersubjectivity not merely global, but also porous in respect to web 2.0 cultures, inserted in Facebook's social networks, influenced by the most famous bloggers' evaluations, that communicated through instant messaging tools like MSN used to conclude financial transactions. For *Newsweek*, the internet allowed for the proliferation of the "invention" of new financial tools in the same way in which it had facilitated technological innovation and at the same time made the financing of derivatives a kind of cross between gossip and video-games [...]. Trivial conversations over instant messaging can mutate into trades.' (p.161)

It had to happen that everything 'social' spilled onto the web: so much information in the form of communication, affects, links, likes, hash-tags, tweets/re-tweets and the like could become, in one way or another, valorised as surplus value. Here, production takes place through socialization. Labour in the factory of the social web is not even cheap: it is provided for free by the user-workers. There is not even a zero hours contract in which our labour time or free time is compensated by a minimum wage. It is 'free user' labour or its total marginalization. The exposure to self-entrepreneurship is a condition of the post-Fordist worker that has not only come about through encouraging creativity as a valuable (a talent most likely needed within labour production), but also as a message sent from an economy that is undergoing a process of financialization and that promotes obtainment of wealth more through stock-actions that fluctuate according to data mined from the Web than through the demands of wages.

The social factory is a collectivity of subjectivities, desegregated and fragmented, unable to compose with one another, deprived of any true process of subjectivation. Our agendas are not our own; they derive from Google, Facebook and the like, and we are not capable of fulfilling their regime of accumulation and maximization, neither in time nor in space. It is the ultimate form of fragmentation, competition, attention capture, speculation and 'free' form of control. The virtual social relations and interactions of users cooperating, the 'general intellect'<sup>26</sup> becoming a technical object. A great big body – which is bodiless – made machine, for which the maximum expression of its technological lineage is the algorithm. The automaton for big data information that forms agency with men and women at work. If, in the beginning, the automaton entered the industrial factory to 'free' the physical body and make use of its mental force, then the algorithm is the automaton that comes to 'free' our mental force in order to make use of our social being.

Labour production is everywhere, without frontiers or borders. It is the total proletarianization of society: colonization of time, attention and distance. The industrial factory started to confine the 'outside', reproducing repetition without a difference, extinguishing all variation. The repeated demands addressed against hierarchy, control and the alienation of the worker in favour of autonomy and freedom seem always to lead to greater forms of discipline and enslavement. Today, the factory is a world full of individual instances connected through a network, a global social factory of living labour, performing 24/7, that practises discipline through self-exploitation.

Each individual is a producer-consumer connection providing information, suffering a constant de-singularization, linked with the other workers (already producer-consumers themselves) through the Web. The factory turns society into millions of atomized self-entrepreneurs that compete between each other, celebrating the autonomy of their own self-exploitation in which life becomes the labour process (Marazzi, 2007; n.p., 2008; pp. 44, 116–17). The social factory, the one that Tronti already announced: 'At the highest level of capitalist development, the social relation becomes a moment of the relation of production, the whole of society becomes an articulation of production; in other words,

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<sup>26</sup> According to Karl Marx (1973) in his *Grundrisse*, the 'general intellect' represents the social knowledge as a force of production generated by the cooperation of individuals forming collectivities: a knowledge that is objectified as well as embedded in the machinist system by capital. More recently, in the seventies and eighties, Italian post-Operaism made use of this notion actualizing its contemporary meaning. Virno (2004) has used it extensively in his book *A Grammar of the Multitude* in an attempt to escape from the condemnation of subsumption. In the immaterial production, says Virno, knowledge cannot be objectified by machines. The general intellect needs to be understood 'as intellect in general'. As the faculty and power to think, rather than the works produced by thought.' (Virno, 2004; p. 66)



the whole of society exists as a function of the factory and the factory extends its exclusive domination over the whole of society.’ (Tronti, 1962; p. 5, quoted by Wright, 2002; p. 38)

‘Workers’ , as producers and consumers/users, start by giving away all that they are: first, by sharing, as the free culture community envisioned; then in order to reserve a place of visibility within a society transformed by the free economy. Spurred on by competition, they keep on giving away, exhausted, without having any time to think, since humans are not able to think faster than machines. However, we are organisms with the precious capacity and necessity to communicate: we are social beings. And the power of cooperation, the general intellect, is put at the service of machinic capitalism. Machines only need us to be living, labouring, socializing. Always more precarious, nearly priceless. Production seen under the capitalist project transforms everything into ‘value’, so we just have to keep on working/living.

This forces us to consider capital as a social relation, as Marx suggested, and to recognize capitalist production as the (re)production of social relations. Commodity production seen in this light is really just a mid point in the production of social relations and forms of life. (Hardt, 2009; p. 25)

## CHAPTER 3

### **The cinematographic factory**

In the seventies and eighties, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1985 b[1972]; 2005, [1980]) examined the machine beyond the regime of alienation imposed by factorial production. In the search for an emancipatory relation between humans and machines, they rethought the imaginary of forces inherited from the Marxian perspective of labour production. In doing so they suggested leaving behind the views that saw machines as mere technical devices and apparatus in order to conceive them, instead, as compositions and concatenations of technical, bodily, intellectual and social components. However, I believe that the relation that Deleuze and Guattari problematized with their proposal should be re-addressed. While it may seem as if the human-machine agency has arrived at a 'harmonic' integration in the present, the archetype of production brings us to a different conclusion.

The human-machine engagement in the production of the network society is generally acknowledged as if it were of a radically different nature to its engagement in the industrial society. This largely happens because the contours of its constituencies are becoming more and more unrecognisable, even becoming a piece with the other, as if the relation of composition that Deleuze and Guattari proposed had been finally achieved. However, what we have seen with the notion of the archetype of production and of its expansion is that the technical and human composition is an agency that, even if it juxtaposes and couples, it perpetually increases the 'enslavement' and 'subjugation' of men and women to machines. One could say, in line with what I have been arguing, that the project of capitalism has already pursued Deleuze and Guattari's challenge while it expanded the archetype of production through the different factory models.

That is why in the first chapter I pointed to the problematics of this human-machine concatenation in which capitalism defined production according to its own imperatives. This agency was then established to maximise profit and surplus value, and has therefore been driven by a relation based on 'punishment' that cancelled any path in which the human-machine engagement could have been animated by joy and fulfilment. This chapter does not yet attempt to explain how the reorganization of production is proposed in the factory of Cine sin Autor or how I consider that their practice manages to converge

the technological and the organic in a non-parasitic relation. To do so, we first need to enquire into the human-machine agency created and developed by cinema's technology. In particular, we need to acknowledge what virtues the cinematographic has for empowering a different reorganization of production, something that is fundamental to any understanding of the CsA factory.

When I started my research about CsA's practice, some of my initial doubts focused on their cinematographic format. For example, I constantly wondered whether a specific artistic medium was necessary for the success of their model or if any medium would be equally operative to meet their goals. As we will see in the Intermezzo of this thesis, the CsA collective began their proposal for realizing an authorless artistic practice using the cinematographic media as their means of production based on one of the founders' personal interest and knowledge about cinema; something that makes me consider that their choice was more accidental than analytical. However, CsA has been active for more than a decade during which time the cinematographic has finally become referential for the group, both theoretically and in practice.<sup>27</sup> Having said this, they have always left open the possibility of finding ways to articulate their practice using other formats, as they clearly stated in their first manifesto (Tudurí, 2008; p. 57) and as, indeed, one of the founders – Eva Fernández – has more recently demonstrated by practising an authorless production in writing (see Fernández, 2016).

Some years after the constitution of the collective, the group decided to think how their practice could turn into a model of production, setting themselves the challenge of developing a prototype for a factory of authorless cinema. The hypothesis of this thesis focuses on the potentialities of the experience of prototyping such a factory, and more precisely, on the possibilities unfolded by the confluence of the cinematographic and the authorless. Despite my initial uncertainties, and the apparently random choice behind the cinematographic component of CsA's project, I will defend the position that to fully deploy a new factory archetype necessitates an engagement with the specificities of cinematographic technology. Hence, this chapter is dedicated to understanding what cinema, as a technological form of artistic production, empowers in respect to the reorganization of the archetype of production as determined by the industrial factory.

<sup>27</sup> The theorization and contextualization of CsA's practice, especially within the field of cinema and its possibilities for redefining production, were published periodically by Gerardo Tudurí, one of the founders of the project, in the blog <http://cinesinautor.blogspot.com.es/2007/>

In order to uncover the relevance of the cinematographic component in CsA's model, I dedicated some time to investigating the history of cinema, with special attention to its origins, some specific accounts of its early years and to its process of becoming a factorial production. My intention in this chapter is not to propose a revision of the history of cinema, for which I do not profess to have a specialized knowledge, but to show the uniqueness of cinematographic technology for composing the new archetype of production, especially regarding cinema's technological lineage, something that no other artistic media have. Indeed, Cinema was technological long before other artistic forms became so,<sup>28</sup> even though art as a practice soon started to embrace transformations due, precisely, to the techniques of mechanical reproduction (see Benjamin, 2007 [1936]; pp. 217–43). By highlighting some of these events and transformations in the history of cinema, I hope to explain why I see it as an irreplaceable component for the new factory production.

In my investigations I have arrived at two fundamental conclusions in respect not only to what cinema is and does concerning CsA's proposal, but also, as we have seen in the previous chapters, to what its factory is and does. Firstly, I consider that the foundations of the archetype of the factory in the industrial period cannot be reorganized without having a model of production based on a different reconstructing of the agency between humans and machines. Moreover, this agency must be reorganized considering both machines and workers as companions. Secondly, I consider that the machine that accompanies the worker in the new production process should offer two important abilities: to cast life through production and to return that life in the very process of production.

In this chapter I will mainly argue that cinema, in contradistinction to other artistic practices, has a technological lineage that makes it be irreplaceable for constructing the archetype. I will present the cinematograph as the technical essence or the absolute origin of cinema. This technical object 'hides' and 'reveals' in its essence certain characteristics that are not at all arbitrary or gratuitous. Indeed, the original cinematograph as invented in the 1890s by the Lumière brothers, due to its double functionality of filming and projecting with the same machine, makes it fundamentally different from the family of technical objects engendered in the lineage of inventions in cinema's evolution.

<sup>28</sup> Photography is not considered technological here following the explanations given in earlier chapters, and in particular following Simondon's distinction between a tool and a machine (see pp. 52–53 of this thesis). According to them, the camera employed in photography should be considered a tool and the cinematograph employed in cinema a machine due to its use of external natural power (i.e., electricity).

The cinematograph was able to portray life by both filming and projecting it, and it is this dual quality that makes it exceptional. It is true that, today, filming and projecting is not restricted to cinema: we perform similar<sup>29</sup> operations with everyday devices, the mobile phone being the most common. But the specificities of this first machine become important when attempting to recuperate what cinema meant in the early years of its invention. Moreover, this will allow us to think how cinema, and its dual operation, can be relevantly connected today. It is essential to grasp this before moving on to the next chapters, since it clarifies how and why cinema and its technology are necessary for the task pending in the new factory.

<sup>29</sup> It is important to distinguished between showing and projecting something to others, especially for what projecting allows in terms of a collectivization of an activity.

## Cinema's lineage

*The enormous leap in the development of technical apparatuses and equipment in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, their dissemination and the knowledge about them in every possible field of society, was followed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the development of an economic 'dispositif' of technical apparatuses, in other words a 'dispositif' of the economic functionality and the exploitation of these apparatuses to increase productivity.*

Raunig, 2008; p. 24; translation: Aileen Derieg

The history of early cinema is usually traced following the inventions of the machines that made it realizable (Fielding, 1967; Pearson, 1996; Burch, 2011). This history varies depending on the emphasis given to some inventions over others as well as the weight afforded to simultaneous evolutions taking place in different countries. It is not only a story of its technological inventions, but also of its strategies, the economical possibilities for patenting such inventions and what was later produced with them. Even though this approach is the most common, there are historians that critique the centrality given to machinism in early cinema. (ex. Musser, 1994)

The cinematograph<sup>30</sup> in Europe and the kinoscope in America were the culmination of a sequence of scientific and technological efforts and are considered the first cinematic machines because they were able to both film and project. Similar progress was made in Germany with the invention of the Bioscop by the Skladanowsky brothers or in Great Britain with further inventions proposed by William Friese-Greene. Although the investigations that preceded these 'final' inventions took varied directions – looking to the eye and reproducing its biological engineering, studying motion and anatomy, the observation of light or the testing of chemical emulsions – a lot of input went into making and understanding the mechanics for a new machine.

There are authors (e.g., Musser, 1994) who have even traced cinema's origins back to the mid-seventeenth century with the inventions of the first 'magic lanterns'. Suffice to say that a fascinating study can be made of the plethora of small machinic steps that can be counted among the genealogy of inventions and improvements that helped to achieve the

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<sup>30</sup> The cinematograph is the first machine able to work as a motion picture camera as well as a film projector and printer.

birth of cinema, and that this lineage is representative, as well, of the technological pulse of the time.

In 1829, the Belgian physician Joseph-Antoine Ferdinand Plateau defined the principle of persistence of vision,<sup>31</sup> an optical illusion that happens in the eye and which was analysed in order to be reproduced mechanically. In 1877, the French inventor Emile Reyman created the praxinoscope,<sup>32</sup> which is considered to have produced the first moving animations. Also in France, in 1882, the scientist and physiologist Étienne-Jules Marey, with the intention of improving the study of animal and human locomotion, invented chronophotography, capable of taking 12 consecutive frames a second and recording them in the same picture. Eadweard Muybridge, the famous British photographer, invented the Zoopraxiscope in 1879, the first movie projector, although for the capacity to film as well as project we have to wait until the mid-1890s and the inventions of the cinematograph and kinoscope. We can sense the breakthrough offered by this final step in the words of Thomas Alva Edison, inventor of the kinoscope:

In the year 1887, the idea occurred to me that it was possible to devise an instrument which would do for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear, and that by a combination of the two all motion and sound could be recorded and reproduced simultaneously. This idea, the germ of which came from little toy called the zoetrope, and the work of Muybridge, Marié and others has now been accomplished so that every change of facial expression can be recorded and reproduced life size. The kinoscope is only a small model illustrating the present stage of progress but with each succeeding month new possibilities are brought into view. (Edison quoted in Fielding, 1967; p. 90)

The praxinoscope, the electrotachyscope, zoopraxiscope, chronophotography, zoscope, etc., are all machinic apparatuses that culminated in the invention of cinema. As such, they were conceived more as entrepreneurial and innovative events celebrated as successes concerning a properly technological and scientific progress rather than innovations in the arts. The art field established its relation to these progresses without considering them a means of production but more as events that were challenging society.

<sup>31</sup> Persistence of vision is the optical illusion whereby multiple similar but different images blend into a single image in motion in the human mind. The explanation for motion perception in cinema and animated films was very much constructed from this scientific idea that explores the mechanism of the eye in conjunction with the brain.

<sup>32</sup> The praxinoscope and the zoscope are pre-film animation devices that produce the illusion of motion by displaying a sequence of drawings or photographs showing progressive phases of that motion.



As such, artists raised them as their concern, just as Futurism would later do, specifically because technology was introducing crucial changes in the course of life and history. Proof of the techno-scientific predomination in cinema is the way in which these innovations were exhibited and categorized for presentation to the general public. An example in point is the 1898 Paris Exposition, in which motion pictures were projected with Lumière's cinematograph, using an 80 × 100 foot screen and a projection distance of more than 600 feet, although these screenings were exhibited in the *Galerie des Machines* and shared space with inventions such as the diesel engine, escalators and the telegraphone. (Fielding, 1967; p. 49–50)

As we can see, throughout the evolution of the inventions that gave birth to cinema, as well as their first public contextualizations, machines and technology were crucial. Beyond the overcoming of technical challenges, the other specificities with which cinema was later composed – scripts, sets, costumes, production, actors, storyboards, scores, etc., – were not yet primary elements that placed limitations on cinema. Because of the precedent already set by theatre, literature, painting, dance, music and even photography, it was the technological side that represented the major challenge and experience in this case. In the end, it was thanks to technology that time and space were implemented at once to create the illusion of the moving image. For that simple reason, I think it is justifiable to say cinema is a medium that, in contradistinction to those mentioned above, owes the reason for its existence not necessarily to art, as the allusion to the seventh art would seem to infer, but to technology and science.

*Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon* (1895), a 46-second film by the Lumière brothers, is often cited<sup>33</sup> as the first real motion picture ever made and projected before an audience. The cinematograph was invented by Léon Bouly in 1892 and patented by the Lumière brothers in 1895. It is the technical object that, as I have said before, made it possible to observe, register and screen the real as an image in motion. It is, therefore, the 'technical essence' with which cinema celebrated its birth, inaugurating a technological lineage with its corresponding 'continuous and discontinuous inventions' that would mark its subsequent evolution. As suggested by the title of the very first movie, cinema is a medium born in conjunction with the Industrial Revolution and in a moment of expansion

<sup>33</sup> It is often said that the first public screening of moving image was held by the Lumière brothers in 1895 at *Salon Indien du Grand Café* in Paris. But they were not the first to project moving pictures on a screen to a paying audience; this honour probably belongs to the German Max Skladanowsky, who had done the same in Berlin two months before the Lumière brothers. 'But despite being "scooped" by a competitor, the Lumière's business acumen and marketing skill permitted them to become almost instantly known throughout Europe and the United States.' (Pearson, 1996; p. 33)

of production. As such, the factory would inevitably subsume the empowerment of its nature within the project of capitalism: from the industrial factory and, later on, to the diffuse and social factories.

The first film captured by the cinematographic apparatus was actually an image of itself, of its factory in motion: the factory that, some years later, was to be created not in France but in America by the studio system. The title of the film is in that sense completely literal, not only in terms of what it actually depicts but also in what it foresaw. Like any invention with technology at its core, it will be strategically developed according to its capability to produce surplus value.

But, although cinema is born thanks to the machinic invention that it made its existence possible, the very first years of cinema are neither the history of a factory, nor that of a model based on the efficiency of its productivity. Given its origin as a scientific and technological order, and as its invention coincides with a moment of full performance in factory organization, it is almost miraculous that an entire decade was to pass before productivity found the way to exploit cinema under criteria of maximization, turning this production into a source of work, growth and profit.

### **The cinematographic human-machine-value agency**

*Film art under conditions contrary to precedent [...] it was not an artistic urge that gave rise to the discovery and gradual perfection of a new technique; it was a technical invention that gave rise to the discovery and gradual perfection of the new art.*

Panofsky, 1997; p. 93

Before modernity and the invention of cinema, the arts/artisans developed their particular set of technics for representing reality and therefore for its production and reproduction within painting, sculpture, engraving, etc. It is only with modernity that the artist becomes distinguished from the artisan, facing a new challenge related to the 'gift of creation': the artist should be able not only to represent reality but to depict the mysteries of the imagination. However, within this frame of art and applied arts, cinema is a strange bedfellow that builds its own tradition quite independent of the rest of the artistic media.

Cinema owes its existence, as Panofsky states, to the technological invention that made it realizable and it does not set itself 'naturally' within the line of technics of the arts.

Indeed, the beginning of cinema is marked, as we saw, by a techno-scientific invention – the cinematograph – which is also the absolute origin of cinema's technological lineage. Cinema is the first audio-visual media and the one that inaugurated the genealogy of technical objects for which the eye and attention are central: cinema, TV, computers, mobiles, etc. This is also why, very shortly after its invention, cinema entered the sphere of work in the factory that imposed upon the medium the archetype of production. It was through industrialism that capital inaugurated and instituted its technological lineage, settling down in a subjugating relation between humans and machines ruled by surplus value. Cinema's own production will be captured by capital throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, transforming the invention that facilitated its birth – the cinematograph – into an innovative form of creating credit by applying over the field of life representation the same logics that production imposed on work.

Nevertheless, the years between the birth of cinema and its transformation into a factory production are of great relevance. The empowering abilities of the medium started to be explored in these early years with the variation of approaches and under different means: political – in many cases for propaganda or as a police resource for control – but also for workers' expression, social transformation and unionism, or even as a tool for education as well as artistic purposes and entertainment. (see Marinone, 2009; pp. 9–15) However, this period is especially important in view of this research because it offers an example of a human-machine-value agency that, in contrast to that defined by the archetype set in the industrial factory, is non-parasitic: indeed, quite the opposite. It is vital, full of joy and fulfilment. In order to explain what I see as an exceptional condition of that very moment, we should look into this novel agency in more detail.

The machine with which men and women established its agency in early cinema was the cinematograph, which, technically, was a kind of 'mechanical eye-projector' that recorded the image of the real in motion and afterwards projected it before an audience. It is important to think of cinema as this double articulation that was present at the absolute origin of its technological lineage. This machine allowed the filming and projection of movies with the same piece of equipment, the functioning of which invariably implies a fundamental act of seeing with the eye what the cinematograph films and of seeing with

the eye what the cinematograph recorded through its subsequent projection. The double function of the cinematograph turns the 'screen' into an empowering machinic interface because it is not only able to witness life experiences but at the same time is able to reproduce and project them to an audience. This 'ability' that cinema confers to the screen is a crucial component for the CsA factory that will be discussed in depth in the last chapter of this thesis, exploring CsA's cinematographic gesture as a process of life casting.

The archetype of the factory is characterized by the specific way in which the technical object is introduced into the process of production, creating a parasitic relation between humans and machines. It is performed this way in order to capture the information and experience previously achieved by those artisans who became mere operators of the machine, while their knowledge ended up being, as Marx qualified, an alienated or estranged knowledge. It is only the machine that, in the factory, is able to manage production efficiently, thanks to a strategic scientific reorganization of tasks. But the agency that the cinematograph establishes with men and women in early cinema differs in a number of respects, some of which are quite exceptional.

Consider Louis Lumière as an example, being one of the first people to engage with the cinematograph. He knew nothing about real motion representation before using the camera; meaning that there was no 'accumulated' knowledge or experience that could be reorganized, divided and subsumed by the machine in its laudable efficiency. At that moment in time, representation was a parcel of knowledge practised by artists, artisans or naturalists, none of whom had been able to cast life in motion nor had they employed any machine to this end. In fact, there is no proper artisanal precedent to Lumière, certainly none specifically engaged in the filming and reproduction of moving images.

Aside from the impossibility of early cinema alienating any previously acquired and accumulated specific knowledge and reorganising it according to a system of machinic maximization (because, quite simply, no prior knowledge existed), the relation that people established with the machine in cinema was also distinguishable for another significant reason. The human-machine agency in early cinema allowed anyone who carried in their hands a mechanical eye/projector to record and later contemplate life removed from the very moment in which it was lived. And this, in essence, created the possibility for casting, contemplating and reproducing life over and over again. The very first intention

of cinema, facilitated by the agency of human-machine, was to grasp life in real time and space for its later (re)presentation. The double function of the cinematograph shows precisely that intention: to 're-enact' what, until then, only the eye and the brain could catch and keep. This accounts for the power that cinema offered for casting life and the great possibilities for experimenting with such a processes that will become part of the necessary re-organization for returning life to life in the factory of CsA.

However, some years later, this singular empowerment would also be alienated with the transformation of cinema into the factory. When capital manages production, the machine enters the factory as a promise of work liberation, as Marx defended, but instead of freeing life it ends up, as Foucault points out, controlling all its spheres under forms of productivity using work, and life through work, to that end. The cinematic machine, that which enabled the representation of life, will become the representation of cinema itself, of its own institutions and business hierarchy. But the importance for this thesis is not what cinema has become – although in fact that also matters – but what it was able to deploy in its origins, in its very specific and singular concatenation of human-machine-value before it was eventually subsumed into the factory.

The potential that cinema activated in its early years will be rehearsed and actualized in the CsA factory, proposing a human-machine agency empowered by joy and fulfilment. This will arise from an agency between human and machine in which production is not organised around the all-dominating machine, whether that be a vast industrial automaton or a small and diffuse device like the mobile phone. Instead, production would be an exchange of information between men/women and machine and vice versa. The organic and the machinic would compose together, instead of being opposed, and this production would be close to Deleuze and Guattari's positive proposal that sees these reorganizations fundamental for an emancipatory project.

### **Vision of life**

The cinematograph was patented by the Lumière brothers and the name they chose combined the concepts of both movement and writing. Some years later, Edison would call the new version released by his manufacturing company the Vitascope, signifying the 'vision of life' and announcing the engagement of men and women with this technical object and vice versa.

The rapporteurships given in different investigations that refer to the reactions of the public in the first years of the history of cinema (Pearson, 1996; p. 40; Burch, 2011; pp. 21–39) confirm the fascination and amusement it provoked. The Lumière brothers were themselves surprised at the reception of their first public screening.

We decided to give public demonstrations with the equipment, and on December 28, 1895, opened a place in the basement of the Grand Cafe, on the Boulevard of the Grand Paris, where, for a small admission fee people could witness the projection of the following short films [...] The success of the showing when the existence of our place became known, was considerable, although no publicity was sought. Thus, on that date, December 28, 1895, was really born the expression: ‘I have been to a movie.’ (Louis Lumière [1936] in Fielding, 1967; p. 50)

The fascination in the early cinema lay in the ability of the machine to pursue reality and reproduce it outside itself. ‘The first film audiences did not demand to be told stories, but found infinite fascination in the mere recording and reproduction of the movement of animate and inanimate objects.’ (Pearson, 1996; p. 38) The scenes projected on the screen were a universal mirror and in cinema people found a referential relationship. It was the first time that a machine was capable of reproducing the scenes they actually lived: a spectacular machine for casting life and its processes.

The Lumière brothers filmography is a great example of seeing this new phenomena taking place, especially concerning this harnessing of visibility that the early cinema empowered and that the brothers emphasised with a style that required nothing from the viewer beyond the observation of the real. They set out to ‘place the world through one’s own reach’ (Gunning, 2006; p. 381), which made them concentrate on making things seen and in keeping alive the enthusiasm for the new medium, which marked a referential model in early cinema. However, those first years saw other protagonists who’s interests lay less with realism than a tendency toward a more fictional narration and style, as we can see in the works of Segundo de Chomón characterized for his camera tricks and optical illusions or George Méliès’s Star Film company. The Lumière brother’s realism will resonate in later chapters of the thesis in the spirit of CsA’s understanding of cinema’s function.

According to the accounts that theoreticians such as Noël Burch give of the experience of watching the Lumière brother's filmic projections, audiences were impressed by seeing their lives projected on the screen and quickly learned to observe and establish a relation with the moving image, despite the complex machinery that was necessary for these events. And despite the shaky and noisy image that was a feature of cinema's early technology. Despite its dangers<sup>34</sup> and its imperfections. Despite all this, people could see themselves or everyday images like a train arriving at a station in the brother's early movie *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (Train pulling into a station). Or, indeed, any other common scene witnessed time and time again, but still retaining its fascination, leaving audiences absorbed and full of enthusiasm. 'These images,' Burch said, 'have inscribed the need to be seen again and again.' (Burch, 2011; p. 34)

At the end of his life, Louis Lumière told the French cinema writer Georges Sadoul that 'his works were works of technical investigation'. (Sadoul quoted by Burch, 2011; p. 37) It might be true that Louis Lumière's goal was no more than to improve the capabilities of the cinematic machine, to give perfection to the 'machinic eye/projector'. The inventor Charles Babbage probably had the same objective when improving his analytical machine, considered the pioneer of the computer. The great difference is that, in order to accomplish his technical challenges and improve the quality of the cinematic apparatus, Louis Lumière needed to go out and observe, film and screen life. That is, to cast, present and confront people with the everydayness of life.

Louis Lumière documented scenes of everyday life with his camera fixed in one spot and recording what was taking place in front of him. This documentary mode marked the tone of the first years of cinema, not only in France or Europe, but around the world. (Pearson, 1996; pp. 13–23) Lumière's films were the first to be produced and distributed worldwide, and were exhibited by the brothers themselves or by others who owned a cinematograph. Nobody seems to have had a problem with their 'technicity'. Actually, the fascination and enthusiasm was simply produced by what it meant to be able to reproduce 'real life'. The amusement came from seeing life on the screen, even though – or perhaps because – the plane was always frontal and the film's eschewed any distinguishing or personal voice.

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<sup>34</sup> The scarcity and fragility of the sources of energy and light that were improvised in many of the places where cinema was exhibited in the first years occasionally caused fires. The most infamous was the one that occurred in 1897 in the *Bazar de la Charité* in Paris, causing more than a hundred deaths. Furthermore, the imprecision of the focus and the continuous tremors of the projected image were detrimental to the eye.

Lumière's scientific mentality kept him more engaged with the technical challenges than with explorations of narration, language, composition or aesthetics, and thus Lumière produced a kind of a direct cinema that allowed people to see and look to themselves: maybe it was as simple as that. Or perhaps it was the bare abilities of the mechanism, which at that moment had not yet entered the factory, that engendered a great, general interest. It was enough to be able to see life, life as such. A life that as Foucault (1990; pp. 130–33) explained was being normalized, administrated and controlled. The life that power 'makes' us 'live' and which the industrial factory was progressively capturing, but that cinema harnessed for its contemplation.

Inventions in the field of technology always announce upcoming adaptations, but also the release of certain limitations in production. Cinema, as a technological invention, gave to production the 'power' to give 'vision to life'. At the time, people even attributed to this machine the power to overcome the limitations of death. And this was felt to such an extent that the magazines of the epoch finished their articles by saying: 'When this apparatus will be handed to people, when everybody could film their loved ones... in their action, with their gestures, with the word about to come out of their mouths, death would be no more absolute.'<sup>35</sup> (cited in Burch, 2011; p. 38) It seems as if the negative contingency that we saw in earlier chapters, that which production imposed in the human-machine agency through a parasitic relationship, could be transformed by cinema into an enthusiasm that is merely provoked by the possibility to 'give vision to life'.

### **Cinema becomes a factory**

*It is thus possible to put invention on two planes: that of technical thought representing technique in its pure form, and that of economic need in the wider sense of the term, in order to respond to technical problems or to follow purely economic needs [...] Innovation is quite different to invention, but the two are necessarily linked. 'The dynamic entrepreneur,' writes F. Perroux, 'is an economic innovator, in that he takes a technical invention, or more broadly, a new combination of techniques, and places it in the real world of the market place.'*

Gilles, 1986; pp. 43 and X

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<sup>35</sup> Part of the text appeared at the end of an article in *La Poste* magazine on 29 December 1895 and is quoted in Burch, N. (2011). *El tragaluz infinito*. Catedra; Madrid, Spain.



The alliance that the factory shows between technology and economy means that production uses their interrelation as a power to maintain growth. Even if an invention reduces limitations at a technological and sociological level, this is not enough to ensure its durability. In the sphere of production and under its logics, a technical invention is not useful unless it is capable of creating credit. This, after a few years of amusement at seeing mere life cast and projected on the screen, capitalism entered and obscured cinema's vision by placing the technical invention of the cinematograph 'in the real world of the market place'.<sup>36</sup>

'The notion of "reality" will be utterly and finally obscured... There'll be no need for "movies" to be made on location since any conceivable scene will be generated in totally convincing reality within the information processing system.' (Youngblood, 1970; p. 206) This observation was made by Gene Youngblood in the seventies in his book *Expanded Cinema*, which explores a new cinema in the expanding new media modalities (digitally produced through computation machines) characteristic of the diffuse factory.

Here Youngblood predicted the next economic innovation of cinema in the hands of digital technology. However, the challenge he refers to – the innovative idea of not needing to change location in order to produce the different scenes in a movie – was only a new variation on the techniques that the Hollywood studio system had placed in the industrial factory some decades prior to the arrival of information processing technologies. Actually, the studio system – cinema's first factory – achieved some decades earlier what digital technologies would reproduce at the end of the century: that is, as Youngblood informs us, to 'obscure' the notion of reality and therefore its power to give 'vision to life'.

The years between the invention of the cinematograph – marked by the illusion of treasuring real life – and the beginnings of cinema's factory were years in which many and varied improvements were achieved. From improvements to the technical machinery, to an expansion in the uses of the medium and its aesthetic approaches: sound and lighting were introduced, forms of narration were explored, as well as variations to shots and angles, etc. However, it wasn't until 1912 in America that a first attempt was made to build a cinematographic factory, with an experiment called Inceville. Inceville was the

<sup>36</sup> There are authors such as Noël Burch that speculate whether the technical inventions of the pre-cinema, especially the analytic capacity to study movement, as in the case of E.J. Marey, helped as well in a way to construct the vision of Taylorism in factories as a model in the industrial labour production. (Burch, 2011; p. 29)

first studio to set and expand the production of cinema under the factory archetype in which profit ruled. Its success would eventually define the future of cinema that, in these years, seemed to be taking the first steady steps to transform the medium into a global enterprise of entertainment for the masses. (Pearson, Gomery, 1996; pp. 23–43). Yet no matter how determinant this first factory in the history of cinema was, there are experiences that always counter, especially, the steady developing paths of an industrial production. A significant example is the creation of projects such as the *Cinéma du Peuple* in France, especially if one pays attention to the coincidence of the historical timing (1912–13) and, more importantly, to the model under which the group defined the project and the objectives behind it. *Cinéma du Peuple* was officially formed in Paris in 1913 as a cooperative that promoted cinema within the scope of work production as a valuable tool for workers and social transformation. (see Jarry, 2009; p. 3) Despite the fragility and sporadic condition of projects like this one, what is important to note here is that, if cinema has been and became – as we will see below – a massive medium for creating credit through its industry, the same medium has carried, and still does, a very significant and singular potential – as I will discuss in following chapters with the case of CsA – when the medium is put in the hands of workers and society.<sup>37</sup>

Owned and run by Thomas H. Ince, an American silent film producer, director, screenwriter and actor, known as the father of the western genre, Inceville was the first cinema studio planned to incorporate a scientific and efficient mode of production that followed Taylorist managerial theories. Inceville spread over 73 km<sup>2</sup> in the Palisades Highland, Los Angeles, California, right where Universal Studios were later to be established. When it was finished, its streets mimicked the different styles and architectures of many countries around the world. It featured many facilities like stages, offices, labs, dressing rooms, props houses, etc., where more than six hundred people were employed in the different areas of film production: from the studio boss and the film director to head producers, art directors and writers, production artists, actors and camera operators. Between two and three movies of around 90 minutes in length were produced every week. Different movies were made simultaneously. Actors had to swap between the scenes of one film and another. Sets were efficiently used over and over again, and

<sup>37</sup> This thesis explores in detail the case of CsA, but to see a wider scope of the singular potentials of empowerment of this medium see especially the examples of Groupe Medvedkine (1967–74) in Stark, 2012, or the *Festival of the Young Proletariat at Parco Lombro* (Grifi, 1976), a multi film format and project developed as well in the 1970s. See ‘The Disobedient Archive’ at <http://www.disobediencearchive.org/> or the ‘Enthusiasts Archive Project’ at <http://www.neilcummins.com/content/enthusiasts-archive>

adapted for different stories. Multiple cameras from different angles had to record the same scene in order to ensure that some takes were useable. (Gomery, 1996; pp. 81–98)

By around 1930, most of the films distributed and exhibited internationally were produced by no more than six studio systems based in the United States. This came to be known as the oligopoly of the Golden Age Majors, and was run and managed through a vertical integration.<sup>38</sup> These included: Paramount (1912), Universal (1912), Metro Goldwyn Mayer (1924) and United Artist (1919). Most had become high fliers on the New York Stock Market in the twenties. The ‘major’ managed a film’s production and distribution, in many cases screening it in their own theatre chains. The capacity and speed achieved by the studio system – more than 50 movies a week – overshadowed much of the production coming from other countries that could not keep up with the fast leisure consumption market. Certain forays into legal patents also ensured a monopoly in distribution. In general terms, until the fifties, this industry owned and promoted an unquestionable (they were the major) and standard (ruled by profit) mode of representing society and of colonizing the social imagination.<sup>39</sup>

Two crucial events resulted in the decline of Hollywood’s Golden Age for some decades. One was the competition represented by the rapid growth of television throughout the fifties. The other came with the United States Supreme Court antitrust case (1948) in which the court denounced the Golden Age Majors for violating the law of fair market competition, obliging them to sell their theatre chains and restructure their companies. The big studios reduced production, which they outsourced to independent producers with whom they shared part of the production costs in exchanged for maintaining distribution and exhibition rights, while starting to move into the new TV market, distributing films and producing hours of TV programming. (Schatz, 2008; pp. 13–39 and Rimbau, 2011; pp. 7–24)

The blockbusters and serializations such as the *Star Wars* trilogy (George Lucas, 1977/1981/1983), the mega-hits like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg, 1981), the home video and the videocassette recorder in the eighties, the movie TV channels as a new delivery system, the media franchising of blockbusters and mega-hits (production of

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<sup>38</sup> A vertical integration in economy is a form of management in which a firm owns its upstream suppliers and its downstream buyers.

<sup>39</sup> The recently released movie called *Trumbo* (2015) about the life of American screenwriter Dalton Trumbo shows quite well the speed of the studio system as well as the ‘questionable’ forms of running the business.

derivative works from a movie like video games, TV programmes, merchandise, etc), the Internet and the intense development of media communication in the following decades, reproduced the oligopoly of the Golden Major Studios, but, this time, transformed them into actual media conglomerates on a global scale.<sup>40</sup> They became owners and controllers of cinema production as well as all the many media forms of communication existing today: television, radio, publishing, motion picture and the internet. (ibid.)

### Exiting the factory

In the sixties and beginnings of the seventies, cinema was marked by the *Auteur theory* – *la politique des Auteurs* –, a style that put at the centre the inner and subjective approach and distinctive quality of the director against the standardization of the Hollywood studio productions. Cinema, despite having proved its fully factorial capacity, or perhaps precisely because of that, went through a set of similar claims to those raised by the workers of other factories and students during the sixties, in search of a kind of emancipation and ‘humanization’ in work production.

The essay by French critic and director François Truffaut, ‘A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema’<sup>41</sup> published in 1954, is considered the first enunciation of the *Auteur theory* in Europe. In America, film critic Andrew Sarris endorsed the claim with his text ‘Notes on the Auteur theory’,<sup>42</sup> published in 1962. This new approach helped to question the conservative and market driven production of Hollywood studios. Although, it had

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<sup>40</sup> The largest media conglomerate in America in 2015 (according to Forbes) is Comcast Corporation, formerly registered as Comcast Holdings. Comcast is: ‘...the largest broadcasting and largest cable company in the world by revenue. It is the second largest pay-TV company, largest cable TV company and largest home Internet service provider in the United States, and the nation’s third largest home telephone service provider. [...] As the owner of the international media company NBCUniversal since 2011, Comcast is a producer of feature films and television programs intended for theatrical exhibition and over-the-air and cable television broadcast. Comcast operates multiple cable-only channels (including E! Entertainment Television, the Golf Channel, and NBCSN), over-the-air national broadcast network channels (NBC and Telemundo), the film production studio Universal Pictures and Universal Parks and Resorts with a global total of nearly 200 family entertainment locations and attractions in the U.S. and several other countries including U.A.E, South Korea, Russia and China with several new locations reportedly planned and being developed for future operation.’  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comcast>

<sup>41</sup> Truffaut’s essay was originally published in *Cahiers du Cinéma* in January 1954. *Cahiers du Cinéma* is a French magazine founded by André Bazin in 1951 with the objective to cultivate a film criticism. The essay by Truffaut re-evaluating Hollywood films and directors is known as the one to inaugurate the idea of ‘auteurism’, *la politique des Auteurs*. Truffaut – and other directors that led this move – rejected ‘the literary films of the “Tradition of Quality” in favour of a *cinéma des auteurs* in which filmmakers like Jean Renoir and Jean Cocteau expressed a more personal vision.’ Keith Grant, B. (2008, p. 2)

<sup>42</sup> The text by Andrew Sarris can be found in Keith Grant, B (2008). *Auteurs and Authorship: A film reader*. Willey-Blackwell.

always been difficult to conquer the massive parameters that factories raise, in quantities of production and consumption, the weak conditions of Hollywood in these years of restructuring left some space for the emergence of alternative approaches to the medium.

In these years, Direct Cinema, Cinéma vérité or the French New Wave can be seen as alternative currents and resistances against the industry. Their proposals were very much influenced by the work of Dziga Vertov and his approach to cinema and documentary back in the Soviet Union of the 1930s. Indeed, in the case of Cinéma Vérité, the name was a direct translation of Vertov's Kinopravda (Cine-Pravda), as adopted by French critic Georges Sadoul. (Hicks, 2007; p. 133) These movies had unprecedented forms of expression characterized by their intent to achieve more realism, the passion for documentary and the interest in focusing on current issues as they themselves claimed: '...this is what I saw. I didn't fake it... I looked at what happened with my subjective eye and this is what I believe took place.' (Rouch, quoted by Hicks, 2007; p. 133)

In sharp contrast to Hollywood practices, they shot on location and improvised dialogue. They experimented with the camera and film, introducing rapid changes of scenes and shots that broke the standard 180° angle. Tight budgets made them improvise solutions and use everyday scenarios for sets. They not only helped put into question Hollywood's monopoly but these forms of experimentation, in a way, also served to invoke and recuperate 'Lumière's technical spirit' for depicting life as it happens. Yet, in many of these cases these processes were very much transformed into the claim for a very personal language authored by the director's enunciation. However, in general terms, none of these tendencies were strong enough to unleash the hold of the Hollywood factory.

A quote from Canadian film director, Pierre Perrault, a great defender and producer of Direct Cinema, serves to sense the connection of some of these attempts to emulate 'Lumière's technical spirit'. Perrault produced his films as a way of defending the survival of the collective identity of Quebec.

The territory of the spoken world has been taken over by the merchants. So how could real life recapture the spoken world and defend its soul against all the forces that are striving to occupy it, to lay siege to it, to beset it with music, advertising and subsidized truths? And yet all we have left is the slender privilege of memory with which to resist the invader. Hollywood tells us nothing about ourselves and

our humanity. Instead it offers us supermen, messiahs, miracles, heroes, an infallibility that takes root in our collective imagination, nourished by our willingness to believe. How can we be heard in the here and now by a people that might already have found its *Roots* somewhere else? Our songs, or almost all of them, are darting into the backwash like seagulls, in order to make money”... I am trying to defend an unpopular position, unpopular with left and right alike. This cinema of friendship, humanity, a solidarity worthy of our humanity, destructive of idols, does not satisfy the powerful, mercantile, imperialist ideologies that are fighting over the human race and its purchasing power. But what about the people, this people that I love more than cinema itself, the people from here or the people from somewhere else? Will they always be the easy prey of Gregorian chants, of the idols of cinema, of the gods of the stadium? (Perrault, 2004; p. 189)

The *Auteur theory* can certainly be seen as a search for liberation from the standards imposed by Hollywood, as we see above. It is also an approximation for portraying mere life with the help of the technological medium. Yet – at the same time and in general terms – also applied on cinema a regime of authorization not necessarily driven by market, productivity and profit, but by personal aesthetics and elitist film criticism (usually cultivated by the same directors/producers and critics and by cinema’s institution) enhanced, above all, by the figure of the director as an author becoming the authorized unique voice. In a way, this move, if interpreted as an attempt to exit the archetype of the industrial factory, was eventually transformed into a claim of artistic authorship. This overlapped with a moment in which art was looking for a decentralization of the author figure<sup>43</sup> and falling, as we saw before, into the trap of the work industry. Cinema tried to fight against its own industry by keeping the medium away from the masses (conquered by Hollywood), ‘protecting’ it under cover of the intellectual ‘bourgeoisie’ (by the bourgeoisie intelligentsia) and its pedagogy<sup>44</sup> for the moving image (reading the image in each director’s own pedagogy).

<sup>43</sup> It is interesting and remarkable to note that cinema raised the figure of the author legitimizing its power for organizing the field at a moment in which other art practices, especially literature as we will see in coming chapters, was questioning the centrality of that figure with regards to production. This decoupling in terms of the discourses that structure the history of the different artistic practices places cinema as an ‘out-of-track’ medium to possibly look at when other artistic forms may have been exhausted, precisely, because of its de-synchronization with the rest.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Godardian pedagogy’ is a term first used by French film critic Serge Daney (1976) in his text *The T(h)errorized. (Godard Pedagogy) [‘Le thérorisé (pédagogie godardienne)]* dedicated to Godard’s understanding of film and cinema. Deleuze (1985a; pp. 247–48) has used it in *Cinema 2. The time-image* assuming that the reading of an image is necessary if we want to understand it. He used the term pedagogy to refer to the different ‘didacticisms’ of cinema directors. I use it here, in a way assuming that the *Auteur theory* also brings with it the ‘birth’ of a school for making cinema.

There is in these events an interesting conflation of strategies of resistance, which share similar drives around the same period. The cinematographic production tried to exit the factory by incorporating artistic modalities, coinciding with a period in which art was exiting the museum and becoming closer to everyday life, and finally entering into the regime of work production. What we will see next in relation to cinema is that, while locking itself under the authorization of the artistic scope, cinema's production was not taken outside the factory and that, moreover, the diffuse factory applied its management and efficiency in cinema. The history of cinema shows how a technological invention turns into an innovation that ends up owning the privilege of the world's representation. Cinema, based on an industrializable, technological conjunction, having had in its first years the power of giving vision to life, falls trapped – and it could not have been otherwise – into the industry of the factory and into the authority of the art institution.

However, it should not be forgotten that cinema has two principal and interconnected virtues, that of having the power to record and project, and, by doing so, that of harnessing the real. This gigantic power has been managed according to the different interests of whomsoever happened to own or direct its organization. However, due to its technological lineage, what cinema poses in contrast to other artistic means is that it is a medium that favours the re-organizability of the new factory archetype.

As Perrault asked himself, what about the people, this people that I love more than cinema itself, the people from here or the people from somewhere else? The people who once lived, destined to give life to work and never own the pleasure of its vision? What about their imaginary and representation? What about their vision of life? Of their own life? It should be seriously questioned whether there is any justification in the act by which one assumes as his/her right the task of representing the imaginary of the rest, whether this right is defended under aesthetic or profit justifications. In a way, maybe Lumière's technical aspirations are necessary to safeguard representation, in this case, for the benefit that self-representation can bring to others.

### **Merging into computation**

*Precisely because it is based on communication technologies without presence, hypermodernity initiates a process of cancellation of references to identifiable*

*places, a process that makes the sources of enunciation ubiquitous... but the eliminated place is replaced by a hell of frustrated expectations, unfulfilled promises and artefacts that confuse identification.*

Berardi, 2003a; p. 144;

In its very early stages, cinema had the capacity to give ‘vision to life’, something that was obscured in the transformation of cinema into a factory for the mass production of representation. In the seventies, the fascination for casting and projecting life in the everyday went beyond even cinema’s first intentions. If we go back to Youngblood’s declaration (1970) that ‘the notion of “reality” will be utterly and finally obscured’ (p. 206), I should clarify that what he was announcing was, not a first, but a second wave of obscurity in cinema’s production.

From the seventies onwards, cinema’s industrial production will show how ‘real life’ is not even cast, not even staged, performed, rearranged or fictionalized. It is not there any more as a referent to be filmed and projected. Cinema’s technological lineage shows that the technical objects engendered in this lineage no longer incorporate the double function of the cinematograph. In order to favour productivity and growth, this technical double quality is compressed into only one screen in the computational machine, which, moreover, leaves out the referent of reality.

French movie critic Sergey Daney – also editor of *Cashiers du Cinema* – for whom the image is the support of the visual experience referred to this radical event in this way:

It is no longer a question of seeing what the image shows, not even, to see the image, but to recognize that what it is behind every image is another image, that we are facing an endless carousel of rapid replacements, witness of the radical indifference of many images, of the substitutability of an image by any other: it is the realm of any image. (Daney, quoted by Esteve Rimbau in Rimbau, 2011; p. 17)

*Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1993) is the landmark in cinema production’s second wave of obscurity and the consolidation (ex. *The Matrix*, 1999 or *Avatar*, 2009 among others) of the introduction of the simulacrum in the field (see Rimbau, 2011, p. 8): something that coincided with the transformation of the industrial factory into a diffuse factory and later



the social factory. In cinema, the change from industrialism to computation and digitalization opened the door to the era of the simulacrum, and, therefore, the loss of the real as the referent, the dissolution of Lumière's success and 'an end' to cinema's empowering ability of giving 'vision to life'. But the new modality of cinema, based on the power of the simulacrum, turned out to be a great success in terms of audience acceptance and maximizing productivity.

In *Jurassic Park* real actors and scenarios are combined with those created with the help of computer image software. Computer generated imagery (CGI) does not require any real referent to produce a movie. It doesn't need the scene, or the set, or the people, the event, the machinic eye, the capture of movement, etc. In a way, it does not need cinema at all, only its industry to make profit out of a collection of 'pure' images without a referent.<sup>45</sup> With digital technology, it is possible to produce an entire movie in which representation does not refer to anything cast directly from the world of the real. Thus, at that moment, cinema owed nothing to the world as a reference and gained total independence. This of course does not mean that all movies on the market are produced in this way, but it nevertheless marks a tendency for the future of filmic production and representation.

Berardi (2003 a; ex. pp. 81, 93/4/8, 101/6/21/22) has interpreted the persistent economic crises of the New Economy not as a problem of economy itself – of numbers and of wealth, or as a failure in the auto-regulation of economy –, but rather as the impossibility of the organic body to adapt to the conditions imposed by the virtual domain: the speed and the acceleration to which society is exposed in the present techno/economic life. As such, the organic body is just not able to compute with the machinic pace. It keeps on sinking, revealing the limitations of the biological when confronted with the technological. It is unable to merge fully, therefore producing 'cracks' that are manifest in the form of depression, paranoia, suicide and other mental illnesses.

These are the effects of the simulacrum in the era of communication and digitalization, already criticized by Baudrillard in the eighties (1983). 'There is no longer any system of objects' (p. 126) is how he began his text entitled 'The Ecstasy of Communication'. For Baudrillard, all secrets, spaces and scenes were banished to a single dimension of

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<sup>45</sup> PIXAR is the major computer animation film studio based in California known for its CGI animated feature films. Pixar began in 1979 as the Graphics Group, part of the computer division of Lucas-film before its spin-out as a corporation in 1986, funded by Apple Inc. and co-founded by Steve Jobs. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pixar>

information when the ‘satellitization’ (ibid.) of the real took place, turning it into a mere subsidiary that was destined to be forgotten when, bit by bit, the subject finally loses its referential relation to the object. Berardi calls this digital image production mode the ‘synthetic image’ in which ‘the sign becomes a virus eating the reality of its referent’. (Berardi, 2009 a; p. 149) Thereafter, it would be the simulacrum that appropriates reality and life, not as a quality of the imaginary but as a *modus operandi*.

If with Lumière’s spirit, real objects and subjects were constitutive of the image and the image, likewise, constitutive of reality, then cinema represented reality by filming it as a referent, wherein the projection represented a restorative process, a giving back that conformed to a kind of collective individuation. That was the form in which cinema gave ‘vision to life’. But what if computation and its simulacra are also playing that role of foreseeing reality? Computerized cinema invents characters with no referent in the real world and without any need to synchronize with reality. In the end, the factory will dissolve or will fully substitute Lumière’s spirit, the one that gave vision to life, because it is there only to subsume life through work and representation through simulacra. What if work occupies life and representation does not give vision to life but projects simulacra? How are we then going to take care of our own lives, having no body, no workforce and no capacity to represent and see ourselves?

As we have seen, the factory is inside us, and we produce, reproduce and consume the factory globally: in short, each individual *is* the factory. Meanwhile, cinema uses its power to (miss)represent society by producing simulacra: replicants, the living dead or robots conquering the screen and occupying representation. Therefore, the challenge is to rethink this industrial, diffuse and social factory, drawing a new archetype using the potentialities that industry has left behind. As individuals, and as a ‘body with so many heads’ (Foucault, 2003, p. 245), we need to transform production into something other than that which the logics of capital have imposed through the modern factory archetype.

INTERMEZZO



## CHAPTER 4

### **Cine sin Autor (CsA)**

### **A decade of an authorless cinematographic practice**

In the position of programme curator at *Intermediae*, I had to dialogue with many artists and collectives and support proposals that tested different approaches, understandings and modalities of participation, collaboration and social engagement. Despite my wide experience in the field, following my first meeting with CsA I was left astonished and overwhelmed. Astonished by the honesty with which the group encouraged the challenges that an authorless artistic practice seemed to pursue in terms of refusing authority, and overwhelmed since I had never encountered an artistic collective that wanted to challenge a whole model of production. It was also relevant that in 2011–12 – years of active social and political resistances in the city – they were willing to put the cinematographic medium in the hands of the people, believing in its capacity for social transformation. The medium would be put in hands of the people in general and, specifically, those of workers/producers and consumers at *Intermediae*: an industrial factory created in 1924 and recently converted into an artistic social factory. These last two details recall previous movements of resistance that, like CsA at *Intermediae*, have experienced cinema’s empowering capacities for transforming work in factories. I am thinking of, for example, the experience lived by the Groupe Medvedkine (see Stark, 2012) in the textile factory of Rhodiateca in Besançon-France in the late 1960s. Knowing that the study of genealogies that weave together factories, cinema and social transformations exceeds the framework of this thesis, I will leave this thought as an open note that situates CsA’s project and factory as a possible continuity in just such a potential genealogical trajectory, albeit as yet hypothetical.

This chapter marks a turning point in the discourse of my thesis. This intermezzo closes the chapters dedicated to the ‘old’ archetype of production and enters into the specificities of a ‘new’ factorial archetype conducted by CsA’s practice and model of production. As from now on CsA will be at the centre of this study, it is important to commence with an introductory examination of this collective and their artistic proposal. With this in mind, in this chapter I elaborate a ‘historical’ account of the CsA collective following a more or less linear narrative of their ten-year existence. My intention is to show the reader how and why CsA came together as a group and to make visible their initial urgencies. In so doing, I will also begin introducing some traces of the gestures to which the rest of the

chapters of this thesis are dedicated – the authorless, the parrhesiastic and the cinematographic –, presenting them as important nuances already present in the period previous to their becoming a factory at *Intermediae*. In the coming chapters, these nuances will unfold as the empowering capacities for a new production and will be discussed as the three gestures that I see necessary for changing the modern archetype of production into one that is able to return life to life rather than subsuming it. I present these capacities in the form of gestures because gestures are an exteriorization of our thoughts turned into a material expression, and it is this materiality that I think helps to counter the extreme intangibility of the vast automaton of the present factory. If generating these material expressions can determine a practice and, eventually, a mode of production that continuously challenges the one set in modernity, this will also help to increase the potentials for its transformation into something new.

The materials and resources that allowed me to compose a ‘history’ of the collective, to identify and trace the potentialities of their practice, are many and various. From existing materials such as the private correspondence<sup>46</sup> maintained by some of the founders of the collective with regards to the earliest formulations of an authorless practice (2005), to interviews (2013) and future archive<sup>47</sup> sessions (2013–15) that I conducted with the founders. Also of importance were the first experiences with which they tested their intuitions, even before the constitution of the collective. For example, the audiovisual project *Correspondencias*<sup>48</sup> (2006–08) and their first attempt to produce an authorless film at the Patio Maravillas Social Centre (2008).

Aside from my research into these various materials, I joined their meetings and accompanied some of their processes of production, even forming part of CsA’s project in the residency programme at the Museo Reina Sofía (MNCARS) in 2015. All of this direct personal experience led to a clearer understanding of their *modus operandi*, while I am

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<sup>46</sup> I had the chance to access to their personal correspondence thanks to Eva Fernández and Gerardo Tudurí, founders of CsA collective. This material has been extremely relevant in understanding the complexity of the beginnings of the project through their collective discussions and also for an understanding of the urgencies of each of them within the process that informed the project.

<sup>47</sup> In an attempt to understand and know more in depth the different positions and views of each of the members of the CsA collective regarding their own past, present and future, I organised and conducted two future archive experiences in 2013 and 2015. The *future archive* is a project initiated by Manuela Zechner, which I practiced and learnt with her when working at *Intermediae*. It proposes a methodology for engaging in conversations in which the group is ‘conducted to the future’. The person who guides the conversation speaks always as if the present is already the past and the future already the present and helps the rest remain in this frame of time. All this is achieved within a specific method of verbal activity and imaginary projections. The methodology can be consulted in <http://www.futurearchive.org/>

<sup>48</sup> *Correspondencias* was released in a DVD format. However it can be accessed at [http://www.interactuem.org/video.asp?id\\_fichero=674](http://www.interactuem.org/video.asp?id_fichero=674)

further indebted to their own conceptualization of their practice through their two Manifestos.<sup>49</sup> (2008[2007], 2013a,b[2012])

I also refer in this chapter to their films, with whom they produced them in the factory and to its expansions outside its walls. Since their practice is very much rooted in Spain, and most of their production is only available in Spanish,<sup>50</sup> my intention has also been to provide an accessible background of the collective.

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<sup>49</sup> CsA has published two Manifestos, one in 2008 as a kind of 'how to' produce under an authorless methodology and a second published in 2013, which tries to address the methodology in a more reflective mode. The second Manifesto has been translated into English. See: <https://www.cinesinautor.es/publicaciones>

<sup>50</sup> Most of the production of Cine sin Autor is in Spanish except for two films produced in French in Toulouse, where some members of the collective live and put into practice the proposal. These two films are *Cahier de Kader* (2014) and *De résistance et de L'espoir* (unreleased). Only two of the Spanish films have been subtitled in English: *NegraBlanca* and *Más allá de la verdad*. All films can be accessed at: <https://www.cinesinautor.es/>



## Pre-cinema<sup>51</sup>

*Imagination is the territory where the possible germinates. If there is something in the XX century that allowed the revealing of imaginaries, it has been cinema. But cinema has had a democratic problem of substance, structure and origin. It has been produced by few to be consumed by many.*

Tudurí, 2014

CsA's origins can be traced through the correspondence maintained in 2005 between Eva Fernández, Miguel Baixauli and Gerardo Tudurí. Eva Fernández was finalising her first novel and was looking for critical voices with whom to discuss it. In her novel, she tries to problematize the expression of the collective voice in the exercise of writing. The letter with which she starts the correspondence with Miguel Baixauli and Gerardo Tudurí had the symbolic 'subject' of *nosotros* ('we'). This *nosotros* not only made explicit the wish to explore a collective perspective against the voice of the authoritative author, but it also referred to the idea of a generation that had been exposed to a process of radical individualization due to the form of expansion of capitalism.<sup>52</sup>

Fernández's invitation was therefore to seek companions – probably of her generation – who shared similar urgencies and therefore could collectivize their struggles in order to break this individual imprisonment. Tudurí and Baixauli took Fernández's challenge seriously, and as an opportunity to discuss and propose their own views on Fernández's problematization. More than anything, what made them want to do something together was their resilient position against the 'un-real reality' of the all-pervasive capitalistic system in society. Fernández raised the difficulty of the challenge she was posing herself, as well as offering to the others.

[...] Because deep inside me, I feel that conspiring [...] means for me to kick the highchair in which my mother fed me, it means to burn the cradle, it means – if I do not want to become Ana Belen and Victor Manuel – saying 'no' to almost everything that surrounds me. What I feel and what I know is a product, a result of

<sup>51</sup> In the history of cinema, precursors of film are often referred as pre-cinema. Here pre-cinema also refers to the precursors of CsA's cinematographic.

<sup>52</sup> See for example the reflections that Eva Fernández published between 2005 and 2006 in her text 'Sobre el materialismo y dos novelas de la llamada Generación X'.  
<http://www.nodo50.org/mlrs/Biblioteca/evafernandez/materialismo.pdf>

power, of capitalism, of Oedipus ... I do not know how many intricate mechanisms between / in / within which I function most of my time. A time, Tudurí, that they have bought in rations of eight hours a day, if I do not include that feeding myself is also useful to my employers.

What Fernández provoked from within writing was pulled into cinema by Baixauli, reasoning that this medium was the most suitable to collectivize any experience, since, unlike the writing of a book, cinema and film were always produced within a group. Baixauli, who was considering becoming a cinema director, suggested readings, authors and filmography to discuss together. Tudurí enunciated the authorless as the notion to explore collectively and recognized that, as Baixauli suggested, cinema could be the ideal medium for addressing this ‘new working process’.

I am 41 years old and I have been looking for a tool to dissolve myself into (social) realities for a long time. I already did it without any tool. With how much more emotion will I do it now [...] Probably, all disciplines can be realized under an authorless mechanism, I do not know. But cinema seems to carry this in its essence.

The writings also show how, while sharing similar urgencies, their different dispositions and availability to engage in a collective project – conditioned by their professional and life backgrounds and commitments – become relevant for the general definition of the project itself and also for the roles that each will eventually play in it.

Gerardo Tudurí is a Uruguayan, authorless filmmaker and multi-media artist, who has been influenced by a long learning process accompanying and activating social practices in Latin America. Some of these practices were developed and led by figures that formed part of the Liberation theology movement, which supported the occupation of housing by homeless families. In one of my interviews with CsA (2013–15), Tudurí retraces the origins of his driving ideas for the project to his experience working with Vicente Mejía, a Colombian Anglican priest and defender of the Liberation theology movement. He was well known in Montevideo for his work as a figure of social mediation between the marginal communities and the administrative bodies.

Tudurí recalled Mejía’s capacity to engage with groups, not from the position of authority

that the use of power provokes, but from his ability to relieve hierarchies. Tudurí pointed to these early experiences as the drive behind his search to dissolve within social realities: a ‘gesture’ that is fundamental to CsA’s methodology, as I will be analysing in the next chapter. In the following fragment of the interview (2013), Tudurí associates CsA’s claim for the author’s disappearance with his experiences in the nineties and also with the authorless mechanism or tool for which he had been searching for a long time, as he admits to Fernández and Baixauli:

For me this was a very important period of my life. I wanted to live a social immersion experience. I learnt what it is and what it means to disappear in the field of social work... the social practice of Vicente Mejía made a huge impact on me... he was a very active man always with and around the underground movements... he would always go to meetings and assemblies, and people would not start until he arrived and then he would always sit down and observe, always really calm. And then the assembly would *detonar*<sup>53</sup> (provoke) many issues, and from time to time he would make a comment and then remain silent... he had a deep power for moving the social agency... from him I learnt the practice of disappearance in order to provoke the emergence of the other.

Fernández’s contribution to CsA’s gestation was deeply influenced by her experience working in programmes of international and development cooperation, in most cases collaborations with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. Fernández had firsthand experience of how these policies are often controversially initiated and managed by the public administrations and beyond. She committed herself especially to the development of popular education programmes for workers, many of them addressed to women collectives. As a writer, she has constantly tried to find ways to touch and empower collective modes of enunciation opening spaces for the voice of others questioning the centrality of the author figure.<sup>54</sup> Her work in both fields accentuated her need to reclaim everybody’s right to self-representation, especially among collectivities wherein this very right is generally silenced.

Fernández’s initial urgency with regards to her conception of the project was clearly

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<sup>53</sup> ‘Detonar’ is a word that Tudurí often uses as the best expression for condensing the potentialities that assemblies inhabit as if they can provoke radical transformations.

<sup>54</sup> See for example, Fernández’s novel: Fernández, E., (2008). *Inmediatamente después*. Caballo de Troya: Madrid

expressed throughout the correspondence (2005) with Tudurí and Baixauli:

I have a need for seeing reality differently. I want to stand against how ‘they’<sup>55</sup> enunciate our thoughts as if they were us talking or thinking, as if ‘they’ knew or had the right to do this. I want to defend a self-enunciation and representation of my thoughts and be at disposal for accompanying that of others.

Fernández’s desires had to do with the task of emptying a space that has been ‘occupied’ by those who have historically conferred upon themselves the right to speak for the other, as interpreters of others who never asked them to do so. Her claim is one that tries to support those whose right of speaking for themselves has been put down, favouring the loss of correlation between the one who speaks and the thing that is said. Hers is a cry for a restoration of the materiality of the world; how each of us experiences her/his own life. Fernández proposes to practice *parrhesia* as a verbal activity that implies having the courage to take the risk of relating one’s life in one’s own words. The actualization of the Greek Ancient *parrhesia* as a verbal activity of truth-telling in relation to our present use of language for communication will also be addressed in coming chapters as a fundamental gesture of CsA’s practice.

Miguel Baixauli was the only one who was already engaged in the field of cinema in these early years of exploration. He was the first to change the subject in the correspondence from *nosotros*, renaming it *Cine*. Baixauli received training in cinematographic production, especially in the areas of direction and screenplay. He studied philosophy and anthropology at the universities of Valencia and Barcelona, although he didn’t complete them. The films he has directed – *Temps d’aigua* (2008) and *Sol de Amparaes* (2014) – are influenced by how the audiovisual is employed in the field of anthropology and ethnography. His contribution to CsA’s beginnings was marked by his attitude to the cinematographic, considering that the medium, as he describes it in the correspondence (2005), could be a test for an experimental ‘anthropology of life’.

What I find decisive in cinema as an expression is that it brings together in its own dynamic all the essential processes related to life and to the management of life [...] In cinema it is always necessary to form a ‘machine’, an agency with a defined group of people and an indefinite multiplicity of realities, for it – the film –

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<sup>55</sup> ‘They’ refers here to those who hold the power and impose it to others.

to finally become the pure document of that encounter.

However, Baixauli was the least supportive of the idea that the collective production they were looking for needed to emerge from the refusal of the figure of the author. For Baixauli, this meant assuming a position in cinema that he was not yet ready to defend. His doubts about this challenge led him abandon the project once it took a clearer shape in 2008.

Should we not first become authors and then become capable of ceasing to be so? Will we first not have to experience the responsibility of making decisions to get to know later how it is possible to delegate them without our film disappearing in the vacuum of collective indecision? [...] I must admit, however, that right now I doubt that the passage (to the authorless) might be relevant because I still like the pages that speak from the *yo* (I; the self).

Tudurí, Baixauli and Fernández conducted between 2006 to 2008 an audiovisual experience in the field of education that brought them together in the realization of a project. This collaboration allowed them to test forms for collectivizing the *nosotros* with assembly-like methodologies pointing towards gestures of disappearance, the cultivation of *parrhesia* and the use of audiovisual technologies that recalled the double function of the cinematograph. Gestures that later became major enquires in their practice as the CsA collective.

The project was called *Correspondencias* and was commissioned by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. It took place between High School students from Valencia, Spain, and from Cuzco, Peru. For over a year, Baixauli and Tudurí visited the schools to carry what they called a 'video correspondence' between the two collectivities that didn't know each other. It started with the group of students from Valencia. Girls and boys of around fifteen years old were invited to speak about themselves and with their peers in front of the camera without following any script or structure. Baixauli and Tudurí then travelled to Peru and there projected the video-letter to the new group of students. Provoked by the engagement of their peers in Valencia, the reflections of the Peruvian students were again captured on camera. This, together with the original video letter, was brought back to Valencia and screened to the students. And

so on.

*Correspondencias* was an exercise that presented the students with an opportunity to look at each other's lives, with the help of a simple technical object, consisting of a camera and a projector, and using language to engage with each other. This process of thinking and seeing the other and oneself as a *nosotros* was repeated several times, transforming the writer into a reader, and the reader into a writer, while surveying a transformative process of self-definition and recognition of the unknown other and self. As the project advanced, the experience started to become a sort of a *parrhesiastic* verbal activity in which each student shared with the *nosotros* her/his thoughts by speaking them, taking the risk and finding the courage to tell the others the truth.

This exercise involving lives made speakable and listenable, composed with the help of a cinematographic technology, was already pointing at the core of the model of CsA practice. There followed a deep immersion in the history and theory of cinema, done by Tudurí thanks to Baixauli's support and guidance and constant immersion in discussions about the urgencies of the three. All of this converged in a first Manifesto (2008 [2007]) of an authorless cinematographic practice, written by Tudurí,<sup>56</sup> which explained in detail the proposal, its goals and its methodology.

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<sup>56</sup> Although CsA Manifestos have been written by Gerardo Tudurí, the texts speak from the voice of *nosotros* of the collective. In the second Manifesto (2013a,b) the collective clarifies "that his signature is not a manifestation of a personal property over the given discourse" (p:79) but refers to a function he develops agreed within the collective consisting of gathering and theorizing the discourse of the project.



**Images 1-8:** Photos of the process of *Correspondencias*. Videoletter project developed by Tudurí, Baixauli and Fernández secondary schools in Valencia and Cuzco from 2006 to 2008.

## Giving vision to life

In 2008 Tudurí and Fernández took the decision to continue the project by putting into practice the Manifesto. At this point Baixauli decided to step aside to focus on the production of his first film as a director. Tudurí and Fernández found the opportunity to test the first authorless cinematographic experience in the Patio Maravillas, a self-organized social centre in Madrid that had recently been squatted. The inhabitants of the Patio welcomed the idea and were willing to experiment with forms for narrating their own constituent process. It was in the Patio that Fernández and Tudurí found support in Daniel Goldman and David Arenal, with whom, in November 2008, they finally formed the collective of authorless cinema: Cine sin Autor.

David Arenal had a small association dedicated to developing participatory projects for the city public administrations. Before the Patio, he had been actively involved in self-organized initiatives in the city as an activist. He mentioned in the interviews (2013, 2015) that, despite his wide knowledge and experience in the field of non-formal education,

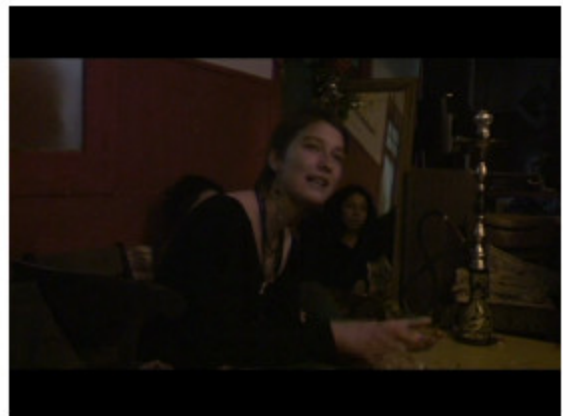
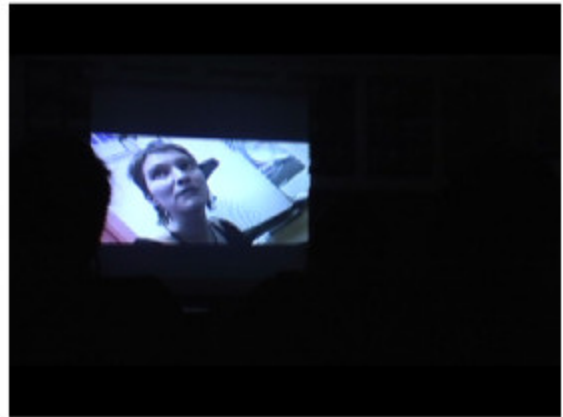




CsA's radical methodology for approaching learning through collective production was very challenging.

Before becoming part of the CsA collective, he was not especially interested in the audiovisual. He learnt all the technical knowledge necessary for producing cinema thanks to Goldmann and Tudurí, and found a deep personal interest in photography. He defined his role in the collective as a 'subsidiary one, as a militant in the shadows who chose as his main concern to take care of himself and others. A "care-agent" who tried to put the life of the collective, "as a family", always in the middle.'

Daniel Goldmann had recently arrived in Madrid from Germany to study Audiovisual Communication at the Carlos III University. He dropped by the self-organized centre looking for new inspiration and a different input to that offered by the university. In the Patio at that time were various audiovisual groups that used the space as an experimental laboratory, and among them Tudurí and Fernández's initiative caught his attention. In the interviews (2013, 2015), Goldmann described his goal as something as



simple as ‘willing to make films with people in a dignified manner, meaning, films in which people could have a role and a true implication’. The youngest in the collective, CsA’s project was Goldmann’s first ‘professional filmic experience’, and determined his approach toward his career. Also, it is significant that, as apposed to the rest in the collective, he described his experience of immersion into this practice as not at all contingent, as Baixauli for example identified, but as quite natural.

The Patio Maravillas happened to be the place of reunion, the core of the collective and a location for proving the viability of their challenge by putting into practice the theorizations convened in the first Manifesto (2008) in collaboration with the community of the social centre. At that time, the collective conceived itself as a kind of audiovisual militant activist group, so once the experience of the Patio came to an end, they considered continuing their project in different locations around the city. There is no proper film that came out of the experimental process lived at the Patio Maravillas. The eviction from the centre forced an end and the negotiations in the assembly failed to reach a consensus



**Images 9-18:** *Guión. Esto NO es una película.* Fragments of the audiovisual documents of the first test of CsA methodology in the Patio Maravillas Social Centre in 2008.

regarding a public release of the documents.

The first authorless filmic productions came out in the following years, testing the methodology with different ‘semi-formal’ collectivities. *De qué?* was produced with a group of teenagers finishing their schooling period; +101 with teenagers from an adult education centre; and *Sinfonia Tetuán* with different neighbours from the Tetuán district in Madrid. The latter was the first filmic authorless process that tried to permeate a whole neighbourhood and its enthusiastic reception persuaded the collective that the model could work on a larger scale.



**Images 19-23:** Photos of the process of production of the film *¿De qué?* Carried out with a group of teenagers of a secondary school in the Humanes borough in Madrid and released in 2011 at the Medialab-Prado Centre, Madrid.





**Images 24-29:** Photos of the process of production of the film *+101* conducted with a group of young people from the Adult Education Centre (CEPA) in Madrid. It is a fiction that portrays the students' day-to-day concerns. Released in 2012 at the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid.



**Images 30-35:** Photos of the filmic process *Sinfonía Tetuán*. This is the first film made by neighbours in Tetuan, Madrid in 2009 following CsA's methodology.



## Entering the factory

In 2012, CsA understood the drive that such a methodology could signify for transforming cultural institutions, especially in a period in which the debates about new forms of institutionalism were at stake (see Revista Carta nº2, pp. 1–10; ibid. nº 3, pp. 3–11; Sánchez Cedillo, 2008; Rowan, 2014).

The collective found a way to try out a modest temporary Factory of Authorless Cinema at Intermediae-Matadero, Madrid, where, for the first time, they found themselves in a cultural institution producing films under an authorless methodology. This scaled up the project and made CsA ask whether more institutions might also support this production? What if this mode of production reaches broader publics and is practiced more intensively and in more places in the city?

However, the Factory had still faced many challenges. Within two years, five films were collectively produced there, with five different types of temporary collectivities responsible for their production and with the collaboration of hundreds of people who wanted to learn how to produce under CsA's methodology. Films were not only made but also presented to the



**Images 36-39:** Photos of the process of production of the film *Más allá de la verdad*. This was the first film produced in the factory of Cine sin Autor with Gioacchino Di Blasi and his family in 2013. It is a film about Gioacchino's life.

public, opening them for discussion before finalization. During these years, a second Manifesto (Tudurí, 2013a,b[2012]) was published and translated into English.

The Factory confirmed the potential of CsA's model through the results of its production. The enthusiasm of people willing to explore a *nosotros* and their commitment to an experience that seemed to transform them happened in all the filmic processes. On the other hand, the Factory was also a challenge to the institution that had to confront its own desires for new institutionalism with its own limitations.

The films that came out of CsA's experimental Factory were: *Más allá de la verdad*, produced with an old man and his family; *Entre nosotros*, with a group of university students; *Locura en el colegio*, with infants from an elementary school in Madrid; *Vida Fácil*, with a group of teenagers who shared similar precarious situations; *Mátame si puedes*, with a group from the psychosocial rehabilitation centre in the district. The later soon became a web-series and the collectivity that produced it was engaged on it for three



years.

Since the factory started producing under this new archetype, and until today, the methodology has been tested by different people who, in one way or another, have become part of the collective and have responded to their necessity to experiment with this production in different places and contexts outside the Factory at Intermediae. These events expanded the production outside its walls.

In Toulouse, between 2011 and 2015 there was a stable group producing under this methodology and working out of their base in the autonomous and interdisciplinary artistic space of Mixart-Myrys.<sup>56</sup> From their experience, two filmic processes stand out. One is the work made with people from the neighbourhood of Lalande in Toulouse Nord: *De résistance et de l'espoir*. The other was made with a group of children of different ages, together with an old Algerian migrant: *Le cahier de Kader*.

In 2013, a temporary group of CsA collaborators produced the film



**Images 40-47:** Photos of *Locura en el colegio*. Around thirty children from the Crespo Primary School in Madrid collectively composed a 'horror story'.

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56 The experience of CsA Toulouse can be consulted at <https://cinemasansauteur.wordpress.com/>



*NegraBlanca* in a completely different context. They spent a year in the village of Blanca, Murcia, Spain, under the umbrella of an artist in residency project.<sup>57</sup> This group explored the *nosotros* with nearly a hundred people from the rural village who had elected to become involved in producing their own film.

Beside those who experimented with the methodology by directly producing films, teachers and researchers have introduced it into the sphere of formal education, at universities and secondary schools, and have incorporated CsA's methodology in their curricula as both theory and practice.<sup>58</sup>

As of today, CsA artistic proposal has intervened and affected different fields of work, disciplines and generations of people. It has transformed given knowledges, pedagogies, apprenticeships and contexts. But overall, it has affected the people who have been involved in producing their own films and who experienced the possibility of giving vision to life.



**Images 46-49:** Photos of *Vida fácil*. A generational portrait in which a group of university students wanted to show their precarious and nomadic reality of residency and work. It started in 2012 as part of the production in the CsA factory.

57 The process of production of this film can be seen at <https://hacemosunapeli.wordpress.com/>

58 See e.g., Villaplana, V., (2016) 'Discursive Trends: forms of collaborative film production, communication and participatory practices on internet', in *Revista AdComunica* n°12.

The people with whom CsA formed a *nosotros* have occupied cinema's production with their fictions, memories, imaginaries, stories, urgencies and, more importantly, their lives. They have assembled and demonstrate their courage to practice *parrhesia*. And they have built up other narratives, other aesthetics, sociabilities and modes of life. They have come together and negotiated their own self-representations. They have questioned the author, the canon, the work of art and any set of prescribed given values. Moreover, they have renewed their resistances by entering into the Factory and trying to 'write what was never written' (Benjamin, 2005 [1933]; p. 722), creating in this manner the basis for a new archetype of production.

Today, the Factory of authorless cinema is disassembled due to the scarcity of resources. It survived for as long as it did mainly thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of the people who made it happen. However, there is still a small network of practitioners, researchers and people that continue interrogating CsA's practice, trying to tackle and enhance its potentialities.



**Images 52-55:** Photos of *Mátame si puedes*. Produced by a collectivity that came from a Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre in Madrid, this 'armamentistic comedy' evolved into a Web-series. The collectivity were involved in production in the CsA factory longer than any other group.

Some of them still produce films with people. Others, like Eva Fernández, are challenging the authorless by exploring other media,<sup>60</sup> or by dropping it into their own fields of theory and practice, and in life itself. Making it happen, with different lengths and durations, in different places – urban or rural – with different intensities, with more or less resources, regardless of its limited market rentability.

This thesis wants to contribute to this collective overture by thinking of CsA's factory in its convergence as an authorless and cinematographic production from within the curatorial. My challenge is to make it thinkable as an alternative to the model of production imposed by the project of capitalism. Hence, in the coming chapters I propose to look into CsA's proposal and to discuss their empowering capacities. With them I invite *nosotros* to envision a new archetype of production set, in this case, by CsA's factory.

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<sup>60</sup> See for example the experimental approaches in relation to literature and writing as a mode of production that Eva Fernández, one of the founders of the collective, has recently put into practice in the project 'Somos ColaCola En Lucha.' <http://www.laovejaroja.es/cocacolaenlucha.htm>



## SECOND PART

### **The factory of CsA** **A new archetype for production**

## CHAPTER 5

### **The authorless gesture and language: dissolving power**

This chapter is the first of three that form the second part of the thesis. Their focus is to reorganize the stances that gave birth to the archetype of production with the industrial factory. Hence, to rethink structurally the forms of production that set up the agency between men/women-machine and situate value away from economy. My proposal begins in agreement with Marx (1973, see introduction) that work is a necessary element for the definition and transformation of life. Following this assumption, I take production as a fundamental element, but I refuse to acknowledge it only under the notion that the capitalist project has imposed since modernity. From now on, the challenge is to propose a new archetype for envisioning a form of production with which to bring back the life that ‘they owe to us’. (EZLN, 1997; n.p.)

To propose a new factory, the factory of CsA, is to reaffirm the Marxist idea of having to transform work for life transformation. But as we have already seen, any notion of work will not be useful for the task at hand and yet refusing to work hasn’t always been of empowerment. In the first half of this thesis, I have problematized the different strategies that have employed work as a means to capture life and, shown how ‘refusals to work’ have been strategic for the expansion of work into more domains of life. Leaving the factory has not been effective because it has only served to expand its archetype everywhere we fled. Hence, within this thesis we will be aiming to remain in the factory yet looking to ways of returning life to life. In the following chapters I will concentrate on explaining how to transform the modern archetype of production in the factory of CsA in a way that production can also give vision to life. The challenge is to find a new entry into production that might also be an alternative to the strategies that base its resistances on acts of refusal.

It was Berardi, one of the thinkers of post-Operaism, who drew attention to the possible misunderstandings that the call for a refusal to work claimed by the Operaists could have provoked. He clarified that such a call should not be understood simply as a call to stop working. As he said, it should rather incorporate its deeper insights in understanding such a refusal as ‘the daily action of withdrawal from exploitation, of rejection of the obligation to produce surplus value, and to increase the value of capital, reducing the

value of life'. (Berardi, 2003b; p. 1)

Marx (1996 [1877]; pp. 541–42; 2009; pp. 36–42) was very clear that, in the organization of production, there was a fundamental obstacle related to the ownership of its means. His view of an alienated or estranged labour departed by problematizing the constraints that private property imposes within production and which, in his view, condemned workers from the outset to sacrifice their autonomy in all the activity of production: from the things they produced, to how they produced with others, as well as how they signified themselves in production. This chapter takes Marx's problematization as the foundational change for the new archetype.

The first gesture in CsA's factory is the authorless. This gesture is a claim for the author's disappearance and for opening production to the *nosotros*. The authorless notion of CsA refers, precisely, to the gesture of disappearance that is constitutive for the new production. This gesture is the first, as it operates as an opening gesture. But it is also one that is sustained throughout the whole production. One in which the other two posterior gestures – the parrhesiastic and the cinematographic – support themselves. This is the first, and it is necessary for the foundation of a new production and also for its durability.

For the purpose of discussing the authorless, language and literary criticism are the two pillars in this chapter, largely for what they were able to empower in the 1950s and sixties as well as for what they failed to become later in terms of production. The expansion of the industrial factory into the diffuse and social factories meant that society had to adapt to the qualities of the new machine of computation and to the Internet. Computers were the first 'thinking' machines and also the first to have a language that, although it was not made for communication, played a fundamental role in transforming the existing communication system, which, until then, had been informed by literature. In this chapter, the demands claimed by literary criticism in the fifties and sixties against the history of literature, its authors and its institutions are problematized by placing them as 'actors' of the change into a new system of communication that characterizes the form of production in the diffuse and social factory.

With a view to explaining the value of the authorless gesture in CsA production, I will discuss in some detail how literature experimented with the above set of challenges. CsA's claim for the author's disappearance will help to question the mode in which



authority was put on hold in those decades by the intellectual class helping capital's logic in its achievement of a prosumer society. One in which 'the man of consumption, insofar as he consumes, "became" a producer'. (Foucault, 2008; p. 245) I will also address how we forgot to take care of a language that, being common to all, ended up, as Pal Peibart (2009; p. 36) recognized, expropriated by capital in the diffuse and social factory.

The notion of disappearance proposed with the authorless gesture challenges authority by overcoming the limitations of the death of the author proposed by literary criticism, as well as by putting forth language to recuperate its capacity for 'thinking the being in the world with others'. (Heidegger, 1998; p. 248) This is a gesture that empowers the authorless in terms of giving entrance to a new production undertaken by the *nosotros* and empowering language. In order to signify the importance of CsA's distinct approach, the proposal is to re-enact, today, the right to question authority already invoked by literary criticism and to do it in a manner in which the re-appropriation of the void left by the author's disappearance would not be subsumed by labour, making the old authors become infinite-less 'bearers of capital' in the form of entrepreneurs of the self. (Foucault, *ibid.*) The new claim would instead open forms for recuperating the honesty of the task.

The disappearance of the authorless gesture performed by CsA in order to start production anew proposes an alternative to the mode being already performed in a manner in which the 'I', or even the 'we', won't be able to forget the *nos-otros*. Moreover, the radicality of CsA's disappearance allows us to bring language beyond literature and its system of authorization, towards life and existence. To fully explain this, I will also look to Martin Heidegger's notion of language, considering that CsA's first gesture reactivates the possibilities of thinking our beings in language against its total subsumption by the system of communication, expanded throughout the diffuse and social factory.

## **The author(less) and the *nos(otros)***

When entering into CsA's Factory at Intermediae in Matadero, Madrid, what was most often seen were groups of people assembling. The emergence of these assemblies, constantly negotiating production together, is the verification of the constitution of a *nosotros* through the gesture of disappearance in an authorless practice. This first gesture is the inauguration of CsA's production in their attempt to open a constituent *nosotros* that is founded on the refusal to hold the position of authority or property historically sustained by the author.

As we have just seen, the authorless was first enunciated by Tudurí in his correspondence with Fernández and Baixauli. Tudurí thought that pursuing the authorless would allow them to dissolve into the social within the emerging voice of the *nosotros*. The actual access into an authorless practice was formulated much later with the question: If you could make a film, what it would be about?

Fernández started sharing her urgencies with Tudurí and Baixauli precisely because she had been in search of the *nosotros* in writing. While finishing her first novel, published in 2008, she recognized already the limitations she felt in her voice as a writer. Her attempt to reach the *nosotros* in that novel was only present through the voice of the 'I' that spoke in the form of the 'we', that is, through the author that authorizes others through her own existence.

The authorless gesture in CsA's practice is a clear refusal to produce in the first person of the 'I' or to speak for the other. It also denies any production in which the other's only role is to complete something that already exists. For a decade, Fernández had to rehearse by herself all the challenges of CsA's production in order to find the *nosotros* within writing. In 2016, Fernández published the first authorless project in writing called *Somos CocaCola En Lucha: una autobiografía colectiva*. In the prologue of the book Fernández explains:

This book is a collective autobiography. Is an oral story that tells in the first person how 236 workers and union members of the Coca Cola factory in Fuenlabrada beat the giant. From the 'I am Carmen', 'I am Juan Carlos', the day to day life of the

workers can be read [...] We have put into practice the authorless because we have changed the social contract that people generally establish with culture. This time, culture has not been given to us, but we have transformed culture into a weapon useful for our collective realization [...] to help ourselves in being. (Somos CocaCola En Lucha, 2016; pp. 11 and 15)

The disappearance of the author that CsA claims with the authorless cannot be presented as a new radical proposal for the present unless we explore precedent calls for the death of the author and collate them. As we have seen already in previous chapters, the sixties were a landmark against authority. The changes taking place as a consequence of the protests raised in the socio-political domain had an echo in the artistic sphere as well, with proposals of new ways for experimenting with publics and opening a role for them in production. Yet, even before this, in the early fifties, literary criticism had already started to question the role of the author and the institution with more radical stands.

‘What matter who’s speaking’, which appeared in *Texts for Nothing* (Beckett, 2010[1954]; p. 43) in the voice of Samuel Beckett, who held to question his own role as a writer at a moment of change in his work, embraced a whole set of questions that unfolded and remained in play for the following decades in the field of literature. In *Molly* [1951], *Malone Dies* [1951] and *The Unnameable* [1953], Beckett persistently invoked these questions, presenting and hiding himself behind the text that he used to interpellate to his own function. In these works, one sees his voice dwelling in different forms of the third person, pressing himself behind and beyond the ‘I’, making explicit his doubts about whether to remain present or to ‘disappear’. *So it is I who speak, all alone, since I can’t do otherwise. No, I am speechless. Talking of speaking, what if I went silent? What would happen to me then? Worse than what is happening?* (Beckett, 2010[1953]; p. 51)

Before authority was interrogated by students at universities in the sixties, the field of literature had already started to manifest this concern with their own set of enquires projecting them in all directions where any trace of authority was felt. Critical literature doubted its own medium, the course of its own history and even the role of its authors. Jean-Paul Sartre started to question literature in *What is Literature* [1948]. Roland Barthes proposed a ‘degree-zero’ in order to start writing anew in *Writing Degree Zero* [1953]. And Maurice Blanchot called upon disappearance to come forth, refusing words

in order to maintain thought intact in 'Literature and the Right to Death' [1949]. It should be said that the problematization of the authorial was addressed concerning the limitations that these meant with regards to the exploration of creativity and expression rather than enquiring into its individualising effects. In a way, this set of claims never allowed authors to think of their disappearance as a foundation of a *nosotros*.

Roland Barthes [1967] cleared the disruptions that were open in the previous decade with his text *The Death of the Author*, in which he liberated the author's 'responsibility' by calling for a symbolic death. With this gesture, he strengthened the independence of the text over the author once it has been written and emphasized an aperture opening to endless transformations that were to take place in the encounters of readers with texts. Only Foucault, in 'What is an Author' [1969] took Beckett's enquiry as an important step towards the possibility of the *nosotros*. As a way of testing Beckett's challenge, if 'it does not matter who is speaking', Foucault proposed to re-examine the empty spaces left by the author's disappearance:

It is obviously insufficient to repeat empty slogans: the author has disappeared; God and man died a common death. Rather, we should attentively observe, along its gaps and fault lines, its new demarcations, and the reapportionment of this void; we should await the fluid functions released by this disappearance. (Foucault, 1980; p. 121).

Over about two decades, literary criticism destabilized the organising parameters of the field by holding to question the very parameters, the field itself – literature – and its author-producers. The events of May '68 were certainly mirroring these urgencies by questioning authority, but it is always in the spaces left empty where the battle unfolds, as Foucault stated. The key is not about absence but about what that absence is able to produce if the act of disappearance is not simply a strategy to hide authority. The challenge proposed by Foucault was a call for a real and encouraging act of disappearance that had to surpass the limitations of the authorial. Once the gesture pursues that intention, the question would then be about how to keep the space that is left empty away from power. Whether disappearance holds onto the task of writing and in so doing produces liberation, or whether, on the other hand, disappearance means to silence the expansion of authority.

Friedrich Kittler (1999; p. 4), whose areas of research intersect the studies of literature and media theory, presents literature as the communication system that preceded the Internet. As he says, literature had the role of generating, storing and distributing communication before the invention and implementation of the new storage and transmission media. If we look at literature in this way, as the prevailing system of communication until very recently, all the criticism of the fifties and the sixties around the death of the author and the transcendence of the field can be seen as an anticipation of the challenges that the new communication system and its technologies were about to introduce.

British journalist Paul Manson in his recently published book dedicated to *Postcapitalism* (2015; p. 25) qualifies our epoch as a time in which any emergence takes the form of a disappearing act. In earlier chapters, we saw the disappearing of our bodies in the context of the expansion of work production and the birth of simulacra as a virus eating the real referent in the computerized cinematographic production. But the figure of the author's disappearance was put on hold even before we had fully reached the times in which technology was destined to transform any event of emergence into the form of a disappearing act.

During these decades, the history of technology accounts for some important machinic innovations that could have influenced directly or indirectly the imaginary of the critical people and questioned this affirmation. For example, Alan Turing's Universal Machine, which was invented in 1936, was the first able to store programmed instructions in an electronic memory. The invention of the 'Giant Brain' (ENIAC – Electronic Numerical Integrator And Computer) developed by the United States Army was announced in the press in 1946. As for the Internet, the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) promoted by the United States Department of Defence, had already invented the precursor of Internet in 1968.

Maybe it should be recognized that the author was put on hold but was never willing to disappear. And if so, it is worth speculating that if the challenge of this disappearance had been taken farther, literary criticism would have had the possibility to envision the emergence of a new system of communication in which the *nosotros* would have had its own voice as an agency in production.

However, perforce this thought can be only speculative since the present system of

communication presented its authorial figures some time ago: ‘Google needs to be the only search company; Facebook has to be the only place you construct your online identity, Twitter where you post your thoughts, i-tunes where you go to the online music store...’ (Manson, 2015; p. 119) ‘They’, like the old author, silence themselves behind the ‘text’, behind the structure, never really disappearing. And to the speaker – who is also the reader – they speak, and in speaking they get transformed into prosumers, commodifying and being commodified, giving themselves freely for the capture of their freedom. Forgetting. Putting themselves at a loss. Being unable to recognize themselves in the detritus of their speeches. Speaking through language, but using a language that does not speak.

The suspension of the discipline of the author already proposed in the fifties and sixties was not transformed into the unity of a creative *nosotros*, despite the Internet’s capacity to support and propel collectivities. Instead, it served to shape the strategy with which modern production expanded the values of the ‘free’ individual, who was in constant competition with him/herself. After ‘the death of the author’, authors(*nos*) and readers(*otros*) became a dispersal of self authorized entrepreneurs that forgot their language. And this favoured a new system of communication that, as Pelbart says, is characterized by its ‘totalitarian communicativeness’ that provides an emptied language that speaks for ourselves. (2009; p. 36)

For this reason, I propose to investigate other forms in which the disappearance of the author could be performed anew. In the following sections, I will defend that the proposal that, echoing Foucault in the late sixties, CsA’s gesture takes care of, and attentively observes, the reapportionment of the void that the act of disappearance provides for sustaining that same void. The questions raised in those decades by some of the intellectuals that felt the need to enquire into the author will be of help in distinguishing the claim that the CsA collective performs today under the same motto – ‘the author should disappear’ –, although addressed through different manoeuvres and therefore having different consequences. A claim that can also actualize the potentialities it once held and that might be of help, especially because the present system of communication still informs the social factory.

## Language as a common horizon.

*Thus, regarding language, it is our shell and our antennae; it protects us against others and informs us about them; it is a prolongation of our senses, a third eye which is going to look into our neighbour's heart. We are within language as within our body. We feel it spontaneously while going beyond it toward other ends, as we feel our hands and our fear; we perceive it when it is the other who is using it, as we perceive the limbs of others. There is the word which is lived and the word which is met. But in both cases it is in the course of an undertaking, either of me acting upon others, or the other upon me. The word is a certain particular moment of action and has no meaning outside of it.*

Sartre, 1950; p. 20

In 1953, Roland Barthes (1970) published the French edition of his first work on literary criticism *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*, a critique of the history of literature as well as a proposal for giving writing a new function. With this work, Barthes questioned not only the figure of the modern writer and his predecessors, but of literature itself in its historical construction: from the seventeenth-century French tradition of classical and official literature that spread power as the 'natural' form of communication, to the nineteenth century onwards, once industrialism had transformed it into a part of a larger system of ownership and property (authors and publishers).

Barthes' essay is seen as a continuation<sup>61</sup> of some of the concerns previously addressed in *What is Literature?* (1950[1948]) by Jean-Paul Sartre, who interrogated the field with fundamental questions such as 'what is writing', 'why one writes' and 'for whom'. Sartre defended writing as a mode of engagement rather than as an artistic expression, even emphasizing his political approach and problematizing how the task of the writer had been historically defined. Even if all these revisions concerning authority were already claimed from different perspectives, it wasn't until Barthes' proposal of 'The Death of the Author' [1967] that not only the figure of the writer was de-centred yet the voice of the reader was considered as if it could become part of the process of production.

Sartre proposed that writing be seen as the utilization of language in the same manner that the speaker uses words, considering that language is a horizon common to all. It is

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<sup>61</sup> See the preface written by Susan Sontag in 1968 as an introduction to the book. I refer in the bibliography a later edition but that also includes Susan Sontag's preface. See Barthes, 1970.

through his justification of why it is prose, and not poetry – the form closest to language –, that his understanding of writing gets clearer. According to Sartre, prose uses words to name the world, which implies a perpetual sacrifice in which the name remains linked to the object. For the prose writer, words are not objects but designations for objects and they correctly indicate certain things or notions. Contrary to prose, Sartre argues, poetry continually takes names away from objects. The poet considers words as things and not as signs, so the poet creates outside language and uses words as verbal images.

As language is within reach of any one and its end is communication, for writing – says Sartre – one only needs a gesture of engagement with the object, as happens with speaking. Both, writing and speaking are an act for revealing to others and to oneself what is said with the words with which one names the world. ‘If you name the behaviour of an individual, you reveal it to him; he sees himself. And since you are at the same time naming it to all others, he knows that he is seen at the moment he sees himself.’ (ibid; p. 22) Hence, the one who speaks discloses parts of the world and knows that the act of revealing with words is an engagement with the world to change it: there are no authors and readers, but an exchange of engagements through the way words are lived and met by those who engage.

In *Writing Degree-Zero* (1970), Barthes does not try – as Sartre does – to define writing but rather to transcend it. Barthes does not mention Sartre but he begins his book with the chapter “What is Writing?”, recalling Sartre’s second chapter in *What is Literature?* For Barthes, writing is the History of an alienated literature and, also, an alienating personal utterance, and hence, he proposes abolishing them, offering the liberating function of *écriture*, a mode of writing established ‘outside the permanence of grammatical norms and stylistic constants’. (ibid.; p. 14)

Sartre proposed writing as an engagement at the disposal of all through language: Barthes puts language in motion, transforming this engagement into a function liberated from the traps of history (from the ‘natural’ form of communication and from the larger system of ownership and property): a function that produces a multiplication in the modes of writing, liberating one’s inner qualities. It is a mode of writing that, as he says, ‘brooks no limits and can not be permanently stabilized or held in check by any particular strategy of writing’. (ibid.; p. xxi).



However, if literature transcends itself thanks in part to the efforts to sustain writing in a language that is common to all, and it is put into practice through an engagement that unfolds in multiple free forms through the function of *écriture*, why does the author remain as the sovereign power, as a name that is needed for authorization?

The first step that Barthes took in his call for the author's disappearance was to interrupt the process of individualization forged throughout history by the author with his proposal of the 'death of the author'. According to him, the author should refuse his name (as author) to confront *écriture* in a mode as neutral as possible: as a 'colourless writing' said Barthes; '*l'écriture blanche*' said Sartre. This act will turn the writer's function into one that enables the reunion of the writer with the work and with the reader, in order to recognize the multiplicity of authors. It seems that the author needs the mediation of the work made and the role of the reader in order to rehearse the gesture of the author's disappearance, something that is very different to CsA's proposal for an authorless gesture of disappearance.

Barthes strategy for questioning the authority of the author towards his own text is assembled by once again giving precedence to language: '...where language alone acts, "performs," and not "oneself".' (Barthes, 1977; p. 145) Language is presented as the structure that precedes any narration and the writer is an 'eternal copyist', inscribing a particular zone of language, a kind of craftsman who is skilled in using a particular code. Barthes undermines the author's empire and ruling power – gained as a 'résumé and a result of the capitalist ideology' (ibid.) – by defeating its prestigious genius category, considering the writer – who succeeds the author – as one of multiple contributors to the enormous dictionary endlessly being composed. Readers necessarily become contributors for achieving the unity of the text. 'Someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted.' (ibid.; p. 148)

However, what made Barthes' move relevant also made it problematic. It was relevant in so far as it opened a space for the reader who, until then, had not been recognised as a producer, and problematic because such a space was not sufficient to constitute a *nosotros* in charge of a new production. The following decades showed how this move was utilized to favour the increase in the range of production for consumption.

## **The authorless gesture of disappearance.**

*Before participating in this film I thought that I had not done anything in my life, that my life was not important, but now I see all this, after so many months working, remembering our whole life I realize that I have done many things.*<sup>62</sup>

Matilde Blanco, participant in *NegraBlanca* authorless film

CsA refer in their second manifesto to their authorless gesture as a ‘suicide’, ‘a cultural kamikaze act’, ‘a purely political decision’. (Tudurí, 2013; p. 53) They define it as the first necessary act in order to create a new system of film production. In the section entitled ‘Filmmakers and Professionals. Authorial suicide’, CsA explain this ‘suicide’ that, as a gesture of disappearance, I will put in relation to the ‘death of the author’, as also claimed in the fifties and sixties as a disappearance gesture:

We say it is ‘authorial suicide’ when filmmakers or film or audiovisual professionals voluntarily give up the proprietary power that comes with their status as professionals, executives or investors. This ‘suicide’ does not repress their personal expression, it erases it while they are engaged in collective work, subjugates it so that their knowledge and skills can be offered to the group.

Authorial suicide means giving up the privilege and exclusivity of sole authorship and ownership of decisions relating to the production and management of films. Authorship is given up so that it can be placed in the hands of the group, to create a social arena that allows the shared aspirations, needs and imaginary to emerge in all their fullness. ‘Without-authorship’ is a direct attack on the ownership of intellectual property that technical and business elites wield over the film capital that cinema is made from, and over their production and exploitation. A cultural kamikaze action.

By ‘film capital’ we mean all the elements that come into play to produce films: money, technology, people, places, time, ideas, feelings, interests, know-how, objects.

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<sup>62</sup> This testimony is gathered in the doctoral thesis of Helena Fernández de Llanos (2016). Her investigation gives account of her own experience as an authorless producer of the film *NegraBlanca* conducted as part of a residency programme in Blanca, Murcia, Spain. See: <http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3496&context=edissertations>

Authorial suicide is a purely political decision. It seeks to overthrow the old authorship methods and to provoke – from within the profession – the democratisation of cinematic processes.

By the ‘authorial’ we mean the aspects relating to power and ownership that distort or obstruct social authorship as a communal power. (Tudurí, 2013; p. 53–54)

For CsA, the authorless gesture is about to put forth disappearance. Rather than writing followed by a silence that lets readers engage with the text, the author is about to disappear in the first place, acknowledging that, since language is common to all, anyone can engage with it in naming the world themselves. The authorless gesture is not about disappearing once one has put oneself in writing and inviting the reader meet the author’s text, as Barthes proposed. Instead, ‘authors’ open a space for the *nosotros*, proposing they use the liberating function of *écriture* through their engagement in language. It is using Sartre’s understanding of the writer and the reader to turn over to others the task of projecting oneself on the blank page and, in so doing, ‘liberate’ readers of their future, of the thousand of words that separate them from the end of the book.

It is to break any position already given to authors and readers. It is also refusing to start with any of the given positions assigned to literature and its history. It is ‘to abolish literature’. Even to the extreme of proposing the disappearance of the last writer on earth,<sup>63</sup> as Blanchot (2003, [1959]; p. 218) did in *The Book to Come*. If the author is met only with silence once the work is made, the reader still meets the writer once the writer ends the task through the author’s words. And words are, as Sartre said, that which brings things into existence and should be at disposal of all for engaging in the transformation of the world.

But whose words are these – Foucault would ask hypothetically – once God and ‘man’ have died a common death? What CsA invokes is the withdrawal of the author to give space to the murmur of the multitude, not one that is difficult to hear, but a steady collective voice that takes over the function of the author: a function that does not belong to the writer nor the reader, but to anyone who engages in the world through language.

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<sup>63</sup> In one of the sections of *The Book to Come*, Blanchot makes us imagine that speech falls silent in Rimbaud, and dies with him. He does it to imagine a sort of rebirth of writing and literature. The imagination of an era without language that allows us to re-enter both the task and the field. See chapter 24. ‘Death of Last Writer’, in Blanchot, 2003; pp. 218–24)

In the authorless film *Le cahier de Kader* (2014), the voiceover in the credits at the beginning tells how the disappearance in CsA gives entrance to the *nosotros*:

We didn't know it yet. Kader and his stories would become the theme of the film. [...] The starting question was made to all (the kids, Kader and Nabila). If you could make a film, what film would it be? And the cinematographic dispositive was open to everybody. All the participants made this film thanks to a permanent dialogue learning to know each other.

CsA inaugurates the writer's function anew, believing in the power that the writing function itself poses for confronting oneself with the very self. Therefore, CsA's renunciation should give space to everybody's creative capacity: to the *nosotros* who, because we write or we speak, confront the work of writing and of language itself. There is not a 'thing' superior to men and women (art) but there is them that in writing sketch the world through their work, a work that turns back to *poiesis*, to creation, instead of remaining as labour.

The values at stake in this creative effort, the authenticity of this effort; it is everything which, above the work that is constantly being dissolve in things, maintains the model, the essence, and the spiritual truth of that work just as the writer's freedom – of anyone who happens to write – wanted to manifest it and can recognize it as its own. The goal is not what the writer makes but the truth of what he makes. (Blanchot, 1995[1953]; p. 308)

The creative act is valued here as an act of confrontation with the very self. It does not matter whether the book is good or bad, famous or forgotten. Its only function resides in its action, in production: in thinking and revealing oneself to the very self and to others, through language. Performing the seductive title of Barthes' essay *Writing Degree-Zero* by trying to achieve a form of production in which the writer's freedom is constantly rehearsed. An experience that in Barthes' words 'brooks no limits and can not be permanently stabilized or held in check by any particular strategy of writing'. (ibid.)

CsA's notion of disappearance is an attempt to break the history of alienated representation. 'To write is to finally... refuse to write.' 'To write is first of all to want to

destroy the temple before building it.’ (Blanchot, 2003[1959], p. 206). To transform work (labour) into creation and to delve into the essence of things and of being in the world. CsA gesture should be interpreted within labour production parameters, not as a refusal to work but as its transformation into creation, inaugurating a new beginning for work in production. Without exiting the factory, but accomplishing the task in a radically different way. Bringing back *poiesis* to the notion of work and understanding it as creation and as the sustenance of life. The refusal to work is a refusal to work that way. Its inauguration takes place in the authorless disappearing gesture that allows it to enter production anew.

This is a creative practice in which work becomes art and art becomes life. An attempt to re-enact what the ‘death of the author’ pursued in the sixties before art and life were captured by work production. As the first step in the new archetype of production, and through the authorless gesture, ‘workers’ conform a *nosotros* in production having language as a horizon in which to engage and *écriture* as the different modes in which to project their ‘lives’ as an absolute concern for truth.

### **Entering the ‘house of being’**

*Words are water wells in whose search the saying pierces the earth*

Heidegger quoted by Garcés (2015; p. 72)

Up until now, the field of literature and of its critique has been useful for re-negotiating a more radical stand for a disappearing gesture than the one led by Barthes. It is the field of literature that we should thank, as Susan Sontag recognized,<sup>64</sup> for opening new views regarding categories that had been so far unquestioned in the field of visual arts. Literary criticism was the spearhead that challenged other artistic media to address, although later on, such important concerns. But language is more empowering than to be merely interpellated as the horizon of the *nosotros* that is gazed in common for assigning names to objects, as Sartre defined. We can think about language beyond its function, against or within the work of literature: to rather think of it even more profoundly.

I want to explore language in its relation to existence by taking it as the productive medium that *écriture* envisioned, but considering life as the ‘thing’ being produced

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<sup>64</sup> See Susan Sontag preface in Barthes, 1970; p: xxiii

instead of the book. I propose to look at language and life, and uncover their specific relationality since, in the end, both language and life get commodified by capital in the production processes of the modern factory. From now on, language will be explored in its engagement with life for the constitution of a new production. For that reason CsA's authorless gesture will be proposed as an alternative with which to re-appropriate, not only language, but life itself.

For the task at hand, it is interesting to look at Martin Heidegger.<sup>65</sup> Around the same time as the interrogations on literature and the author were being addressed, Heidegger was re-opening the question of the 'being', 'rescuing it from oblivion' (Garcés, 2015; p. 118); a mobilization that indeed was an influence in the thinking of literary criticism. With the help of Heidegger's conception of existence and language as the anchor, my proposal is to point to some of the empowering capacities of language to transcend the limitations that were already found in the categories of the author and the work of art (the book, for example). The proposal is to lift up authors to their undeniable human condition as beings and their work to the undeniable condition of existence.

Heidegger's 'Letter on Humanism' was written in 1946 as a letter to Jean Beaufret<sup>66</sup> and published in 1947 as an extended essay. In it, Heidegger (1998) declared that the *Ek-sistenz*<sup>67</sup> of the being takes place in language. The human being, according to Heidegger's view, is necessarily always inscribed in the world – for which he used the word *Dasein*<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Martin Heidegger has created his own language for his thought. He has invented a whole set of terminology considering that the terms already being at disposal or in use were not accurate enough to express his thinking. He has received much criticism in this regard and has been accused for his cryptic nature and his excessive eagerness of authenticity. His special terminology does make his thought more complex but at the same time very unique. I will just be using few of his terms, for which I include more extended clarifications in footnotes.

<sup>66</sup> 'Letter on Humanism' (Heidegger, 1998; pp. 239–76) is a work by Heidegger written in 1946 in response to a series of questions by Heidegger's French colleague Jean Beaufret with regard to Sartre's address, given at the *Club Maintenant* in Paris in 1945. The letter was published in 1946 as 'Existentialism is a Humanism'. See Sartre, 2007

<sup>67</sup> *Existenz*: 'existence'. In traditional philosophy *Existence* and *Dasein* are terms that refer to subsistence in the effective reality. In the scholastic ontology, *existence* is defined in correlation with essence: *essence* refers to what being is, and *existence* points to the subsistence in the effective reality. For Heidegger *Existenz* is referred differently. In *Being and Time* he already uses *Existenz* to characterize the mode of being of the *Dasein*, especially to indicate its quality of a *being* open to the world and not just the fact that a being is. *Existenz* refers to the Latin *existire*, to the opening of oneself to the 'there'. After *Being and Time*, Heidegger starts using the term *Ek-sistenz* to empathize this difference. (Escudero, 2009; p. 83).

<sup>68</sup> Heidegger uses the expression *Dasein* 'exclusively to indicate the ontologic constitution of the human life, which it is characterized by its aperture (*Da*) to the (*Being*) and by its capacity to interrogate its sense. In the young Heidegger, *Dasein* is one of his main technical terms. (...) *Dasi-en* is used with the conviction that human existence can not be understood as an I encapsulated in itself, but its being consists precisely of keeping itself open to the world. *Dasein* points at the being that interrogates its own being. (...) Heidegger appeals sometimes to the *Da-sein*. The *Da* ought to highlight the constitutive opening of *Dasein* with regards to being-in-the-world as such, that is, the original and

meaning 'being there' – and conceives language as its house, as 'the house of being', which is put into action in thinking the 'clearing of the being', men and women disclosing the being. The 'letter on Humanism' (1998)[1946] is the first piece of writing accomplished by Heidegger after the Second World War. It comes after his major approach into the 'Being' with *Being and Time* (1996)[1927] and before his essay *On the Way to Language* (1971a)[1959]. This condensed work is an argument against Sartre's (2007)[1946] previous address in his text called 'Existentialism is a Humanism'. For Heidegger (1998; p. 248), human beings are destined to think the *Ek-sistenz* of their being and not merely to give account of the nature and history of their constitution and activities. What the human being is, Heidegger argues, lies in their *Ek-sistenz*, which is always open to the world, and revealed in the 'clearing of its being' that is achieved through language. That is why for Heidegger language is the house of being and men and women dwell in it.

Sartre (2007, pp. 22–23) defended that existence (as subsistence) precedes essence (as being) and therefore, what 'we are' is established by 'what we do'. Heidegger reverses this by saying that it is man -and women-, in thinking their *essence* through language, that sets him/herself up in *Ek-sistenz*. Therefore, *essence* is for Heidegger prior to *existence*, and human *essence* is led forth, unfolded, by thinking through language into *Ek-sistenz*. Heidegger writes:

Language is the house of being. In its home human beings dwell. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home. Their guardianship accomplishes the manifestation of being insofar as they bring this manifestation to language and preserve it in language through their saying. Thinking does not become action only because some effect issues from it or because it is applied. Thinking acts insofar as it thinks. Such action is presumably the simplest and at the same time the highest because it concerns the relation of being to humans. But all working or effecting lies in being and is directed toward beings. Thinking, in contrast, lets itself be claimed by being so that it can say the truth of being. Thinking accomplishes this letting. Thinking is *l'engagement par l'Etre pour l'Etre* [engagement by being for being]. (Heidegger, 1998; p. 239)

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previous aperture that should not be confused with a being here simply local; an aperture that in the years posterior to *Being and Time* is defined as *Lichtung* ("clearing") of the being.' (Escudero, 2009; p. 63).

For Heidegger the *Ek-sistenz* of the human being not only takes place through language in the thinking of the being. Moreover, this ‘clearing of the being’ takes place in ‘there’, in the *Da of Dasein*, in the being-in-the-world. The human being, says Heidegger, sustains the *Da-Sein* in that s/he takes the *Da*, what is there in the world, into care. Philosopher Marina Garcés explains such a disclosure of the being in the *Da-sein* as a step that Heidegger takes considering that men -and women- are inscribed in the world and, therefore and because of that, have a relation of attention and care to others.

This being inscribed, Garcés says ‘is not a circumstance exterior to the being, but its original constitution [...] human existence is found already always thrown in the world and in it men and women understand their possibilities through language’. (Garcés, 2015; p. 122) They interrogate themselves about their being, and they do it through language. In their interrogation, in thinking their being, the being is never a being in isolation, but a being there in the world, and therefore exposed and involved, open to the world, in relation with things, other beings and other possibilities.

In this sense, in considering the thinking of being through language and the being as a being there-in-the-world, we can return to – and go further than – Sartre, with whom, earlier, we reached the point of seeing language as something common to all and in which one engages in speaking. To go further means considering that the ‘speaker’ not only engages but, rather, that in engaging discloses her/his being-in-the-world thinking through language about *Ek-sistenz*. That is, about being and caring and about the ‘clearing of the very being’ in relation with the *Da-sein*, the being-in-the-world. Language therefore becomes more profound as it is common to all, but also as it is the medium to access the being, its *Ek-sistenz*, always in its relation to others.

Having Heidegger in mind, we can return to CsA’s authorless gesture and explore it further. In a very different manner to the gesture of disappearance proposed by literary criticism, CsA’s gesture is an attempt to let the other address its *Ek-sistenz* through language. Barthes claims that the author, in writing and speaking, already appropriates language. An author takes the position of the writer and creates that of the reader. In this case the author’s enunciation cancels the possibility for readers to use language to speak for themselves, and in so doing, to disclose their being. Cancelling, for them, their use of the world of language, cancelling as well their different possibilities for being in the world through language. Not allowing them to find words with which to name their



experience.

CsA's authorless gesture is an invitation offered to others to find in language its power of estrangement, addressing other experiences of language dwelling in the margins of a knowledge proper (Foucault, 1968; p. 76). A power that for Heidegger had long ago been put on hold by forcing the interpretation of language through 'logic' and 'grammar'. Language has fallen, says Heidegger, 'under the dictatorship of the public realm, which decides in advance what is intelligible and what must be rejected as unintelligible'. (Heidegger, 1998; p. 242)

CsA tries to open a space in which the power of 'other-*otros* languages', still based on the same common language but resultant of other experiences that are foreign if not alien to those of the author, can be made speakable for the constitution of a new production by the *nos-otros*. The production that anyone can bring while thinking their being-in-the-world through language. The reader, according to Barthes' 'Death of the Author', always enters into a world that has been prescribed and its order already defined by a set of arrangements previously established by the writer as well as by literature.

CsA authorless gesture is not invoked through an announcement of an act of disappearance. CsA transforms the authorial disappearance into an invitation made to everyone who comes to produce together, to work together. The invitation is: If you could make a film, what film will you do? And anyone willing to produce has to engage from 'degree zero', in speaking through language, without an author, with his/her very being and that of others. CsA's gesture is rather ambitious since, for them, the disappearance of the author sets in language a double take, that of creating another entrance to the artwork, as well as that of recuperating one's life in the being-in-the-world. 'To know how to question,' said Heidegger, 'means to know how to wait, even a whole lifetime.' (ibid., 1976; p. 206)

Within CsA's gesture, it is not enough that language is understood as something common to all simply because we all use it. Language should be recognized as the foundation, as the very access to thinking the being of oneself, of anyone, in-the-world. Not only as a horizon towards which we all gaze, but also as a constitutive experience in which we merge. Here is where Heidegger's conception of language as that which gives beings their being in the world – *Dasein* – is very useful. It is through language that CsA returns to the

always-unfinished question of being. A human being that, as we saw in previous chapters, has been entirely colonized by capital that spreads the factory inwards (inside the being) and outwards (outside to the global world).

Sartre attributed to the prose writer – and not to the poet – the virtue of being closer to language for her/his perpetual effort of using words in such a way that the name always remains to the object named. In contradistinction, for Heidegger the task is not to use words to name objects but to find the speech of thinking and, for him, such a speech is by nature poetic. (ibid., 1998) Heidegger attributes to thought and to poetic creation the power of liberating language from grammar and logics, and giving it a more original essential framework.

For CsA, the entrance to production is very Heideggerian, since one should enter guided not through knowledge but through experiencing language as the tool that gives access to the word, to things and to others. This relation is not, however, a connection between the thing on one side and the word on the other. The word itself is the relation that, in each instance, retains the thing within itself in such a manner that it ‘is a thing’. (ibid., 1982; p. 66) It is through language that thinking is able to say what thinking is. It is the word that for Heidegger brings things to being: ‘...where words break off no thing may be.’ (Stefan George, referred to by Heidegger, 1982; p. 64) No word is anterior, it is in the word that we create our understanding and our being in the world.

CsA creates an open space for a conversation to which no one arrives with a given position or role; only the assumption that everyone is already thrown into the world to care. They inaugurate a space that has the status of a common action for all, an invitation to think and share the being through language. It is in speech more than in writing, Heidegger says, that ‘the element of the truth of being’ remains, and it is also in speech that Heidegger sees that the ‘multidimensionality of the realm peculiar to thinking’ is maintained. (ibid., 1998; p. 241) A language that is understood as Heidegger said as ‘the house of being’, as that which creates and should be everyone’s access to the world in its compromise with their *Ek-sistence*.

If it would be true that I could make a film... well, every one of us could made one, because ours are long and intense lives... because, there are many lives, and

many films could be done... if we were asked for... (Anonymous woman,<sup>69</sup> 2012)

### **The History of the first language of these lands**

‘The History of the first language of these lands’ is a story told by Subcomandante Marcos (2007, pp. 72–77) as part of a broader strategy to legitimize the *nosotros* of the Chiapas community. I include the whole piece, following in a way Subcomandante Marcos’s intention, as if the story is actually told by Old Man Antonio accounting for the believes of the ancient community of Chiapas. The interest of this story resides in how language is defended as the production of the *nosotros* and against the impositions of the language of gods.

Subcomandante Marcos invented the stories of the Chiapas community as part of a broader strategy of communication. His dialogues with Old Man Antonio are part of this strategy for which, in this case, he deliberately infuses a kind of a ‘magic realism’. Old Man Antonio is a wise figure in the tribe who relates the old knowledge of the community and unveils their ‘ancient history’. All these stories are made up to encourage the right to their own identity, both within the community and outside. Indigenous cultures are in many cases sustained thanks to oral tradition and ‘words’ have constituted the axes of struggle of the Zapatista revolution.

Although what Subcomandante Marcos does is to articulate a voice for the *nosotros*, his approach does not correlate to the authorless gesture of disappearance to which I have thus far given account. Taking advantage of his personal abilities and academic background, what Subcomandante Marcos does is to dissolve his voice into the collective *nosotros* of the Chiapas community, placing himself as one among others, but in opening the space for others he is indeed speaking for them.

However, the importance here is the claim of Subcomandante Marcos to acknowledge language as the foundation, not only to think the being of *nosotros* but also to empower the production of a ‘tomorrow’:

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<sup>69</sup> When CsA arrived at Intermediae in Matadero Madrid they took some time to go around the district testing their authorless ‘opening question: ‘If you could make a film, what film would you do?’ This is one of the answers they received. It can be watched at: <https://vimeo.com/45657317>

The oldest of our peoples recount that the first gods, not the very first, not those who birthed the world, but others who were no longer the very first, but a bit like that, were a tad lazy.

And it so happened that a goodly amount of the world had already been birthed by the very first gods, and the men and women of maize, the true ones, were already making the rest.

And so these gods became lazy, because they had no work, and they only wanted to play and to dance. They were just fooling around, and they went about lifting up the women's skirts with their wind and tangling up the men's feet so they would fall down.

And then the men and women of maize, the true ones, took courage, and they held an assembly in order to look into this problem.

Since the men and women of maize were already set in their thinking that *he who governs, governs obeying*, they called these gods to the assembly.

Because no matter how godlike the gods were, they still had to respect the agreements of the collective, which is what they then called *the agreement by everyone for the common good*

And so it came to pass that the gods arrived and they began making little jokes, and the assembly scolded them, and then these prankish gods remained quiet.

When the women of maize spoke, and they were very fierce, because the gods had been lifting their petticoats with their winds.

When the men of maize spoke, and they were very fierce, because the gods had been moving about in the ground like snakes and tangling up their feet so that they would fall down.

And so in the assembly the men and women determined the crime of the gods, and they reached an agreement that the gods would have to clear the collective's field of rocks.

And so these gods went to clear the rocks out of the field, yet they said: 'What? But we're gods, even though we're not the very first.' And they became seriously angry, and they picked up a large rock and they went and smashed the house where the men and women of maize, the true ones, were guarding the first word, the one that sees behind and ahead if one knows how to listen to it.

After this most unfortunate occurrence, the gods ran very far away, because they knew they had done a great wrong.

Then the men and women of maize made their assembly to look into what they should do about this great wrong that had been done to them, because they knew that collectively they were indeed able to resolve great wrongs.

And, without the first word, the men and women of maize could remain deaf to their history and blind to tomorrow, because the first word was the root of the past and the window to the path to come.

Nonetheless, the assembly of the men and women of maize, the true ones, was not afraid, and they began seeking thoughts and they made them into words, and with them other thoughts and other words were born. That is why they say in Zapotec,<sup>70</sup> *Diidxá ribee diidxá* – ‘words produce words’.

This is how they reached the agreement to guard their memory with great care and to make their word language. But they wondered what would happen if they forgot their language or if someone stole that memory from them, and then they also agreed to etch it in stone and to guard it well where their thoughts told them to do so. And some guarded the stone etched with memory in the mountain, and others gave it to the sea to guard.

And now the men and women of maize were content.

But it came to pass that those gods became lost, and, in exchange for finding their way, they recounted their mischief to the false god of hard excrement,<sup>71</sup> which is how money was called at that time.

And then this false god visited evil on the land of the men and women of maize, the true ones, and he undertook to have the men and women of maize forget the first word and thus remain deaf to their history, which was thereafter called ‘forgetting’, and blind to their tomorrow, which is what they thereafter called ‘being at a loss’.

The false god knew that if the men and women of maize forgot their history and lost their way, their language would die, little by little, and, with it, the dignity it held.

The false god of hard excrement – money – used, and still uses, much force and many traps. He did everything to destroy our very first language.

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<sup>70</sup> Zapotec is an indigenous language, one of eleven spoken in the Mexican state of Oaxaca.

<sup>71</sup> ‘The false god of hard excrement’ is a reference to pre-Colombian mythology/religion in which evil gods, those that persecute humans, are named after diseases and human aliments. In this case is also a joke. Money = hard shit.

But he always failed. And it happened that the men and women of maize, the very first, every so often would go to the mountain and to the sea to read what the stone etched with memory said.

And so they resisted the attacks of the false gods of money, and that is why we indigenous have mountain and sea close to us.

So that memory will not fail us, so that we shall not become lost, in order to have 'tomorrow'.

Old Antonio ended his history when he threw the seventh cigarette made with his roller on the ground. I asked, 'And what happened to those second-rate gods?'

Old Antonio berated me: 'They were hardly second-rate. The ones now are second-rate: money and power

Well, it happens that nothing is known of them any more, and so the indigenous always thought they might return to make their mischief.

The women lengthened their petticoats and they drew them together more at the hem, so that the wind could not play with them.

Men and women also walked slowly, attentive to the path they trod. That is why we indigenous walk looking down, but those who do not know this say that it is because we were defeated or because we are saddened by what we are. It is not true, we were never defeated: the proof is that we are here.

Nor are we made sad by what we are.

If we walk looking down, it is because we go watching our path carefully, in order not to trip, in order not to forget, and in order not to be at a loss.'

*Indigenous Brothers and Sisters of the Oaxaca Isthmus:*

*People of Juchitán:*

The struggle for the recognition of indigenous rights and culture is also the struggle for respect for our language, for its safekeeping, for its greater glory.

Time and again the false god of money has wanted to take our language away from us, because he knows that, without it, we will no longer be ourselves and they will then be able to take everything away from us.

When we say we demand the recognition of indigenous rights and culture, we are saying, among other things, that we are demanding the recognition of our language.

There are words in it that speak of the history we are, yes, but that also speak of tomorrow.

One must know how to listen to these words, one must know how to brandish those words so that others might be born who would speak of a time yet to come.

Perhaps that is why the powerful do not want the constitutional recognition of our indigenous rights, because in that way they would have to recognize and respect our language, which is something they fear.

If we learn to listen, we would find in our language that for us, the indigenous, tomorrow means being as we are and being with everyone.

*Long live indigenous language, and might those who walk and speak it live forever!*

Subcomandante Marcos (2007, pp. 72–77)

### **‘Valorising’ language**

It is important to recall the value that Heidegger and Old Man Antonio (in the voice of Subcomandante Marcos) gave to language for considering it, precisely, the nexus for thinking our being, as well as, relevant for the production of a ‘tomorrow’. It is also important to consider that, in the construction of a new factorial archetype, CsA’s first gesture is invoked by a radical disappearance with regards to power and authority, but, also, by claiming the value of language for thinking our being in the world with others to start production anew. Before we see in coming chapters how the other two gestures, the *parrhesiastic* and the cinematographic, keep reorganizing the factory archetype, I want to emphasize the problems that our language faces in the actual factorial production and why it is relevant that the new archetype takes care of language with respect to a ‘tomorrow’.

In a text called ‘On the language as such and on the language of man’ [1916], Walter Benjamin alludes to language referencing the sacred texts of revelation: recalling the “‘divine’” and invoking the “‘magic’” of the “‘origin’ forgotten in the past<sup>72</sup>. For Benjamin, the language of ‘man’ is a language ‘fallen’ from the language of Eden, which

<sup>72</sup> ‘Benjamin’s definition of sacred text incorporated not only external criteria for sacredness (i.e., a text’s being sacred due to its having been revered by many), but also internal criteria for sacredness (i.e., a text’s being sacred due to the revelation that it provides to the reader). Benjamin’s conception of the sacred text sees interpretation, commentary and translation as necessary to the maintenance of the life of the sacred text.’ (Kunkle, 1998; p. 296)

is a 'pure language' transformed for men's -and women's- comprehension. Benjamin cites the Bible for referring to this pure language in the mystery of God, in the beginning of creation: 'God breaths His breath into man' and 'this is at once life, mind and language'. (Benjamin, 1996; p. 67) And then Benjamin mentions how language 'falls' once God created the human being and asked him/her to name things. Benjamin again recalls the Bible: 'God's creation is completed when things receive their names from man, from whom in name language alone speaks.' (p. 65)

In the same essay, Benjamin also reveals that not only humans have a language but things have their own language too. He describes it as mute and magical, and its medium as the material community. (p. 67) However, neither in Benjamin's text nor in the Bible is there any mention of the language of machines. But machines, as well as beings and things, also have a language, which it is generally identified as the 'language of machines', as an artificial or cybernetic language. Humans, as the 'creators' of machines, have given them: life, 'mind'<sup>73</sup> and language. Yet, contrary to the essence of our language, the language of machines is not meant for naming or communication, neither is it for conversation, but to execute operative instructions and, therefore, their language is not speakable but only writeable. (Galloway, 2004; p. 163, Cramer, 2008; pp. 170–71).

Computers not only have language, but are even considered to be 'thinking' machines. In the early fifties, Alan Turing demonstrated that computers could perform perfectly the thinking of the human being and today these machines have come to substitute humans in resolving complex operations. Computers are called 'intelligent' due to their exemplary capacity for manipulating symbols formally when they execute orders. This machinic intelligence is obviously different to the property of enactment of human intelligence. The introduction of 'intelligent' machines into the everyday life of human beings has produced a hybridization and an expansion in the understanding of intelligence that exceeds that previously ascribed to the purely human and which has also influenced the construction of subjectivity and of life in general.

Today's young, for example, are the first in history whose mother tongue is a hybrid between the language of the mother and the language of the machine (Berardi, 2011; pp. 101–12). It is possible they have learnt more words from a computer than from their

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<sup>73</sup> Within the field of technology, especially in artificial intelligence, when comparing human and machinic characterizations, the human mind is referred in the machinic analogy as the software and the brain as the hardware of machines.



mother, thus breaking with the natural and instinctive character embodied and transferred through language from mother to baby. The absence of the mother suggests that language is failing to transfer the emotional meaning of words.<sup>74</sup> Before these machines were commonly available, children were usually taught to read by sounding out words coming from printed texts in the voice of the mother. (Hayles, 2005; p. 4) The influence of this hybridization also takes place inversely, in that the language of programming that confers to the machine its thinking property takes human beings as a developmental model, looking into the patterns of behaviour of their cells in order to improve code.

When computers entered the factory – reorganizing production in the change from the industrial to the diffuse and social factory –, language was captured by the velocity and acceleration imposed by the agile machine. Although the machinic domain always implies risks, especially if it is only employed for maximizing production, the human-machine agency can also deploy many potentialities against the effects of subsumption. Some of them will be explained in detail in the chapter on CsA’s cinematographic gesture. I have already commented in previous chapters on the specific logics that the entry of the computational machine and the Internet imposed as well as the specificities of how this affected production. However, in order to signal the relevance of CsA’s task in recuperating the value of language within life production in the new factory archetype, I will discuss some of the transformations that language also faced with the introduction of these machines.

The problem of the modern factory archetype largely resides in how the human-machine agency has invariably been constructed to favour productivity by applying constant divisions through scientific management. These divisions are defined according to the machines that maximize production, ‘estranging’ the workers’ capacities and virtues, and, in this specific case, affecting language and its function. The move that literary criticism in the sixties made to liberate language from the constraints of literature, the old system of communication, resulted in this empowerment falling into the engines of the diffuse factory, annihilating all its freeing possibilities. The language that should have empowered a return to the unfinished question of being, today has become an ‘idle talk’ representative of our present form of production.

<sup>74</sup> In *After Future*, Berardi (2011; pp. 101–12) explains the psycho affective implications that this human-machinic hybridization mediated through language produces. The fundamental relation of trust that the baby instinctively has with the mother is what sustains the learning process of words and things through affection. This is complexly altered when the organic body presence of the mother and her reference is substituted by the inorganic presence of the machine with which the baby has no natural or instinctive bond.

Paolo Virno (2004), in a series of lectures published as *A Grammar of the Multitude*, has recuperated the notion of ‘idle talk’ as used by Heidegger (1996) in *Being and Time*, to characterize both the subject of the post-Fordist production and the type of production that this subject accomplishes. The post-Fordist worker, says Virno, is a ‘*locuter par excellence*’ (Virno, 2004; p. 90), who in working continuously utters words without content, but, because they intersect, produce the act of speaking.

It is interesting to see how Heidegger and Virno both seem to consider idle talk as a groundless language. Nonetheless, for both, the concept implies a double take, a favouring tool as well as one that should be looked upon and used with some precautions. For Heidegger, idle talk has a positive quality in that its use facilitates the access of the being-in-the-world (*Dasein*). But, he also advises us of the dangers of simply remaining in such a language, by saying that ‘when *Da-sien* maintains itself in idle talk; it is as being-in-the-world cut off’, favouring a sort of ‘nonbeing’ of *Da-sien*. (Heidegger, 1996; pp. 162–64)

For his part, Virno defines idle talk as a language that does not bring things into being since its performance is indifferent to content and therefore has no foundation. Men and women do not use this language to name things, so it does not matter what is said or meant; rather, what is meaningful is the simple ability to say. For Virno, while recognizing idle talk as a language with no referent – virtually a noise in the background, unrecognisable –, he gives value to the flexibility of this type of language. Its generic power lies in its being able to articulate any utterance (pp. 90–91). The problem is that any language, if it only consists in producing idle talk, if it does not communicate and only utters, is a language that forgets its *Dasein*. But quite possibly Virno’s idea of idle talk is, as Heidegger would have wanted, a language that does not respond to grammar and logics.

However, idle talk is no longer what Heidegger appreciated, everyday valuable speech, the speech that contains the value of daily life. (ibid.) Its quality has rather become that of indifference, as Virno recognized. The question that concerns us here is about having a language that does not help in thinking our being-in-the-world. A language that, subsumed in the process of production by the computation machine, loses its human qualities for thinking the being, its voice and its capacity for conversation fading away.

Language becomes entirely idle talk because, being ‘indifferent to content’, it becomes easy prey for automatizations, divisions and scientific forms of management that reproduce and expand these effects.

The language of the human being is a ‘fallen language’ that ‘falls’ into a form comprehensible for machines and everyday becomes increasingly more choked with automatizations. In principle, automatizations are, in part, our way of learning, of socializing, of building up our culture, our traditions, our conventions, etc. Our biological cells follow sequences of instructions that repeat constantly. We learn to speak by the constant repetition of words. But the introduction of the computational machine has reproduced and multiplied this ability, turning it into a risk that, if it is not held to question, might ‘control the automatisms of everybody to make them converge into the interest of the controller’ (Stiegler, 2015; p. 16), reproducing our automatizations while producing ever newer ones, all of them accelerating until finally commodified.

From a creative viewpoint, the hybridization of human and machinic languages could open our imaginary to possibilities of new compositions<sup>75</sup> of languages of different expressions and performativity. Machines could constitute a great alliance if they were employed in production in ways that were different to those in which the project of capitalism has used them. And language is just one of the human resources that have been put at risk by the modern archetype of production. The subsumption of language in production was the last call for attacking life, because capital knows that, without language, ‘we will no longer be ourselves and they will then be able to take everything away from us’. (Subcomandante Marcos, 2007; p. 76)

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<sup>75</sup> To explore further the possibilities of creative hybridations between the language of machines and natural languages see Cramer, 2005.

## CHAPTER 6

### **The parrhesiastic gesture and the assembly: dissolving divisions**

In the previous chapter I argued how language, one of the human resources being subsumed in the factory of post-Fordist labour, could hold the key for activating the authorless gesture through which production opens the path for a new organization under a different factory archetype. We should remember how CsA's 'disappearing proposal' provokes a momentary break in production in order to begin over in a new factory. And the new factory, of necessity, should function according to different parameters to the ones imposed by the modern notion of work as generally defined under the logics of capitalism.

In this chapter, in an attempt to continue with the intervention into the productivist conception of the modern notion of labour – and within the task of encouraging a different understanding of it –, I will relate work and life with the assembly by retaking some ideas from the materialistic conception of labour through Friedrich Engels' approach. I will do so in order to offer operative alternatives for transforming the ideas largely put in place by the theoreticians of mercantilism.

Marx believed that, under capital's logics, labour created a loss of self simply because what man -and women- produce will always be alien to him/her (as property and authority). Marx qualified this labour as 'estranged labour' because it not only estranges man -and women- from himself/herself and from his/her own active function, but it also 'estranges the species from them. It changes for them the life of the species into a means of individual life. First it estranges the life of the species and individual life, and secondly it makes individual life in its abstract form the purpose of the life of the species, likewise in its abstract and estranged form.' (Marx, 2009; p. 31)

For both Marx and Engels, work was the means to transform life, but the modern conception of labour had estranged the life of the species before the workers could conceive any of these possible transformations for themselves. In this chapter I will

follow an analysis of Engels' characterization of this view, which, regardless of his exalted scientism (at least, within the context of the time), is most useful in delineating how work played a role in the constitution of the life of the human species and how it should be acknowledged as a condition of human composition. Engels' reasoning will be of help in unravelling the importance of the role that not only work, but also language, the assembly and even technics played in such a constitution.

We have already seen how language is relevant for thinking the being-in-the-world with others and, therefore, its suitability for the new production. In this chapter the assembly will be presented as a valuable methodology for the reorganization of the archetype, not only for having influenced the constitution of the human condition, but for its power to reconcile work with life. Therefore, I will also refer to cases in where the rehearsal of the assembly has been consciously invoked for activating its empowering capacities against the 'estrangement' – of the life of the species and of individual life – frequently caused by work in the factory, be that industrial, diffuse or social. We will see how the assembly has been recurrently performed for compensating abuses of power and for reclaiming the collective 'we'.

The assembly has been claimed as 'the child of the revolution' (Federici, 2009; p. 120) and as a social laboratory for the destitution of power and for its later constitution and redistribution (Rieznik, 2002; p. 5). Through its praxis, everyone can exercise freedom of speech and activity can be organized in common. For the Athenians, the assembly served for organizing the life of the city. (Foucault, 2011; p. 70) The indigenous communities of South America used it as the medium to 'lead by obeying'. (Zibechi, 2010; pp. 15-16) The utilization and care of communal lands in Europe in the middle ages were also organized by assemblies. (Federici, 2009; pp. 71-72) Beaubourg, a social and artistic centre occupied in 1976 beneath the Centre Pompidou, as well as more recent socio-artistic experiences, relied on the assembly for its governance. (Meister, 2014; p. 53) So did the worker-recuperated factories.<sup>76</sup> Then there are the women's liberation groups, the workers' unions, the students, the little kids at school, Alice in Wonderland,<sup>77</sup> the

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<sup>76</sup> In the last decade, throughout Latin American Countries and due to the crisis caused by capitalism, workers have been recuperating factories and businesses, usually against their owners, and transforming them into cooperatives. Their organizational structure is generally the assembly. The slogan they chose is 'Occupy, Resist, Produce', taken from Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement/ *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais* in the eighties.

<sup>77</sup> This refers to chapter two in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, where an assembly is organized between the animals of the land and Alice has to solve a specific problem concerning the group. See: Carrol (2011.)

residents' associations, the public, the parliament and so on.

Adding the echoes of the assembly in the past to those of the present, the assembly emerges as a tool and a praxis with powers that no other form of organization possesses. Depending how we invoke the assembly, its virtues can be alchemical. For this reason, in this chapter I also touch upon some of assembleary events of the last decades in which these virtues have been invoked in a rather experimental manner, testing and activating its transformative powers as an organizational component. The assembly is not only natural to our human condition but its experimental practice also seems to be valuable for compensating the division, fragmentation and scientific management imposed by the archetype of production. Although, and this is how I will end the chapter, not all assemblies are alchemical and I will also be questioning the technological assemblies by problematizing some of their risks.

In the previous chapter we saw how the authorless gesture creates a void in order to release the emergence of a *nostros* that engages with the *Da* of *Da-sein* of the being-in-the-world through language. CsA's proposal to start production anew through the first gesture leads directly to the assembly. From then on, the assembly will become the tool through which to ensure the distinct reorganization of cinematographic production. Following the dismissal of the author, thereby breaking with the old archetype of production, it is in the assembly that the transformation of production continues. In this chapter, the language of those present in the assembly, those who both think and care about existence, maintain the void opened by the disappearing gesture by continuously reapportioning it.

In order for a community to achieve this, it is necessary to find a methodological approach that guarantees the alternative proposed against the failure of the disappearance of the author, as claimed in the sixties using language. Facing such a challenge, CsA employs within the assembly the practice of truth telling. Called *parrhesia* in antiquity, this practice was recovered by Foucault in his last years of life. In *parrhesia*, Foucault saw a way to venerate 'man', not as author, but as one with the capacity to care for the self and others, taking advantage of the absences of power in order to build new potentialities. In CsA's parrhesiastic assembly, the veracity of the author's suicide will be strengthened and the capacity of the collectivity to sustain it will be rehearsed enabling a common, singular, non-fragmented and true practice.

This is only possible because the disappearance of the authorless gesture traverses the entire production process, and I will explain how the authorless turns into a parrhesiastic gesture once the author's disappearance has set up the aperture of the new production by revealing the void: a void that is sustained by its continuous reapportioning throughout the parrhesiastic gesture, against which the disappearance is always tested. In combination with this transformation, it is precisely because of the virtues that reside in the assembly that the production process can be reorganized in such a manner that the values lost through labour production under capitalism can finally be restored.



## **The assembly in relation to work and life**

If we are to remain in the factory in order to reorganize production for returning life to life, it might be helpful to reconfigure the relation between work and life further and in contrast to the notion that economy has efficiently imposed. In the course of the process of transferring value from nature to economy propelling a productivist notion of labour – expansive and radical as we saw in the first two chapters –, there was a current of thought that draws attention to the importance that labour had in relation to the transformation of the human condition. The materialistic conception of labour was a line of thought developed alongside the consolidation of capitalism. This was widely articulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who pursued an understanding of the interrelations between ‘man’ and nature, naturalism and humanism. Both looked at labour as something that can be enormously liberating and helpful: an important understanding if we are to consider the future of work and life, and propose new models for transgressing the categories in which they have been so far encapsulated.

Marx believed that labour was a form of meditation between ‘man’ and nature and that, as such, it was through labour that changes in life would be accomplished. (1973, see introduction) Engels went so far as to claim that labour was the primary condition that made the human species appear as such. He defended the idea that work is intrinsic to human evolution that is, a necessary condition that sustained the basis of our lives and hence integral to the transformation of the world. Engels built his argument on the new scientific discourses about ‘man’s’ origin and evolution, and was heavily influenced by Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, first published in 1859. He started his most indebted essay to evolutionary theory in 1876 and left it unfinished. However, it was published in 1896, a year after his death, with the title ‘The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man’.

Engels’ proposal is interesting, primarily because it anchors the relevance of work with regards to life by considering the conditions that distinguished humans from other species and how these conditions became constitutive for their transformation. But this also holds true in relation to the relevance that the assembly might have played among these conditions and which it can still perform as a methodology for reorganizing productive processes. With Engels, we are going to see that the assembly – understood as the

congregation of individuals that collectively take decisions – is not only an interesting tool for compensating the accumulation of power and the imposition of divisions, but also as a form of socialization natural to the human condition and organization, one that, moreover, forms part of the human being's evolutionary transformations.

On the other hand, the juxtaposition of elements that Engels claims as consubstantial to labour with regards life transformation might help us to highlight, once again, which of these human virtues was 'estranged' by the concretizations of the factory archetype throughout history. Engels points to the body, language, socialization and technics as having played a fundamental role in the transformation of human species. Although his articulation might seem a rather crude way of looking at these virtues that were 'estranged' by the factory archetype, it is also both holistic and accessible.

Engels places his statement for relating work and life at the very beginning of the essay, where he calls for a vision of work that exceeds the view afforded by the economists that promoted the pre-capitalist and the capitalist order. Engels opens the text by saying:

Labour is the source of all wealth, the political economists assert. And it really is the source – next to nature, which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth. But it is even infinitely more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself. (Engels, 1996; n.p.)

Having assigned the creation of 'man' to work, he builds his defence. He begins by describing the life of the ape, before explaining how the transition from ape to 'man' took place. Engels tells how a particularly highly-developed species of anthropoid apes – completely covered with hair, with beards and pointed ears, living in troops in the trees – started freeing their hands. And, according to Engels, this was the decisive step in the transition from ape to 'man'. Two important things took place as a consequence of the liberation of the ape's hands. One is that the anthropoid adopted an erected posture and this allowed the possibility of seeing the world from a different perspective. The other was that they used their free hands to make, and, in making, achieve greater perfection. Many tens of thousands of years would pass before the hand was ready to produce a stone knife: man and women exploring technics in the making of tools. 'Thus,' Engel's says, 'the hand is not only the organ of labour, it is also the product of labour [...] Mastery over

nature began with the development of the hand, with labour, and widened man's horizon at every new advance.' (ibid.) And the organ of labour is integrated into the whole body, and the whole body is affected in different ways by the primary organ of labour. Labouring at the transformation of nature for survival, using our hands as our primary organ, is also what pulled us together, helping each other in the achievement of our needs, and thereby creating the need for communication: for language, for reunion, for exchanging and for caring. For the assembly and for language. Engels writes:

He was continually discovering new, hitherto unknown properties in natural objects... The development of labour necessarily helped to bring the members of society closer together by increasing cases of mutual support and joint activity, and by making clear the advantage of this joint activity to each individual. In short, men in the making arrived at the point where they had something to say to each other. Necessity created the organ; the undeveloped larynx of the Ape was slowly but surely transformed by modulation to produce constantly more developed modulation, and the organs of the mouth gradually learned to pronounce one articulate sound after another...

First labour, after it and then with it speech – these were the two most essential stimuli under the influence of which the brain of the ape gradually changed into that of man, which, for all its similarity is far larger and more perfect. Hand in hand with the development of the brain went the development of its most immediate instruments – the senses. Just as the gradual development of speech is inevitably accompanied by a corresponding refinement of the organ of hearing, so the development of the brain as a whole is accompanied by a refinement of all the senses... And the sense of touch, which the ape hardly possesses in its crudest initial form, has been developed only side by side with the development of the human hand itself, through the medium of labour. (ibid.)

Engels considers labour to be the 'essential distinction' of the human condition; one that not only brings about changes in the environment simply by our presence but makes them serve its ends in order to master the environment with the hand that is, at one and the same time, the organ and the product of labour. And to master the environment our organs had also to be mastered through communication, mutual support and joint activity. Engels does not mention the assembly as such, and leaves unnamed our need for socialization, collectivity, agreement, speech and conviviality. But according to his reasoning, the

assembly is also necessary for the becoming of the human species. The assembly could as well be thought as an organ of labour: not as the one that frees the hand but as the one that frees and proclaims our verbal proclivity for communicating and for sharing our needs with others in the group.

Engel's unfinished text continues its explanation of the evolution of labour until arriving at the modern notion introduced by capitalism. It is due to human's capacity for transforming nature, but also labour itself, Engels explains, that we have arrived at the conditions in which, having reached a certain accumulation, 'man' created industries and markets, promoting their expansion and circulation – nationally and globally – in exponential parameters, forcing speed and the compression of time for continuously augmenting the equation of growth.

Here we have reached the point in which the condition intrinsic to the human species – to conceive life as the course in which, through work, we develop our capacity to transform the world – finally reverses. Today, work has occupied life and uses it to accomplish such world transformations that destroy all the conditions proper to living a life. It is precisely at this moment – in which economy starts managing production, using the notions of wealth and growth and its own valorization – that it expropriates the parameters traditionally 'valued' by nature and life.

### **The experimental assembly against divisions and scientific management**

*Through this collective protagonism also arises the need for new ways of speaking of the nosotros ('we/us') and nuestro ('our'), as they relate to the yo ('I'). As each individual changes, that change has an effect on the group, thus changing the group, and as the group changes, this change is then reflected on the individuals, creating new ways of thinking about the individual self and collective selves.*

Bookchin and Taylor, 2014; p. 34

If labour could be considered an 'essential distinction' for the human condition and if the human being has used labour for the world and life transformation, the assembly could become the tool and the place for the circulation and collectivization of all these

transformations in the new factory to come. In order to do so it is interesting to look upon the most recent invocations of the virtues of the assembly in order to learn and unravel more in detail some of its capacities and to recognize some of the events that have actualized them. Below I propose to look at some assembly encounters that, within the last decades, have put into practice a performative praxis of the total refusal of power, its divisions, standardization, maximization and scientific management.

Each assembleary rehearsal has its own specificities depending on the people that populate it, their needs and their urgencies. But all of them have in common a set of methodologies and virtues that are shared when the assembly is consciously invoked. Its recognition is extremely valuable for understanding the function of the assembly in the new archetype of production. I consider that, in general, the assemblearian rehearsals of the last decades are attempts to break not only with power but also with the specific ways in which power had been exercised ‘against’ society. Of all the practices that have been devised for resistance in the last decades – for example, *escraches*,<sup>78</sup> *caceroladas*<sup>79</sup> or *tomas*<sup>80</sup> – the assembly seems to be the one that provided an alternative model, not necessarily for contesting, but for reorganization.

I not only think that assemblies represent a collective desire for fighting against the constant divisions, maximizations and scientific management, I also consider that, with them, people tried to recuperate the power of their language and their bodies. We will see how this is made evident with the physical presence of people, in the expressions of their mottos, their gestures and with the fulfilment of the protocols they practiced. Once I have given some account of the strength that the assembly has in its organising methodology against the organising system imposed by the factory, I will go more into detail about CsA’s singular assembleary practice.

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<sup>78</sup> ‘*Escrache* is the name given in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Spain to a type of demonstration in which a group of activists go to the homes or workplaces of those whom they want to condemn and publicly humiliate them in order to influence decision makers and governments into a certain course of action. This term was born in Argentina in 1995 and has since spread to other Spanish-speaking countries.’ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escrache>

<sup>79</sup> ‘*Cacerolada* is a form of popular protest practiced in certain Spanish-speaking countries –Venezuela, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay Ecuador, Cuba, Spain – and more recently extended to Québec as well as Turkey and Brazil, etc. It consists in a group of people creating noise by banging pots, pans, and other utensils in order to call for attention. What is peculiar about this type of demonstration is that people can protest from their own homes, thus achieving a high level of support and participation.’ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cacerolazo> To find examples of *Cacerolada* in Argentina 2001 see Muñoz, 2012; pp. 164, 167.

<sup>80</sup> *La Toma* is the name that the students’ movement in Chile 2011 gave to its general protest against the control of public education under neoliberal policies. *La toma* refers to the occupation of school buildings by students who lived in them, organising together from these ‘resistant sites’ many other types of actions and demonstrations. *La Toma* in Chile lasted for seven months. See: Barriga. C. (2013).

*Que se vayan todos* / 'All must go' (QSVT) is the motto that best captures the need for refusing any of the existing forms for organizing life today. This is the cry launched by the Argentines in 2001 in response to the extreme measures taken by successive parties in government: ending with the 'corralito',<sup>81</sup> in which all citizens' bank accounts were frozen for over a year. This is one of the most illustrative examples of how the effects of a financial crisis, and the extreme measures taken by governments, can heavily oppress all social levels of a population. But it is also notable for what the people's resistances were able to make visible.

*Que se vayan todos* was inspirational to the subsequent and recurrent protests and uprisings that happened less than a decade later in the United States, Europe and the Middle East. In the view of some thinkers (Rieznik, 2016, Lewkowicz, 2006), Argentina in 2001 inaugurated the diagnosis that points to the decomposition of the order of capitalism, and that the later recursive insurgencies in America and Europe are a clear sign of its continuous exhaustion: a sign that conceivably announces the death of the old period and the gestation of the new. Within all these movements, the assembly has been recuperated and actualized globally, screaming the collective need to refuse any form of pre-existing power in order to create a void out of which to reconfigure new possibilities outside the domain of the market and the state.

Before the congregation of Argentinean citizenship's *Que se vayan todos*, it was the Zapatista movement who spread their motto *Un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos* / 'one world in which many worlds fit': the right to be singular within a multiplicity. The Zapatista movement was created in 1994 for the defence and recognition of the rights of the Indian communities in Mexico. The order in which these events of unification and resistance have taken place around the world in recent history is quite symbolic and special. In my view, this timing shows that before the collectivities of a world community were ready to protest and to proclaim at the end of their assemblies the total refusal to power with *Que se vayan todos*, they needed to recognize themselves – each singular subject, the other and the many others – in their differences, while accepting each other as companions with whom to assemble: *Un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos*.

The Zapatista movement has been a global referent and inspiration for the defence of

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<sup>81</sup> *Corralito* was the informal name given to the most restrictive measure taken by the Argentinean State in the 2001 crises and it consisted of freezing all bank accounts for a period of ninety days, which ended up being longer than a year. See more: Muñoz, 2012; pp. 164, 167.

democracy, justice, pluralism and the organization of power, especially for making their local claims and revolutionary concerns and practices serve as the scenario for dialoguing with the global effects of capitalism at regional, national and international levels.<sup>82</sup> Today Zapatismo is seen as a movement that shed light on a new way of performing politics beyond the state (Zibechi, 2010; p. 1). The celebration of the first ‘Intergalactic Encounter’ organized in 1996 in La Sierra Lacandona, Chiapas, gathered activists from all over the world and is often considered the seed of the anti-globalization movement. In the encounters that preceded and followed this, the indigenous community were, in the eyes of the world, an example of strength because of their form of *autogobierno*.

The Chiapas community have a long tradition of self-administration following the practice of assemblies, using them as a tool to ‘govern obeying’ as well as for the preservation of the ‘communal’ (the ‘common’).<sup>83</sup> The First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle is an example of the influence of Zapatismo around the world. The text has many references and mottos that later became echoes, sung and performed in assemblies held by political, grassroots movements against capitalism.

‘Today we say “enough is enough!” (Ya Basta!<sup>84</sup>)

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO: MEXICAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

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<sup>82</sup> ‘...in the peace negotiations with the government in the spring of 1994, the EZLN used the opportunity to open a dialogue with civil society and invited hundreds of delegates to come to San Cristobal. Then in the summer of 1994, after the EZLN village assemblies rejected the government’s peace proposal, they sponsored the National Democratic Convention where national civil society was invited to come to Zapatista-held territory and hold a dialogue about the future of the popular struggle on a national level. In the spring of 1995 they held a national poll, or consultation, on what the future of the EZLN should be. They set up their own polling networks and over a million people participated. When the dialogue with the government was renewed in April 1995, the EZLN again invited hundreds of activists and advisers to take part. The year 1996 was an exceptionally busy one as a series of workshops on indigenous rights and culture were held in January 1996 in San Cristobal and another on the reform of the state in July 1996. In April 1996 the EZLN held a Continental Gathering in their territory, inviting activists from throughout the hemisphere to come to discuss the various experiences of neo-liberal restructuring and the fight for democracy in the Americas. Then later in 1996, the EZLN organized the Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neo-Liberalism, a meeting with international civil society convened as the beginning of a “local-global” dialogue.’ (Jeffries, 2001; p. 131)

<sup>83</sup> It is important to note here that, according to some de-colonial thinkers such as Walter de Mignolo, the notion of the common rooted in the indigenous communities differ from the notion of the common being defend as a counter approach to neoliberalism by the Western society as a leftist ideology. Mignolo remarks the distinction of the different genealogies that have modelled the two notions. ‘The communal is not grounded on the idea of the “common”[...] It derives from forms of social organisation that existed prior to the Incas and Aztecs, and also from the Incas’ and Aztecs’ experiences of their 500 year relative survival, first under Spanish colonial rule and later under independent nation states. To be done justice, it must be understood not as a leftwing project (in the European sense), but as a *de-colonial* one.’ See: Mignolo, (2009; n.p.). Having said this, it is also important to recognise that for the case of the notion of the Western common, the assembly being a key methodology for its construction, the indigenous example and knowledge of the assembly has been and still is, in many cases, a source of inspiration in Western society.

<sup>84</sup> *Basta ya* was one of the slogans used as well in the 15M movement

We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, [...] We have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. [...] But today, we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation. The dispossessed, we are millions and we thereby call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle as the only path, so that we will not die of hunger due to the insatiable ambition of a 70-year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors that represent the most conservative and sell-out groups.

[...]

To prevent the continuation of the above and as our last hope, after having tried to utilize all legal means based on our Constitution, we go to our Constitution, to apply Article 39, which says: “National Sovereignty essentially and originally resides in the people. All political power emanates from the people and its purpose is to help the people.<sup>85</sup> The people have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter or modify their form of government.” (EZLN, 1993; n.p.)

The spirit behind the Zapatista motto *Un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos* is indeed something that needs to be rehearsed if the assembly methodology is to thrive. During the past three or more centuries, and due to the organization of labour under the old archetype of the factory, we have been trained to naturalize normalization and to operate in as few registers as possible: therefore difference feels somehow disruptive. That is why the Zapatista slogan was born out of a local claim, but suited a global demand.

The Argentinean events resembled the Zapatista motto in their assemblies. They showed that, despite the extreme tensions to which they were exposed at that moment and in previous years (the impossibility of financial liquidity being one of the most illustrative), there was some exceptionality in the forms of the protest that arose against the actions of the state. There was resistance from most classes who ‘spontaneously’ aligned all differences and sensibilities without erasing any and welcoming all. Below, I include a compilation of testimonies by some of the people involved in the protests, who, once

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<sup>85</sup> In Times Square 2011 the slogans ‘We the people’ and ‘We are the 99%’ echoed the concerns claimed by the Zapatistas.



again, invoked the assembly especially because of its faculty to create space for difference:

There was a very strong unity, without banners, we were one. That is flags were not necessary. I believe that the goal of all of us who were there was the same: enough of this fucking economy, and there was great hope for what that supposed as well. It was the end of something, and that is why the hope of something new was reborn, at least at that moment it was lived like that, with great intensity... We ask ourselves where this is going, who leads it, how to coordinate it. At the beginning we didn't really understand how all that worked. Later, as we went along, we understood that it consisted in many spontaneous things... We think it is necessary to unify the struggle, but that nobody should homogenize it. We all have to go out, strike together, but nobody owns that struggle... there is an attempt to form something new, that by putting an end to the representativity of these politicians the seed of what we would like that society to be begins to emerge. A society without a house of deputies, without senators, but rather with assemblies that exercise the decisions without representations and its entire circus. (Testimonies by Unemployed Workers' Movement of Solano. *Colectivo Situaciones*<sup>86</sup>, 2011; pp. 118–20)

The 15M movement in Spain, the *indignados*, also put at its centre the assemblearian methodology as its *modus operandi* for political contestation and as a mode of empowering the reorganization of life in the city against the results of divisions and scientific management that have been ruling our lives. The assemblies celebrated within the course and evolution of the movement in Madrid are not necessarily more special than those celebrated in other regions in the national territory, nor even to many of the experiences lived in different parts of the world where assembling was not only the expression of a resistance against the neoliberal state but also a challenge with constitutive capacity to establish new agencies with a different order. I use the example of the assemblies in Madrid for practical reasons, since these are the closest to my own lived experience.

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<sup>86</sup> *Colectivo Situaciones* (2011) has studied the movements taking place on 19–20 December 2001. Theirs has been always a militant research, that is, a form of research that implies giving voice to others that, generally, have no representative voice. In this case the voice is given to the Unemployed Workers' Movement of Solano.

According to some of the research that the Spanish anthropologists<sup>87</sup> Alberto Corsini and Adolfo Estalella carried about the Madrilenean movement in the years between 2011 and 2013, what seemed to be most relevant for neighbours gathering in assemblies was their outstanding capacity for experimentation (see also Savater, Traditional assemblies turned into sites where general forms for regulation, usually delimited by a set of arranged methodologies, merged with the appreciation of unexpected events that always configured and reconfigured the assembly. Assemblies tried to follow the standards and protocols for ensuring communication, but they were also continuously broken in order to welcome the extraordinary and its capacity for transformation. (Corsini/Estalella, 2012a; pp. 6–12 and 2013; pp. 3–11).

It was precisely this tension between ‘rules’ and experimentation that endured and gave consistency to the production of collective knowledge. The set of methodologies that have been put into practice in these assemblies around the world were a combination of protocols of mediation, facilitation and translation that combined the rigour of establishing turns to speak, settling order and duration with a mind to ensuring and promoting the care for the other and for oneself: all this to safeguard freedom of speech and respect, viability and endurance, reflection and consensus.<sup>88</sup>

According to Corsini and Estalella (ibid.) the singularities of these methodologies can be explained by three of their major achievements. Firstly, they favoured the exploration of consensus against decision-making and vote counting. The assembly was not considered an end in itself but a process throughout which to constantly search for a collective construction. It didn’t matter if the process took time: ‘We are slow but we go far’, they reminded to each other. Secondly, the promotion and cultivation of a sensibility towards the stranger (the unknown), by exploring care against a practice which prioritizes the effective outcome of a negotiation. There was a general concern that everyone in the

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<sup>87</sup> To access to these materials see: <http://www.prototyping.es/research>

<sup>88</sup> Although, as I said, the main methodological procedures and aims of these assemblies were common around the world, still they also had their own situated specificities. These particulars were introduced according to their specific contexts and needs. Here I mention a few of them as examples. In order to ensure participation Occupy Wall Street used a modified speakers’ list. This list gave priority to those who had intervened less often by moving them higher up on the list. In other assemblies, turns were established so that a person could only speak once until all those who wished to speak had also done so. In order to safeguard the course of the assembly, the Occupy movement resolved the restriction imposed by the government concerning the use of speakers by substituting them with voice-based speakers that echoed together what the spokesman said. In Madrid, the 15M movement arranged direct translations into sign language for the deaf. Also in Madrid and in other cities with high temperatures and long exposure to the sun, the assembly introduced the use of water spray bottles and sun protection creams. To have an overview of differences within similar methodologies for assembling, see the documentary film: *Tres instantes un grito*. Barriga, (2013)

assembly was a situated subjectivity that exposed his/her life to the collectivity. The third happened as a consequence of the other two. When assemblies were developed with such an intention and consciousness, there was an increase in the collective abilities for producing specific life events capable of re-territorializing the public space in which their practices were inscribed.

People take turns speaking. Some talk over others, and the facilitator is often ignored. Yet all manage to speak and to be heard. This is the quiet insurgent noise of *horizontalidad*. Eventually the group reaches a consensus and the quiet is overtaken with song — the same song sung on the first days of the popular rebellion: *Oh, que se vayan todos, que no quede ni uno solo* (They all must go, not one should remain). (Bookchin/Taylor, 2014; p. 23)

### **The assembly in CsA's production**

As we saw previously, CsA's main intention is to propose a new cinematic production and its methodology was to be inaugurated by the authorless gesture, such that any author should put at disposal their authority, power position, knowledge and disciplinary control. This should be a voluntary but necessary decision in order to abandon the old rituals of production and reach new ones. In the new process, CsA proposes that anyone should be included actively, creatively and critically in the cinematic production and that this should happen using language as a horizon common to all and as a valuable medium for disclosing our being-in-the-world with others.

For CsA, the new cinema production should be collective, self-organized, horizontal and democratic. In their first manifesto (2008; pp. 24-31), CsA describe how cinema, contrary to their view, has been organized and operating in a rather exclusionary, elitist, minority, individualist or corporative mode since its invention. They reveal how the 'engines' of such organisation have been developed in a specific manner to fulfil that goal. How all the parts and subparts of the cinematic sphere – its sites, aesthetics, modes of subjectivation, producers, viewers, etc. – have been continuously arranged in order to favour the logic of capital. For over a century, this logic has colonised our imaginaries and imposed its own forms of representation, suppressing our capabilities for employing our imagination.

Against this logic, implemented in a form of labour and cultural production and reproduction, CsA proposes some guidelines for an alternative production, through which, I defend, they help to return life to life. CsA created a specific vocabulary, terminology, 'rules' and behaviour to help leave behind the 'old cinema', explaining instead how to adopt other forms with which to produce the new cinema to come. (ibid; pp. 32-42)

To find sense within the new condition as non-author, the authorless gesture (see the previous chapter) should also serve to encourage the reapportioning of the void, rather than, as Foucault suggested, the insufficient repetition of empty slogans claiming God's and 'Man's' death. CsA's authorial disappearance gives entrance to the collectivity that would reapportion the field creatively, sharing the right and the responsibility of its reorganization. Once this possibility has been opened, a new imaginary composite is there awaiting to become.

According to CsA (ibid), while the imaginary that traditionally organized cinematic production arose from a minority of subjectivities, from the investors and from a few professionals in the field, the authorless cinema looks instead to anyone and to the many, as new social collectivities for producing films. Those considered spectators or consumers of cinema in the twentieth century will now become producers and will do so organized under an assembleary model of production. Professionals and non-professionals are now both considered producers and administrators of the filmic representation.

In CsA's model of production, everybody willing to make a film collectively performs the functions of production, direction and scriptwriting. The film deals with what they together consider opportune according to their own needs, interests and thematic, political, cultural and aesthetic criteria. The non-author should understand their purposes and facilitate their materialization in a film. Argumentation and debate are par excellence the tools for advancing the collective production. The social collectivity that produces together always makes the final decisions about any aspect of the film and is the only administrator responsible for what happens with it. The collectivity organised as such will produce following the stages of a classic cinematographic production but under a new organising model.

Below I include a kind of a protocol that CsA uses for the reorganization of methodologies. These coincide with those generally followed in cinema production but,

as we can see, at each step in CsA's model the author hands his/her function to the assembly:

— The social operational mode of pre-production.

Pre-production, which is usually intended to be devoted to planning the viability of a film, should be transformed into social encounters between the team, who puts at disposal its knowledge and media, and the *plato-mundo*, the world-set. This coming together will trigger the process of 'wanting to do one or more films together'.

— A social operational script.

The script should be done through collective discussions around the different social narratives based on the interests of the people involved in creating a movie.

— A social operational mode of filming and staging.

People should have the opportunity to review, propose and decide what is being shot as well as holding different technical roles in the production process, according to their own inclinations and interests.

— A social operational mode of editing and post-production.

The film editing process and postproduction should be open and public. The raw audiovisual material is viewed collectively and the decisions on its modifications are also taken collectively.

— A social operational mode of display.

The most relevant display events should be those that bring together the first or 'present viewer' (those who have participated in any way in the making of the film) with the 'remote viewer' (those not involved in the production and who, in the old cinema, would be the viewer). The exhibition should be a time for exchanging and an opportunity for sharing work and for the remote viewer to join the film production.

— A social operational mode of management and distribution.

Each specific community should determine the mode of management and distribution of the film and they should be the ones presenting and defending the film when it is displayed and showed anywhere.

(Tudurí/Bella, 2012; n.p.)

For CsA, the assembly should always be present for reorganizing production. It should be invoked believing in the distinct virtues that it is able to deploy as a methodology. As a way of recalling these virtues, we have seen that, as part of our human condition, men and women have learnt to communicate and organise by assembling. As political social subjects, we have experienced the benefits of the experimental assemblies for the redistribution of power, freedom of speech, together with its compensating components against the generalized divisions and scientific management produced by productivity and growth.

CsA's assembleary model allows collectivities to empower themselves with these virtues but, apart from all the aspects that I have commented upon, CsA's assemblies put into circulation the practice of *parrhesia*. Being parrhesiastic is fundamental to the whole process. It is in fact the parrhesiastic move within the gesture, the one that ensures a state of permanence for the non-authorial figure as well as that of the assembly as the organizational axis of production chasing, as Foucault did and will be addressed below, for a 'humanism after the death of Man' (Negri/Hardt, 2000; pp. 92). As we have already seen, power fears and despises any vacuum, therefore the disappearance cannot only be performed once, but needs to be continuously sustained and reapportioned away from power.

### **The parrhesiastic gesture**

[...]

*How is it possible that the author (referring to Foucault) who worked so hard to convince us of the death of Man, the thinker who carried the banner of antihumanism throughout his career, would in the end champion these central tenets of the humanist tradition? We do not mean to suggest that Foucault contradicts himself or that he reversed his earlier position; he was always so insistent about the continuity of his discourse. Rather, Foucault asks in his final work a paradoxical and urgent question: What is humanism after the death*

*of Man? Or rather, what is an antihumanist (or posthuman) humanism?*

[...]

*The humanism of Foucault's final works, then, should not be seen as contradictory to or even as a departure from the death of Man he proclaimed twenty years earlier. Once we recognize our posthuman bodies and minds, once we see ourselves for the simians and cyborgs we are, we then need to explore the vis viva, the creative powers that animate us as they do all of nature and actualize our potentialities. This is humanism after the death of Man: what Foucault calls 'le travail de soi sur soi', the continuous constituent project to create and re-create ourselves and our world.*

Negri/Hardt, 2000; pp. 91–92

At the end of his life, Foucault studied<sup>89</sup> the notion of *parrhesia* and the evolution of its practice in ancient times, searching for an ethical care of the self as a way of returning to a possible humanism after the death of God and 'Man', as Negri and Hardt posited. Following his similarly extensive dedication to disentangling the domain of knowledge and power as structures that shape the subject, with the institutions intervening to this end, Foucault turned to the study of truth telling, believing that therein resided the path to rehearse practices that concern the care of the self and others. His is a search for the emancipatory qualities that he believed could be found in the courage of truth telling, to trace in them a possible interpellation to the soul of the self that should orientate the being towards the recuperation of its ethical willingness: '...to encourage the continuous constituent project to create and re-create ourselves and our world.' (Negri and Hardt, 2000; p. 92)

The cultivation of truth telling is fundamental for the assembleary methodology in CsA's production, especially in ensuring the reapportioning of the void that is released by the authorless and sustained by the *nosotros*. Therefore, first I propose to explain what *parrhesia* is, when has it been practiced and by what means, in order to then engage with the role *parrhesia* plays in CsA's assembly practice. I will discuss how *parrhesia* helps to ensure the authorless within production, while securing the permanence of all the virtues that the assembly empowers.

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<sup>89</sup> Between the years 1982 and 1984, Foucault gave a series of lectures dedicated to *parrhesia* at the Collège de France and at the University of California, Berkeley, later collected and published as *Fearless Speech* (2001)[2001], *The Courage of Truth* [2008] and *The Government of the Self and Others*, (2010)[2008].

According to Foucault's investigations, *parrhesia* is, first of all, a verbal activity that uses language as a medium to relate the logos – speech and reasoned discourse – with the bios – the way one lives. Its performance looks for the correlation between what one thinks, what one says and what one does and it demands to be acted out in front of others and oneself. The two fundamental aspects that a verbal activity needs to be considered *parrhesia* are frankness and truth. According to Foucault, the speaker, if he is a *parrhesiastes*, 'says everything he has in mind: he does not hide anything, but opens his heart and mind completely to other people through his discourse.'

In *parrhesia*, the speaker is supposed to give a completed and exact account of what he has in mind so that the audience is able to comprehend exactly what the speaker thinks. The word *parrhesia*, then, refers to a type of relationship between the speaker and what he says.' (Foucault, 2001; p. 12) And what he says is what he believes is truth, therefore 'there is always an exact coincidence between belief and truth'. (ibid.; p. 14) Foucault emphasized that his interest was not to address truth as such, but truth telling.

A *parrhesiastes* believes what he says and what he says is true. He always discloses truth and because he does so, he takes the risk of speaking truth to others. Therefore, *parrhesia* is an act that comes from 'below' and is directed 'above', since the risk of speaking truth implies a criticism to others and/or to oneself. The act of disclosure is not an act delivered under any form of oppression, but is considered a duty someone accepts as his/her own. Someone who chooses to take the risk of speaking the truth is therefore considered courageous.

Foucault makes an interesting comparison between the modern (Cartesian) conception of evidence, in which the coincidence between belief and truth 'is obtained in a certain (mental) evidential experience', and the Greek conception wherein the coincidence between belief and truth is found in the parrhesiastic verbal activity that has to be carried out with certain moral qualities. (ibid.)

*Parrhesia* was referred to for the first time in Greek literature by Euripides [c.484-407 B.C.]. It was initially considered as a civil right whereby every citizen could speak in the assembly, thus practising freedom of speech in political life. Later, *parrhesia* became restricted to the circle of the royal court, denying its access to the citizenship and the



public arena of the assembly. At the end of the fifth century B.C., it appeared again outside the court and was considered to be a tool for the education of the soul through the care of oneself and others, and was practised between master and student. This was the Socratic *parrhesia*. *Parrhesia* had a continuity in the Hellenistic period, resulting in the Cynic *parrhesia* returning to the public space as a form of provocation.

The political *parrhesia* is a civil right and the disclosure of truth was intended to protect the course and welfare of the state. In *parrhesia* as discourse, the Socratic *parrhesia*, the disclosure of truth aimed to reveal the truth of someone's life, 'the kind of relation someone has to truth'<sup>90</sup> (Foucault, 2001; p. 102), and it called for a slow, durable and persistent transformation of existence through its practice. By contrast, the Cynic *parrhesia* was more extreme: it looked for a punctual and intense intervention caused by propelling, through consciousness, the provocation that truth telling holds when someone is courageous in front of other/s. (Gross, 2014; pp. 137–40)

*Parrhesia* is not only used as a form of criticism that implies taking a risk in front of others, for it also involves a criticism of oneself: in taking and giving such criticism, one should also be searching for a correlation between what one says and how one lives. Therefore, what someone says in the assembly becomes something important for one's life, for oneself and for others. One could say that the verbal activity practiced by the Athenians in their political assemblies as a form of *parrhesia* has been actualized in the practices of the popular assemblies referred to in this chapter as experimental assemblies. In them, this truth telling activity has played a role in turning the citizens' assembly from being the site for a mere exchange of ideas into the proper site for producing a consistent courageous performance, taking the risk of telling the truth in front of others and oneself.

But my concern is to show how the virtues of *parrhesia* are key to CsA's assemblearian methodology and how they operate in the context of offering a new form of production. The disappearing gesture that CsA calls for in order to start production anew within the authorless supports the parrhesiastic gesture as a sort of complementary action. The correlation of these gestures is an exemplary move for exiting the 'ring' in which the

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<sup>90</sup> 'And the truth that the parrhesiastic discourse discloses is the truth of someone's life, i.e., the kind of relation someone has to truth: how he constitutes himself as someone who has to know the truth through *mathesis*, and how this relation to truth is ontologically and ethically manifest in his own life.' See: Foucault, 2001; p. 102.

cultural industries have enclosed the roles of both artists and audiences, repackaging them under market strategies, while also debilitating the empowering and liberating principles of the notion of participation by fearing and despising, as capital always does, any proposed vacuum.

CsA's example breaks radically with the ground around which these strategies have been readjusting the roles of artists and publics under a continuous co-optation of capital's logics. To explain this, I shall get more into the specificities of the Socratic *parrhesia* and the procedures under which it was practiced in antiquity. This will help give an understanding of how CsA introduces the same practice while moving it into the event of the assembly.

The ancient Socratic *parrhesia* introduced a very personal attitude. Differing from the form of *parrhesia* practiced in the political assembly, the Socratic *parrhesia* took place between two interlocutors, one of whom acted as a *basanos*. (In Greek, a *basanos* is a black stone used for testing the genuineness of gold.) In order to fulfil the role of the *basanos* in the Socratic *parrhesia*, one needs to be able to speak freely, meaning that what one says accords exactly with what one thinks, and what one thinks accords exactly with what one does. When this happens, the speaker has achieved a basanic role with his interlocutor and would be able to encourage the other in the disclosure of truth between her/his logos and her/his bios. The *basanos* figure serves as a guide for truth telling. (Foucault, 2001; pp. 97–102)

I have been emphasizing how the author figure, within the authorless gesture, activates the loss of power – of authority and property – and, in so doing, the space which is left empty is then reapportioned by a collectivity. The author as non-author subscribes him/herself as one within the many in a collectivity of beings. To enter into the freed space that the non-author inaugurates, the author acts as a *basanos* in relation to the group. Not only does he enunciate the loss of power, he has to believe in what he says and, moreover, act accordingly. From the on, the author needs constantly to rehearse the new position as a non-author, becoming a *basanos*, a guiding figure for truth telling. When this is performed in a collectivity, the place for enunciation is organized in the form of an assembly. Within it, the community again plays a decisive role, since they also become necessary *basano* agents for enabling each other to discover the truth about themselves and for helping each other to reflect upon their lives.

CsA's assembleary practice, under a parrhesiastic logic, could be interpreted as a 'mutual confession in a group' that practises 'mutual salvation', where members of the community have a decisive role in disclosing the truth about oneself, while helping the other to do so too. For CsA, the 'practice of *parrhesia*' is a component that helps transform the constituency of these events of recognition of the one within the many, of singularity within multiplicity, defining its being together as a unique transformative process. Within the assembly, the author must rehearse continuously his/her basanic role against which the collectivity tests their own basanic powers for the care of the self and the education of the soul. Everyone becomes a guidance figure for themselves and for others by rehearsing the practice of truth telling.

The verbal activity that takes place from then on in CsA assemblies is a parrhesiastic exercise where language is a medium for truth telling and in which speakers continuously relate their logos and their bios, taking the risk of critiquing themselves and others. The one who practices *parrhesia* is not preoccupied with rhetoric (with how something is said) but with the truth of what one says. Therefore, language escapes instrumentality when one refuses to use a language that speaks for oneself and, instead, uses singular and personal forms that respond directly to how each being rehearses its access to the world. Following CsA's methodology, to rehearse one's own access to the world through a verbal activity one needs to address *parrhesia* as an exploration into one's own experience of life. These collective rehearsals aim at achieving a *techné tou biou* – an art of living. (ibid.; p. 143)

In the case of the ancient Socratic *parrhesia*, these techniques comprised specific recipes and exercises one had to follow: reading, rereading, meditating upon and learning in order to construct a lasting matrix for one's own behaviour. (ibid.; p. 144) In the case of CsA, the specific recipes are rehearsed according to the non-authorial cinematographic production. They consist of searching for one's own voice through which one can address experiences in the form of one's own testimonies, thinking one's being-in-the-world, offering it through courage and by exercising truth telling with others.

When one has to respond to the interpellation 'what film would you do', and one does so in front of someone who is denying the exercise of power by giving it to the assembly, the assembly starts the process by trying to perform what they think through a verbal activity,

speaking what they believe is truth to others and to themselves without regard for rhetoric. All the stages of production – pre-production, scripting, filming and staging, editing, etc. – are an opportunity to practice *parrhesia*, readjusting communally how the *nosotros* considers the movie should be, saying and sharing it with others, and acting in accordance with the best resources to hand for each of the attempts they finally agree to make together.

Language becomes a medium in which and through which to explore life, how it is being lived and how one imagines it to be lived in the future, encouraging a counter movement against the violence of power. CsA proposes to practice a form of distancing from the norms and modes of subjectivation that power has imposed over life through work. It offers a new mode of production that believes in the organizational virtues that reside in the assembly for labouring within the logics opened by the new factory.

### **The risks behind the technological assemblies**

*The summation of human experience is being expanded at a prodigious rate, and the means we use for threading through the consequent maze to the momentarily important item is the same as was used in the days of square-rigged ships.*

Bush, 1945; p. 2

Assemblies, as we have seen, treasure innumerable virtues, but they don't always assure horizontality, self-organization, collectivity, etc. There are certain risks, for example, in assembling in the virtual domain, and identifying the limits of virtual assemblies might help us to revalue those that take place between bodies in the real space. Also, the recognition of the specificities of the risks endorsed by the virtual media will help us project some of the views with which to reconsider how we are willing to live and work with machines and technology in view of a production that is different to that imposed by capitalism.

To consider some of these risks, I will refer to the American Engineer Vannever Bush's visionary essay on the 'Memex concept', written in 1945 under the title 'As we may think'. Memex is the name Bush gave to the 'machinic desk', an invention with which he

envisioned what today any mobile or computer connected to the internet does: mainly (for the Internet performs other duties) the individual and collective storage and exchange of memories, experiences, sources, documents, books, thoughts, analysis, discoveries and so forth.<sup>91</sup> In Bush's view, the combination of a series of more advanced machines (than those available at the time) would be introduced to compensate for the restrictions of memory and storage capacity of the human brain, while also ensuring permanence and clarity when data is resurrected from storage.

Even in the forties, Bush's idea of combining memory storage and connectivity projected a world in which tasks that otherwise would have been impossible due to human shortcomings could be overcome. But Bush's concept of an environment and organization given over to the new machinic systems suspiciously mirrors, as had never happened with any machine before, the specificities of our human mental capacities. I propose to follow some of Bush's thoughts with regards to how the mechanization of our mental processes happened, since I find it valuable for understanding why the semantic logic that structures the Internet, where we also assemble, seems so fluidly natural and surprisingly unproblematic.

Bush's 'Memex concept' was initially conceived for addressing human limitations, but it was also an attempt to change the existing – and indeed very unnaturally designed – systems for archiving and accessing information. Bush gives the example of libraries, whose approach to order he describes, as we see below, as being constructed in a very artificial way when compared with our natural approach to thinking:

When data of any sort are placed in storage, they are filed alphabetically or numerically, and information is found (when it is) by tracing it down from subclass to subclass. It can be in only one place, unless duplicates are used; one has to have rules as to which path will locate it, and the rules are cumbersome. Having found one item, moreover, one has to emerge from the system and re-enter on a new path. (Bush, 1945; p. 6)

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<sup>91</sup> Bush described the 'machinic desk' as follows: 'Consider a future device for individual use, which is a sort of mechanized private file and library. It needs a name, and, to coin one at random, "memex" will do. A memex is a device in which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. It is an enlarged intimate supplement to his memory. It consists of a desk, and while it can presumably be operated from a distance, it is primarily the piece of furniture at which he works. On the top are slanting translucent screens, on which material can be projected for convenient reading. There is a keyboard, and sets of buttons and levers. Otherwise it looks like an ordinary desk.' (Bush, 1945; p. 6)

Bush argues that the logic of alphabetical indexes in libraries does not correspond to how our brain cells function, since they organize thought by association of concepts and not by means of a hierarchy. Bush's relational vision for archiving data can be juxtaposed with the vision of Norbert Wiener, with whom Bush collaborated, and who envisioned the introduction of bi-directionality of information through the exploration of feedback systems in order to expand the possibilities given by the set of medias existing at that time: radio and television being the most common. (Wiener, (1985)[1948]; pp. 6–24) Taken together, the approaches of Bush and Wiener reveal that certain notions of potential technological assemblies were already being intuitively explored before the expansion of the Internet, already guessing the limitations that the technology of the moment presented.

For some time, the invention of the Internet in combination with the computational machine seemed to be the perfect answer to all these incursions, which, as in the case of Bush and Wiener, tried to overcome the limitations regarding access to information, its exchange and its transformation, imagining machines, such as Bush's 'machinic desk', still beyond their productive capabilities. Today, the memex complex gives everybody freedom and self-sovereignty, with the Internet allowing us all to become autonomous users and producers. But, as media theorist Alexander Galloway has argued extensively in his book about protocols (2004; pp. 119–43), this intuitive feeling is revealed as misleading once we discover that the Internet is meticulously organized and governed through a set of different protocols that sit behind the friendly, fluid and intuitive environment of its interface.

While anyone can produce, as well as receive, information and to certain extent assemble through their machinic device, Galloway clarifies how, in a distributed network, the protocol sits between this apparently non-controlled and horizontally structured as the unique governing principle creating an invisible (or most of the times unacknowledged) vertical structure of control.<sup>92</sup> We have seen how Bush clearly wished to conceive of machines that would support the limitations of the human mind, but, if possible, ensuring a certain harmony with its logics. In the mid-forties, Bush already recognised what he considered to be an important distinction between the abilities of machines and the abilities of the human brain with regards to their capacities for processing, storing and sharing.

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<sup>92</sup> 'Protocol,' says Galloway, 'is a set of technical procedures for defining, managing, modulating, and distributing information throughout a flexible yet robust delivery infrastructure. More than that, this infrastructure and set of procedures grows out of U.S. government and military interests developing high-technology communications capabilities.' (Galloway, 2004; p. 15)

Bush was already pointing to some of the problems that Galloway ascribes to the implementation of hierarchical Internet protocols. Bush believed, the ‘natural abilities’ of the machine offered individuals an improvement on the capacity for permanence and clarity, given the fallibility of their memory. But, when it came to flexibility and selecting by association, Bush declared that the human brain was peerless. (Bush, 1945; p. 6)

We need to understand what the combination of these two factors, raised in different periods by Galloway and Bush respectively, do together: a strict but rather invisible set of protocols for controlling the structure of the Internet and the expansion of permanence and clarity against the flexibility and speed<sup>93</sup> of relationality. We should bear in mind that the mediation of machines introduces in human processes not only permanence and clarity, but also a set of protocols that shape our communication. On the other hand, the mechanization of our communication processes acts against our specific virtue of flexibility of thought: algorithms being the most evident example.

The implementation of algorithms has automatized the process of subjecting data to analysis, undertaking tasks that otherwise would be impossible to perform manually. However, they have also automatized, through the results of this analysis, decision-making processes that are faster than humans could perform, but to which humans could bring more parameters of difference. (Barocas, Hood and Ziewitz, 2013; p. 5).

From these first steps, machines have proved an efficient mediator, making possible the existence of virtual assemblies that embrace quantity (numbers of people) and distance (multiplicity of places around the world). The Internet has become a tool for freedom of speech as well as a site for the collective exchange of experiences and of knowledge production at a global level, facilitating the practice of this methodology on a larger scale.

Technology provides the assembly methodology with an answer to the human limitation of time, space and number, but the same technology challenges the virtues of the assembly with vertical and non-transparent protocols and the narrowing of humans’ unique capacity for relating ideas. We should not forget that what technology challenges here are some of the most precious attributes put into practice by the experimental assemblies, as we saw earlier.

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<sup>93</sup> Here it should be distinguished the human speed for associating ideas with the machinic speed in the automatization of an exponential amount of connections. One is based on difference by association and the other in sameness by replication.

What is also put into question in assemblies mediated by present technology is the truth of what it is being said. The verbal activity with which the Athenians tried to perform truth telling – the correlation between what one thinks, says and does – is seriously undermined in technological assemblies, dissolving the virtues that the parrhesiastic assemblies can deploy.

To explain where these risks are most problematic in relation to the contents of this thesis, I need to introduce some ideas about language and its activity, ‘the act of speaking’, in the virtual Internet. In the previous chapter we learnt about the character of language of production, idle talk, a groundless language. Now, I would like to focus on some of its forms of replicability and expansion and for this reason I would like to introduce some ideas about memetics.

Memetics is a theory around the transmission and endurance of mental concepts, first elaborated in close analogy to the Darwinian theory of evolution. The evolutionary biologist, Richard Dawkins, first used the term *meme* in his book *The Selfish Gene*, written in 1976. According to Dawkins’ theory, the meme, analogous to a gene, is conceived as a ‘unit of culture’ (an idea, belief, pattern of behaviour, etc.) that is ‘hosted’ in the mind of one or more individuals, and which can reproduce itself, thereby jumping from mind to mind.

In the Internet, what would otherwise be regarded as one individual influencing another to adopt a belief is seen as an idea-replicator reproducing itself in a new host. Dawkins’ publication awoke the classic controversy of comparing patterns of behaviour in science to those in culture, so diminishing culture’s creative capacity.<sup>94</sup> However, and considering that memes and their different analysis are in constant flux affected by human and technological patterns of behaviour, here I would like to point out the most problematic aspect regarding assembling in the virtual space.

This ‘unit of culture’ or ‘meme’ in the sphere of the Internet can be expressed through language or through visual representations. Its strength or permanence does not rely on the truth of ideas, but, rather, in its success for replication. According to some researchers of the meme theory, such as American System Engineer Jack Harich (2007; n.p.), content

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<sup>94</sup> To expand on the different views and specificities for understanding the meme concept, see Rowan, 2015.



based on falsehood and favouritism is more successful in its replication than truth. This occurs merely because growth and wealth in economy and politics are based on quantity (numbers and digits) and not on quality (difference).

For example politicians, in order to achieve more successful discourses (success being counted in votes), do not elaborate with the intention of defending truth but with ready-made, 'convenient' dubious facts<sup>95</sup> elaborated to placate the general consciousness and its wish-fulfilment<sup>96</sup> through manipulation on behalf of a political party's specific strategy. Whether what is said is true or false does not really matter, as what matters is to offer a successful speech based on convenience and its successful replicability.

If the strength of a 'system of inheritance' does not rely on the truth of ideas or beliefs but in its success for replication, and if replication can be easily automated with the help of machines and algorithms, the problem here is not only that lies sell better and are therefore more successfully reproduced. What deepens the problem is that the automatization and recursiveness of what is being said in virtual assemblies ultimately means that truth could end up 'being at a loss'. (Subcomandante Marcos, 2007; p. 76)

Contrary to the example of political speeches and strategies, the strength of mottos of resistance in real assemblies can become weak memes in virtual assemblies. What is said very powerfully in the verbal activity of an assembly of bodies in real space ends up being disadvantaged in the virtual assembly, if that strength is only uttered without any possibility of sustaining its parrhesiastic intention, and therefore remaining as a kind of a soft noise permanently travelling around virtual space, waiting to fall into a wave that replicates it without a solid ground.

This effect has been contextualized by Marazzi (2008) in relation to wealth and economy.

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<sup>95</sup> Good example in today's politics is the concept of 'alternative facts' used by Trump administration to refer to something other than 'generally known' facts.

<sup>96</sup> One well-known case that exemplifies the expansion of false facts and ideas for favouring strategies is the travesty of Iraq's supposed weapons of mass destruction by the Bush Administration. The 'creation' of evidence for starting the war against Iraq was based on a speech first given by Donald Rumsfeld 'The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.... Simply because you do not have evidence that something exists does not mean that you have evidence that it doesn't exist.' Through this twist, Rumsfeld got to mount a convincing position, under the meme of the 'unknown unknown', for the existence of weapons of mass destruction. Or Colin Powell's speech addressing the United Nations Security Council on the same subject: 'I cannot tell you everything that we know. But what I can share with you, when combined with what all of us have learned over the years, is deeply troubling'. Both use just part of the truth for building up the strategy for defending a war against Iraq. For further analysis around this type of strategies see Lütticken, 2004

Actually, the utterance of technological assemblies, as we saw earlier in the thesis, favours the speculative activity of investors within the economy. Marazzi (2008; pp. 31–36) theorizes in *Capital and Language* that language, which, in language theory, is generally understood as a medium with a capacity for describing and narrating facts and events, is now being re-conceptualised in the economy for the capacity it shows in the virtual space, not for naming and describing things, but for producing without the need of a referent that ensures its existence, thereby becoming a strategic tool for financial markets and their constant need to increase benefits. In the economy, language produces, through the performance of its utterances, in an autonomous way without needing humans for accomplishing its verbal activity. Moreover, the verbal activity of language does not need to correlate with anything that its thought or done. Its function is the very act produced by saying and speaking, as we saw happening with idle talk.

The same type of language performativity can be found in the game of political strategies for which the expansion of false truths and beliefs consolidate through a Darwinian effect that becomes stronger thanks to the hybridization of natural language communication in technological assemblies and the implementation of machine code, provoking a mixture of mutations, recombinations and self-recombinations of first (human-organic) and second (machinic) nature.

If, as Marazzi (op. cit.) defends, reality is produced by saying and not saying (creation instead of a description of a reality), and if, according to Darwinian evolution, it survives and expands not on the basis of its value of truth but on its success for replication with the help of algorithms, and if, as Bush (op. cit.) defended, mechanical processes will help in storing, permanence and clarity – as Galloway (op. cit.) also makes clear – on the basis of hierarchical protocols, then it rather seems as if the world of living beings tends to dissolve into a computerized space very much defined under the modern factory archetype.

It is difficult to believe that a change in the chain of this well aligned and organized sequence of events might be within the reach of common people, since the ‘engines of this system’ follow very different protocols to those produced in the experimental assemblies. Any possibility for changing the engines of the virtual assemblies is more likely to rest in the hands of people whose knowledge and skills lie in technology and programming. This is why Comité Invisible (2015) says in *To our friends* that the world is

in the hands of engineers (pp. 134–45).

Galloway (2004), in his book about protocols, defends that capital builds up its narrative always hiding the machines with which the narrative is created. Throughout this thesis, I have tried to give visibility to the different machines with which the modern factory has been intervening life through work. As it isn't reasonable to expect most people to become engineers, we need to consider other ways of employing machines to transform this world. CsA invites assemblies to sustain their condition in real space and to empower imagination with the help of the machine – 'the cinematograph' –, never hiding it but placing it in the hands of the common people who need to give vision to their lives outside the logic of capitalism.

Experimental assemblies, being as they are 'the true child of the revolution', have turned their backs, literally, on power and the buildings of the state-market (Wall Street, Tahrir, Sol or Syntagma Square), and have decided to collectively look to each other. It should be remembered that they have – even unconsciously – a powerful reason for assembling in real space and not on the virtual Internet. What they have done together is to invoke the virtues that reside in the human condition: language, imagination, attention, socialization and so forth, and they have prescribed for themselves, collectively, their own set of protocols, experimenting with them, with no other restrictions or mandates than those imagined by themselves in this world.

Believing in the empowerment that cinema has carried since its birth (giving vision to life), what if the *nosotros* agreed to film that which is thought, said and lived. What if the *nosotros* produces films together with this concern, experimenting with the assembly as the social movements have recently showed is possible. Turning their backs, literally, on power. Maybe, and this is important, what was still missing in these assemblies was to think of the *nosotros* as people producing, as factory 'workers' in search of a new industrialism.

In the thinking of this new production we should also consider, as we will in next chapter, the constitution of these new relations with our technical being, by employing machines in a way that the surplus value gets transformed into the value of life. Maybe using the hand – the organ of labour – to carry, in this case, a cinematograph: a machine that is shared with others and is never hidden. And see if cinema gives 'vision to life', as the

Lumière brothers believed, little by little curing the virus that has been eating the reality of the referent and, eventually, make it possible to live a life that, at present, can hardly be recognized as such.

## CHAPTER 7

### **The cinematographic gesture and the experience of life: dissolving subsumption**

In the opening chapter of this thesis we explored how the understanding of production drastically changed in early modernity. I put the emphasis on signalling how the new notion for production also led to a reorganization of life itself. Production in the hands of ‘Mother Land’ (Petty, 1662; p. 40), for whom labour was conceived as the sustenance of life, moved into the factories, where labour was aimed at ensuring the wealth of nations. This new form of production in factories created an archetype of production that has been extensively discussed throughout the thesis. A special emphasis has been put on how life came to be captured through work, finally reaching a stage where our knowledge about how to live has been lost, having also put at risk the very essence of the human condition.

Throughout the previous two chapters, and following Marx and Engel’s concerns with men and women’s necessity to work for transforming life, I embarked upon the second part of this research with the challenge of finding a way for returning life through production by recalling some of the fundamental gestures of CsA artistic practice. The horizon through the thesis has been always to reaffirm life by reaffirming work in the factory. For this reason, I have set out to propose a mode of resistance that bases its strategy on the reorganization of production rather than a refusal to work or an exiting of the factory. With this intention in mind, I have discussed two of the three main gestures in CsA’s artistic practice, the authorless and the parrhesiastic, and the role they play in the proposal for a new archetype of production. I have also explained how these gestures manage to recuperate certain values that have been lost within the history of modern production, as is the case with language and socialization in the assembly.

In this closing chapter, I will be discussing the cinematographic gesture, through which I shall propose a reorganization of the agency between human-machine that the modern archetype defined in the factory. To explain the cinematographic gesture and the power of its cinematographic technique, I propose to borrow from the experimental practices of naturalists and craftsman in early modernity, which gave relevance to other ways of looking at and exploring nature and its mysteries, in order to identify some of these technics in CsA’s methodology. I consider that the practice of CsA encourages the *nosotros* to develop the capacity for observing and experiencing life using the

cinematographic machine, following similar procedures to those developed by the naturalist of the Renaissance. CsA's technique succeeds in 'economizing'<sup>97</sup> life by deploying a form of attention economy that looks to the screen of the machine by paying attention to others; sensing and caring about them instead of alienating or estranging attention.

The cinematographic gesture is presented considering its capacity to reconstitute the foundational agency between human-machine as found in modern production in the industrial factory, which favours productivity against the life of the worker. With that objective in mind, I will explore technology and its potentiality to give vision to life instead of always condemning humans and machines to a parasitic relation of subsumption and estrangement between them and the things that are produced, their relations of production and to life itself. Instead of having a world destroyed by the 'Industry of the living' (Marazzi, 2007; n.p.), one could think of a factory that employs the recognition of life for constructing the world.

Hence, if life is what is continuously put at stake, the question of 'what a life is' should also be addressed. A life seen, not as an individual, but as a singular life that, as Deleuze says, is 'a life immanent to a man who no longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other'. (Deleuze, 2001; p. 29) In this thesis, life is approached as the summation of the experiences of how one lives one's life, or how one recognizes such, for the process of estrangement that the worker suffers in modern production has left him few resources with which to make sense of such experiences. The cinematographic gesture is not only the development of a technic. While this technic is practiced, the assembly creates a transitional field where the inner experiences of life relate to the exterior reality of the world, and the cinematograph becomes a transitional object that mediates, connecting both.

In this chapter I shall be recalling Donald Winnicott's 'essential paradox' of the transitional object, and its importance for ensuring, in the newborn, a capacity for feeling that life is worth living. I will show how CsA's cinematographic gesture reintroduces the logic of Winnicott's essential paradox with the help of the cinematograph as a way of recuperating the sense of life that has been lost. Such a reintroduction will not only help us to see life when it is felt absent, it will also reconfigure the role of machines as

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<sup>97</sup> To economize life would mean transforming the present economy of subsistence into a libidinal economy of human existence. As Stiegler (s.f.; n.p.) says, 'Within the limits of capitalism (capitalism destroying the planet) economizing means taking care', giving attention to oneself and each other's lives.

companions for production rather than an alliance for alienation.

The cinematographic gesture reveals the relation that the cinematographic machine is capable of establishing between humans, technology and life, and what it also has to offer in terms of production. This final turn closes the proposal for the new archetype of production. On the one hand, life is trapped by labour when it enters the factory and, progressively, labour occupies life entirely. (Marazzi, 2007; n.p.) On the other hand, we need labour to shape life, since through it we transform the world. (Engels, 1996) This chapter proposes to find out how life can be productive for humans, for machines and for itself. It shows how life can re-enter work in the factory and, in so doing, reconstitute the relation between work, life and technology in a way that life is strengthened instead of being occupied.

Through production, CsA searches for a way to encourage life by encouraging the *nosotros* to explore how to reorganize their lives and to finally re-politicize them. Therefore, life needs to be a central referent to look towards, to reflect upon and to be consciously analysed. As CsA defends, cinema has the potential to influence the powers that determine life through production. (Tudurí, 2008; pp. 6–7) Life should not be captured as a commodity but should be envisioned through our processes of labour production. In so doing, life should become a productive process with which to model work and not the opposite. Life needs recognition because life is necessarily where our being dwells.



## **A life**

In the second Manifesto (2013a/b), in the section entitled 'People, performers, protagonists', CsA accounts for their understanding of how the experience of life can be empowered through cinema using its technological machine with certain intentions. Their own concerns with what cinema is and does in relation to the experience of life are of importance for what will be discussed with regards to the cinematographic gesture and its function in production.

In the Politics of Collectivity, the camera turns its lens on the inexhaustible unfolding of the social phenomenon, turning away from the confined spaces of the imaginary of the film industry, its hermetic places controlled by money and professionalism. Ordinary people's lives and the events that take place in them take centre stage on the exploded cinema screen. There are three categories of 'film experiences' or filmable performances:

### Re-living life

Past experiences can be relived, re-enacted in detail for the camera, planned as a way of allowing the protagonists to audiovisually explore particular episodes from their lives to which they have chosen to return. This can be a highly therapeutic opportunity to reconstruct memories through the feelings, audiovisual materials, and sounds that they remember. It is a way of using film operations to regain awareness of one's own past.

### Documenting the present

Observational cinema and documentary forms allow us to spontaneously record life. Filming the present makes it possible to analyse the events later. We can return to the images and see, choose, discard, and then go back and improve our approach. We can appropriate the system of gestures, the ways in which we interact and communicate. Viewing footage recorded using direct filming techniques often allows people to progress from simple observation to naturalised fiction. When people see themselves on the screen, they usually want to make changes, improve scenes, steer them in a different direction. It is an opportunity to choose, and to heighten the effectiveness of the interacting bodies, the experience itself.

### Testing the future

Cinema has always been a temporary social context that offers its actors and actresses the opportunity to test other lives, other forms of behaviour, other identities, other reactions, other storylines. This has been a privilege set aside for a small group of professionals. The history of cinema is essentially the history of this privilege. Under a Politics of Collectivity, everybody has the right to have these types of imagined experiences through film, to discover inner resources that allow them to face and resolve situations that they have not lived through, to try out identities and lifestyles that are totally unlike their own, to create fictions that are unrelated to their everyday lives. It is a new kind of cinema in which the people generate the action. A testing ground in which to explore ways in which life could be other than it is. (Tudurí, 2013a; pp. 65–67)

I have given an account of the strategy orchestrated through work in the factory for employing life as a reservoir of power on behalf of the expansion of the project of capitalism and how, at a certain stage, technologies became an alliance for that goal. Before I explain in more detail how CsA's cinematographic technics for casting life are incorporated into the new archetype of production using technology as a gesture to 'give vision to life', I will account for some of the contingencies that relate life and technology in the course of modern production.

Recalling Foucault (1990; pp. 141–42) again, we can mark the significant turning point in history that illustrates the seeing of power as making life productive through technology. The alliance woven throughout modernity for benefiting productivity and growth was not merely established between machines and work, but, as we have seen, it also concerned life. As if a premonition, Foucault gave light to the powerful communion of humans and machines, and to the important influence this exercised over life once they became companions in production.

According to Foucault, the machine entered the factory to discipline the body through the labour production processes, coinciding with the moment in which life entered history. The machine enters the factory at the time that life enters 'into the order of knowledge and power, into the sphere of the political techniques'. (1990; pp. 141, 142) This is a double operation that aimed at re-conceptualizing life as well as hybridizing it with the

machine. A new agency between humans and machines was created at the time that the mechanics of life were put under the control of power, also with the help of machines. Foucault (ibid.) brilliantly pointed out the relevance of this event in his text 'Right of Death and Power over Life'. He announced that, what was being put at stake, even at this stage, was not only the effects of the machine with regard to work, but, also and very importantly, with regard to 'life itself'.

What Foucault meant when referring to life entering the sphere of power is crucial. For him, 'for the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence'. (ibid; p. 142) The sovereign power, which previously had power to 'kill' or to 'let live', as we saw earlier in this thesis, was then transformed into a power exercised in a positive manner for assuring, maintaining, managing and developing life. Even though life seemed to be enhanced against death, Foucault advises that life instead became the life that power 'makes' us 'live' and therefore a life that power still 'takes', not through death but by ensuring it is lived in that way. 'Power would no longer be dealing with legal subjects [...] but with living beings, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself.' (ibid. p. 143) And the result, says Foucault, is a sort of animalization of human life achieved throughout sophisticated technics of power. The protection of life, he says, brings the authorization of the holocaust much closer. (Foucault, 1990; p: 136; 1998; pp. 9–16)

It is not only that life was enhanced to make it politically active, machines would play an important role in this endeavour. Foucault (1990; pp. 141–42) saw in this hybridization between machine and life a double and bipolar force. A force to which Foucault gave visibility, placing the beginnings of its process in the seventeenth century and which today seems to have reached completeness in the social factory wherein 'automation is taking the place of political decision' (Berardi, 2014; p. 3) and life is governed by technology. We saw how the factory system did not limit its power to the specific domain of the factory walls but how, while doing so, it precisely conducted and expanded 'outdoors' the management of all the domains concerning a life that was being productively captured:

In concrete terms, this power of life evolved in two basic forms; these forms were not antithetical, however; they constituted rather two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations[...] The first to be formed, it

seems -centred on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces[...] The second[...] focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological process: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary[...] a biopolitics of the population [...] directed toward the performances of the body, with attention to the processes of life- characterized a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill (the ancient sovereign power of the King) but to invest life through and through. (Foucault, 1990; p. 139)

How is it possible that life was not felt more real once it turned politically active, when it was apparently free to be lived and no longer dependent on the ancient right of the sovereign king... once it seemed to have expanded and widened? Today we know that this sovereignty over life had eventually passed from the king to the nation state, and from the nation state to the market, and in such a process had become more precarious. A life left bare, denuded of its rights<sup>98</sup> (Agamben, 1998; pp. 9–16), and of its meaning. Controlled and managed under different technics, ultimately, making it productive. ‘Protecting’ life by making it fragile.

Foucault pointed very clearly at what becomes increasingly more evident today; what is at stake is life. Yet life, despite its political existence, is a mysterious entity touching all but very difficult to grasp. We still wonder why we come into being and why we disappear, and what should be happening in-between. Life has always been and remains for many reasons a major, unresolved issue. Despite all the configurations of discourses that have attempted to open the mystery of life since the time of Aristotle,<sup>99</sup> life remains, as Lopez Petit (2003; pp. 14,111/12/15/16) argues, a paralysing tautology – ‘life is life’ – with all the difficulties implied in grasping its abstract contours and many more for stepping out of its own circularity.<sup>100</sup> Life begins and life ends and we still wonder –

<sup>98</sup> According to Agamben, the right to live seems to lead death away, but the same right strips life of its rights. Life becomes a political object, as Foucault also argued, where the state of exception becomes the rule. And the ‘apparent’ right to live hides behind, covering all the violence that is exercised against life. (Agamben, 1998; pp. 9–16)

<sup>99</sup> About the notion of life concerning political existence see: Thacker, 2010, López-Petit (2003) and Franklin, (2014)

<sup>100</sup> Lopez Petit (2003) in his publication *El infinito y la nada: El querer vivir como desafío* constructs an epistemology of the notion of life through history. His attempt is to demonstrate that life, the main horizon that gives sense to society, has been a continuous enquiry for philosophy throwing throughout history different perspectives in order to make it understandable. But despite all these epistemological efforts, life seems even more ungraspable than ever. Trapped in its own circularity. A life that in terms of production is very well defined: ‘...life is made to work for production and production is made to work for life.’ (Hardt and Negri, 2000; p. 32). Petit suggests that Life (in capital letters) should be re-

without much wondering – how to address a life.

In the case of the factory, life is captured through work in a model of production that constantly diminishes its value by dismounting it through processes of fragmentation and exposing it to extreme competition. A life that cannot be seen but only surrendered as a surplus value. Debates concerning the experience of life are in many cases re-directed towards forms of simplifications, reducing life to bioethics, to the elucidation of when a life begins and when a life ends, again with the false intention of protecting life. But actually, all the ‘in-betweenness’<sup>101</sup> of life’s circularity remain in the battlefield of power. Men and women more lost than found, with fewer possibilities for recognizing for themselves what a life is for, once it has begun and before it ends. It seems impossible to think beyond its use as an encrypted commodity that increases the value of economy, and thus making life disappear. The formula of ‘life produces money’ is today the only certainty of our waned aesthetics of existence or *techné tou biou*.<sup>102</sup> ‘Life appears as ontologically empty while it remains politically active.’ (Thacker, 2009; p. 31)

What is certain for our discussion concerning life is that, even if ‘life is life’, ungraspable as it seems, why should it not be thought of in terms of production in such a way that life itself could open its tautological enclosure? The problem is that the history of production has shown that life always gets trapped through the engines of the machine and it seems impossible to think of any production processes that succeed in using life as something more than an encrypted commodity. In today’s techno-political and economical production life gets captured, despite its mysteriousness, or rather taking advantage, precisely, of its abstract essence. Maybe it is time to think about this life that happens to be occupied through work. If production keeps on furnishing the world, materially and immaterially, and if life is used for such an industrialism, how is that workers don’t use such a process to look at life?

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conceptualize through one’s own life (small letters) in order to meet the challenge of its understanding.

<sup>101</sup> Deleuze said that a life, a singular life, a life that is lived is ‘everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through and that are measured by given lived objects. This indefinite life does not itself have moments, close as they might be one to another, but only between-times, between-moments’ of the event yet to come and that which has already happened (see Deleuze, 2001; p. 29)

<sup>102</sup> Foucault referred to aesthetics of the existence or *techné tou biou* as a practice in which the life of each individual should be treated by him/herself as a personal work of art. To make one’s life an object of knowledge and recognition. This sort of practice that puts life in the centre was cultivated by ancient society following different technics, *askesis*, a learning process about oneself, the technics of the self. Foucault declared that our society hardly remembers this idea. This collapse or decline, says Foucault, started with Christianity when the idea of a self was banished, because it opposed the will of God, replacing in this moment the idea of a self that had to be built and created as a work of art. (Foucault, 2015; p. 73)

## Giving vision to life

*First meeting. There are about 50 people, especially teenagers between 12 and 16 and women over 60. I start by asking why they have come, what they hope to find in this meeting. Many thought that they were coming to a casting of a movie that it was going to be shot in their town. I explain to them that we are going to make a movie together from the beginning. 'But didn't you bring a script?' asks a woman of about 75. 'You have to tell us what we have to say and we interpret it,' she adds. 'No, I do not bring a script, the film will be based on the stories we want to tell,' I reply with an infinite smile received by the audience with some bewilderment. 'Everything needs to be done,' I continue. "We'll start by deciding what to tell and how.' The thing starts to flow and ideas begin to fly. 'Well... for stories... I have many... I can tell you about my life, or about us when there were no streets here.'*<sup>103</sup>

Fernández de Llanos, 2016; pp. 56–57

In the previous chapter I explained how the verbal activity of truth telling aimed at establishing a correlation between what one says, what one thinks and how one lives. As with the authorless gesture, the parrhesiastic should be endured through the whole production, but especially in the opening towards the next gesture. The cinematographic element is also employed by CsA with a kind of a basanic intention that is exercised in this case between what is filmed, screened and lived, with the camera-projector acting as the 'touching stone'. The cinematographic gesture will endure the basanic capacity of *parrhesia* not only within the domain of the sayable with regard to how something is lived, but also within the domain of the visible with regards to how one sees what is lived. We will also see later in this chapter how this helps to open life's circularity. That what is said rehearsing truth telling is made visible with the cinematographic gesture that employs the double function of the cinematographic machine: that of filming and screening. This gesture actualizes the vision that allowed people in the early years of cinema to contemplate their life outside the moment in which it was lived.

The concatenation of the authorless, the parrhesiastic and the cinematographic proposes a

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<sup>103</sup> This description corresponds to the narration that Helena Fernández de Llanos includes in her PhD thesis recalling her experience conducting the authorless film *NegraBlanca* (2013) in the village of Blanca in Murcia, Spain.

form of production in which the *nosotros* emerges once there is an engagement in language that explores the being-in-the-world with others. This engagement comes through exposing one's life to the group with the rehearsal of *parrhesia* in the assembly. In the cinematographic, the challenge of relating what is said with what is lived expands towards the domain of the action and of observation by using the cinematograph for filming and screening. What is said in the assembly is then arranged and performed as an experience, filmed and projected again in the assembly, which confronts the seeing by returning again to the field of the sayable. What is presented through projections is the life of the *nosotros* that in this form of production appears as an addressable matter that concerns each person's reality and which is shared in/by the group. It is thanks to the rehearsal of *parrhesia* in the assembly that the cinematographic gesture is able to 'give vision to life'.

What is at stake in this production is how existence is addressed and felt by the *nosotros*. We will see how the cinematographic gesture helps the *nosotros* in developing a capacity to explore the life that power captures through production. The cinematographic gesture is employed by the *nosotros* to 'capture' and project life-transforming production into an experience of life recognition. Through this process, the *nosotros* is exposed to a contingent relation between the life that 'power makes us live' and the life that one could otherwise be living, by making life graspable once it is resembled and sustain by the assembly through what is being said, performed and recorded, and then made visible on the screen of the projector.

The extension of the notion of the parrhesiastic into the field of the cinematographic becomes especially clear in the first Manifesto (2008), when CsA explains that the authorless form of production proposes to understand cinema as an experience that seeks to engage with life as an embodied experience in production and not just with its representation. CsA points to this distinction through the difference between the role of a character in a film and the role of the cinematographic person in the authorless production:

The character in a film is a partial creation whose work and intentionality are fabricated for a precise moment: the time of shooting. Her/his 'real' life as a character depends of the on and off planes that have to be taken from her/him incarnating such a character. Then, what remains in the film is the sum of some of

her/his performances, which will no longer evolve.

The Cinematographic Person as CsA proposes are the People of the film whose lives exceed the time of shooting, of what is registered, since they are real people. They live as such before, during and after the movie. The cinematographic experience of CsA appears for these People in a specific and punctual moment in their lives[...]

CsA accepts to be a mere device of incidence in a brief field of experience of these people. While in conventional cinema, the device of the film is the character created in order for her/him to accomplish an interpretation to bring the film into existence, for CsA the film process becomes tiny in front of the incommensurability of the event of people living.

In this way, CsA is presented to the real Person, as an opportunity for liberating experimentation when film material is offered and planned. The shooting becomes an 'empty space of possibilities' where, departing from each personal Reality (individual and collective at the same time) performances and dialogues can be rehearsed. (Tudirí, 2013; pp. 48–49)

At this final stage of my proposal, I should emphasize the power that this last gesture offers for (re)valuing the experience of life in a working process through which life should be ingrained as a consciously embodied experience. This is an essential part of the new factory archetype if the challenge is to return life to life. I already started in the previous chapter to defend the need to recuperate the presence of the body as a necessary element for production. We saw for example the empowering capacities of the assembly of bodies and the risks of technological assemblies that can make language speak but cannot cultivate truth telling.

In the chapter dedicated to cinema, I referred to the fascination that its technological capacity provoked at the time of its origin. A fascination experienced due to the possibility that cinema offered for observing people's lives out of the moment in which they were being lived and reproducing them outside themselves, using the screen as a filming-projecting device: a mechanism that I characterized according to its power for giving vision to life. In a way, these machines were perfect for practicing processes of life



‘capture’, in this case, making life an object of observation and study similar to, as we will see, naturalist and craftworkers did some centuries earlier, although without the help of such scientific advances. But the amusement and envisioning characteristic of early cinema lasted very few years: as we saw, cinema soon became a factorial production managed under the logics of the project of capitalism. By this I mean that very little of its empowerment could actually be collectively performed and experimented, and therefore, finally, it remained a kind of a magic trick that was transformed into an innovation for creating credit instead of for envisioning life.

To explain how CsA recuperates the virtues of cinema’s origin as a practice able to value life – not only as a momentary event of amusement, but as an embodied experience that endures and therefore gets transformed into a form of knowledge about life – I would like to return to early modernity. And more specifically, I would like to look into the period before the alliance of science, technology and political economy engendered the factory, thus establishing the archetype of modern production. I propose to go to the late sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, when the enquiry into natural phenomena gave relevance to forms of acquiring knowledge that comprised observation, experimental investigation, casual research and personal experiences. We will then see how CsA employs the cinematographic machine with a similar technic in order to explore life through experience and how technology is useful for binding the performativity of the body to the eye’s capacity to observe. Both constitute men and women’s fundamental conditions that are put at risk in the social factory today.

The general enquiry into natural phenomena that arose in the second half of the sixteenth century awoke a new interest in understanding nature and how things behave. This enquiry began in part due to the expansive spirit marked by global trade, the exchange of goods, plants, animals and food that extended between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ worlds. It was reflected in a new fervour for collecting objects of all types and their exhibition as new forms for encountering knowledge. (Smith, 2009, pp. 357–68) Cabinets of curiosities were examples that reflected the relevance given to experimenting with ways of acquiring knowledge that relied on observing, collecting, putting things together and experiencing with them. These cabinets displayed objects found around the world that belonged or referred to natural phenomena, combining fictive and natural elements, and works of nature that turned into works of art.

The new desires and methods to know and to discover collided with the limitations for approaching knowledge occasioned by the educational systems for logic and literacy inherited from antiquity. These methodologies began to break down and were considered, as some humanists and natural philosophers of the time qualified, as an old and constrained, and in need of renovation.<sup>104</sup> In this time, both the networks and universities of the literate classes contrasted with the workshops of the craftsmen and the mechanical artist concerning what to value, how to approach and how to know things. ‘Truer understanding of nature might be gained in markets and workshops than from books.’ (Eamon, 2008; p. 207)

Science historian Pamela Smith in her lecture ‘The History of Science: Snakes, Lizards and Manuscripts’ (2014) compiles many of the observations made by craftspeople of this period expressing the inadequacy of words and language for transferring their embodied knowledge into books. Craftspeople, she says, declared that writing was unable to convey their skills and that book learning was inferior to bodily experience.

Even if I use the thousand rains of paper to write down all the accidents that happened to learning this art. You must be assured that however good is the brain you have you might still make a thousand of mistakes that can not be learnt from writing, even if you had then written, you might not be believed until practice might have given you a thousand of reflections. (Bernard Palissy,<sup>105</sup> quoted by Smith, 2014)

Despite important figures of the time recognizing what was considered ‘illiterate knowledge’, or knowledge ingrained in bodily experiences, much of the production in these laboratories or workshops only counted as relevant when some recognized form of authority confirmed its value. However, many of these practitioners wrote in the vernacular and for their colleges, diaries and papers. They considered themselves to be ‘professors of secrets’,<sup>106</sup> experts on the secrets of nature, and they referred to their books

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<sup>104</sup> Science historian William Eamon does differentiate quite clearly the different approaches that were raised in Renaissance. He says: ‘[...] literary tradition of works promised to reveal the esoteric teachings of revered authorities like Aristotle and Albertus Magnus. Such teachings appealed forcefully to the medieval mind, which was inclined to believe that everything knowable was contained in ancient sources. But they also appealed to Renaissance thinkers, who searched for a *prisca theologica*, an original wisdom rooted in revelation, as an alternative to what they regarded as a bankrupt scholastic tradition.’ (Eamon, 1994; p. 4)

<sup>105</sup> Bernard Palissy was a craftsman and hydraulics engineer of the Renaissance known for his contributions to the natural sciences for discovering principles of geology, hydrology and fossil formation.

<sup>106</sup> In contrast to the traditional scientific community of those times, the university professors, this group

as ‘books of secrets and experiments. (Eamon, W., 2008; pp. 206–12) It is actually through some of their manuscripts and recipes about ‘how to do things’ that one can appreciate the particularities of a knowledge whose major method for understanding was grounded in experience. In many cases, their practices were concerned with technics for casting the life of animals and plants in an attempt to make their ‘mystericities’ understandable by sensing its essence through casting and reproducing its materiality.

Pamela Smith explains, with reference to certain details, the character of these manuscripts and how they were a mirror of the embodied practices of the professors of secrets. As Smith argues, these texts cannot be read in a linear manner since they are full of notations in their margins that reproduce, in writing, the repetitive trials and failures of their constant experimentation, guided through improvisation and intuition. ‘Remember our work is not done by measuring and talking, the hammering, the forging, all the processes are performed by intuition.’ (Paracelsus,<sup>107</sup> quoted by Smith, 2014)

Their written materials are a reconstruction of their processes and show that they, indeed, found words and language inadequate for the translation of what was fundamentally an embodied and experience knowledge. According to Pamela Smith and her studies on the manuscripts, the skills of a knowledge that is based in embodied experiences needs to be achieved in the course of a repetitive practice from a focus on particular body movements to an increasing unconsciousness of particular actions that finally result in the attainment of an ability. As such, they cannot be acquired through written instructions but only by performing them through experience. Judgement, the masters of secrets explained, is achieved by years of practice and experience, by speculation and dispute. The texts in their manuscripts re-enact the trial and error process as it happened and therefore the composition of the writing cannot be understood divorced from the performance of the action.

These texts, Smith recognizes, necessitate re-enacting to be fully comprehended. Only by literally reconstructing their processes, through embodying what they have written, can one fully acquire their knowledge, and while acquiring it also train certain abilities like

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included alchemists, natural magicians, pharmacists, distillers, glassmakers, lens grinders, friars and empirical doctors. ‘They conceived of science not as the explanation of things known, but as a great hunt after unknown secrets of nature.’ (Eamon, 1994; p. 7)

<sup>107</sup> Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim) grew up during a period of Renaissance humanism and formed part of the school of the naturalists who sought truths, including divine truths, in the study of nature and in men and women’s relationship to the macrocosm. He was a Swiss German philosopher, physician, botanist, astrologer and occultist.

observation and attention, working through the resistances of the materials, experimentation, learning by doing, intuition and speculation. Something similar happens when the cinematographic gesture is addressed in CsA's practice. The screen of the cinematograph is used by the collectivity producing films in a similar way to how the craftworkers used their manuscripts, that is, as an interface that reproduces their experience through trial and error. In the case of the cinematographic procedure, the verbal activity of truth telling rehearsed by the *nosotros* in the assembly will afterwards be rehearsed as an embodied experience for which the screen will serve as the interface to record the trial and error of the *nosotros* in transferring words into embodied experiences.

In CsA's methodology, once the script is agreed by the *nosotros*, all that is said has to be embodied through experience and be captured by the filming screen of the cinematograph. The truth of what is said cannot be accomplished completely in the written instructions of the script but only by performing the words through experience. In order to understand the functioning of the cinematographic gesture, one has to look at this device as it was in its origins: a technical machine able to observe life and reproduce it outside the moment it is lived.

In CsA practice, the camera films and the projector screens in order for the assembly to see and reflect upon what the *nosotros* have just embodied through performing in front of the camera: the parrhesiastic script previously agreed together. Once the scenes are filmed, the assembly then congregates again and uses the screen of the projector, which is full of embodied verbal activity or fragments of life expressed in words and later on embodied, to confirm if what they think corresponds with what they said, and what they said corresponds to what they performed. Enduring their skills for observing and caring. Working through the resistances of what is first thought, then said and finally experienced and observed again. Mastering this production using the screen of the camera and the screen of the projector as pages for notation, experimenting, learning by doing, trying things in different ways, testing their intuition and speculation.

### **Life becoming technical**

*We end up loving the distant and hating what is near because the later is present, because it smells, because it makes noise, because it bothers us; unlike the distant*

*that one can be make it disappear with Zapping... Being closer to who is far than to who is next to us, is a phenomenon of political dissolution of the human species. The loss of one's own body leads to the loss of the body of the others, for the benefit of a kind of spectrality of the far.*

Virilio, P., quoted by Berardi 2006; p. 4

Throughout this thesis, we have seen how contingent is the agency that was set up between humans and machines in industrial production and how it has been reproduced in the different adaptations in the lineage of factories reproducing the same archetype. Foucault emphasized the relevance of what was at stake, while several forces conjoined, leading towards the possibility of thinking, as Berardi does, of life being totally governed by technology. We have seen in earlier chapters how the silent punishment of Prometheus saw him finally become one with the rock. Humans and machines becoming one. We have seen also how life becomes indistinguishable from work and work from life.

In a way, following Foucault's initial speculation addressed earlier, and applying it to today, life needed to be occupied or, even more extreme, the process of its occupation opened up to the possibility of investing and improving the intelligence of machines and the expansion of their industrial and computational logic, to the extent of projecting human beings as becoming 'computer programs' performing in a computational universe. Actually, the distinguishable agency between men/women and machine seems to become a hybridization between life and technology in the social factory of today, when the social becomes fully technical. This should call for our attention in a moment in which computation (machines and their derivatives) is the means by which the reality of our lives is continually produced and reproduced on micro- and macro-levels, while our existence increases its 'ontology of the empty'.

The human machinic agency outside production has inspired interesting lines of thought and emancipatory life-form conceptualizations, at least theoretically. In 1991, Donna Haraway introduced the concept of the cyborg as a kind of a thinkable science fiction metaphor with which to mobilize the potentiality of an unfinished reality by animating the human-machinic as an empowering hybridization. She wanted to challenge the narrowed reality of the time (especially concerning feminist theory, but serving as a broader inspiration) by conquering the real with uneasy and uncategorised life forms.

However, today, thinkers such as Berardi interpret the path already taken regarding these hybridizations in production as an alarm that calls for the best of our creative capacities. As Haraway was in fact ‘confirming’, and not just proposing as an inspiration, ‘the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion’. (p. 149) Today, the optical illusion is actually real, as Berardi (2014) seems to intimate in a recent essay called ‘The Neuroplastic Dilemma: Consciousness and Evolution’:

In the modern humanist sense, ‘history’ is the process of the conscious affirmation of free projects in the field of political action. But the cognitive mutation that we are talking about is going to dissolve the historical relation between consciousness, politics, and freedom. Automation is taking the place of political decision, and the word ‘governance’ refers essentially to this automation of data interpretation and decision: it implies the end of politics, democracy, and conscious decision-making, and the establishment of an automatic chain of logical procedures intended to replace conscious voluntary choices. (Berardi, 2014; p. 3)

Hopefully without having yet crossed that border, the truth is that there has been continuous evidence of the crises that the factorial system and the production and reproduction of its specific human-machinic agency has been provoking; blurring, instead of empowering, life and its forms. Especially, once this agency has radically conquered the power to reorganize life through work and because through work beyond work, facilitating the control and politicization of life (biopolitics) through machines.

This has affected life but not just life. It has also reduced machinic usability and its potential possibilities to the regime of a quantitative, standardised and alienating logic. Both effects have provoked struggles in recent history when trying to elucidate where life has possibly gone to and what/how machines should be employed for benefiting life through production. The limits of life and work blurring, work occupying life, work made leisure and leisure made work, self-entrepreneurship, the nightmare of participation, society becoming technical and so forth are symptomatic commonplaces of this fact.

In the computational universe in which we now dwell, dangerously exposed to extreme automation, with life broken into pieces, dispersed, and with very little personal power to intervene for its re-composition, the screen is the interface that connects the worker to the computational universe and to one each other. It is presented as the ‘friendly’ object that

materializes the contract of the human-machinic operation. In the present modes in which life hybridizes with computational machines in production, the screen of the machine should be especially enquired into for the role it plays in the social factory.

As we have partly seen already, and as I will discuss below, the screen has an important role in the new archetype of production, not only as a device for notation, but as a transitional space to open life's tautology. Hence, I would like to raise some concerns that make clearer how the screen, in our contemporary production processes, is the device that mediates the hybridization between life and technology, reducing men and women's capacity for life recognition, and to then explore how their role can be reconfigured through production.

According to film theorist Jonathan Beller (2002, 2006/2007), the screen is the interface through which capitalism economizes attention, captivating the eye that constantly looks to the screen. For his part, philosopher Bernard Stiegler (2006) qualifies this economization of attention as and economization of care, since it is through the eye that our psychic and our socialised libidinal energy<sup>108</sup> are constantly battered. Stiegler refers to the subsumption of the sensible through the psycho-technologies<sup>109</sup> of consumerist capitalism. The juxtaposed subsumption of attention turns the eye blind and society insensible to care.

We could go even farther and say that the screen today acts as an intermediary for re-staging a secular version of the medieval Christian understanding of power over life mediated in this case through technology. The way that technology is employed in production, placing the screen as an interface, not only makes us blind and insensible to care, it uses the screen as the intermediary interface that divides life into a superlative and incomprehensible 'divine-machinic' entity and a subordinate 'creaturely life' cancelling life's comprehension by making men and women sense that life is not within reach and, in any case, its meaning should be looked for somewhere else beyond the reality of the

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<sup>108</sup> According to Stiegler attention is the social faculty of taking care of an object or of another or as the representative of another, as the object of the other. Attention is also the name of civility as it is founded on *philia*, that is, on socialised libidinal energy. (Stiegler, s.f.; n.p.)

<sup>109</sup> Beller (ibid.) for his part makes emphasis on the audiovisual technologies that capture attention through the eye. Stiegler (ibid.) for his part amplifies this capture attention farther than the eye and visibility referring to the psycho. He says that the capture of attention made possible by the psycho-technologies that have developed with the radio (1920), with television (1950) and with digital technologies (1990), spreading all over the planet through various forms of networks, and resulting in a constant industrial canalization of attention which has provoked recently a massive phenomenon of the destruction of this attention that American nosologists call attention deficit disorder. (Stiegler, s.f.; n.p.)

material world. The 'divine-machinic' entity is the totalization of the info-sphere that exists behind the screen and that is run by machinic 'black boxes'<sup>110</sup> that manage the life of the world. And the 'creature life' is the life of the 'living' humans that stare at the screen, offering their individual lives to be sacrificed, divided, and that can only be recomposed according to a logic ruled by the machinic divine.

From the idea that the attention one invests into screens is economized through production, it follows that attention is estranged by the machine benefiting the capitalist, estranging what one produces, the way it is produced and affecting as well the relations of production, as Marx would say. The 'divine machinic' has the same role that the capitalist has been playing and once again the machine, in this case through the screen, cancels any process of exteriorization the worker could achieve in production due to continuous divisions and fragmentations that work against composing comprehension. In the end, the life that is invested in production cannot break its tautological enclosure due to subsumption in production.

Although it might seem so, the problem we face here is not necessarily technological, it is one of power and the ways in which machines have been constantly employed in production. I will discuss below why I consider that the cinematograph, when employed as a human-machine agency in production for giving vision to life, has an empowering capacity to bring life closer to the eye: an eye that is not blind and that not only sees, but in seeing pays attention to others. My concern is that despite the subsuming function that machines have been playing in production and despite the increasing number of screens employed for this means in the social factory, the screen precisely can help workers produce in a manner that to recognize life.

### **For returning life to life. The 'essential paradox'**

In this thesis I have discussed the difficulties and risks that the scientific and productivist modern notion of labour has been throwing against life and against our abilities for its recognition as a life that powers 'takes', leaving it empty, estranging it more and more. I have also given an account of the promotion and normalization of a rather parasitic form

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<sup>110</sup> The concept 'black box' is used by cyberneticians whenever a piece of machinery or a set of commands is too complex. In its place they draw a little box about which they need to know nothing except to ensure its input and output. When you switch the 'black box' on the importance is only that it runs the programs. (Latour, 1987; p. 3)



of agency between humans and machines. Such an agency has been sacrificing the capacity of exteriorization of workers in production, something that was arranged in this way when the craftworkers moved from their workshops to the factories and the modern archetype of production was defined. These effects have increased and expanded until today while they are constantly reproduced by the modern factorial archetype for work and life production. If, as Marx and Engel's defended, men and women are totally dependent on work for life transformation, the question at this stage would be how work could be employed for making people sense their lives with the help of machines?

Returning to the idea of how technology is today employed for the organization of production, the screen seems to be not only a device that continuously valorises our attention but it also seems to function as the boundary separating the workers domain from the outer space of what is produced. The outer space behind the screen, which we have already characterized as fragmented and divided, remains – due to these characteristics – beyond comprehension. However, the complexity of the outer space does not prevent anyone from overstepping the limit of the screen and falling into the incomprehensible. Indeed for the sake of keeping up the pace of production, workers in the social factory are constantly encouraged to throw their subjectivity into the outer, virtual space, even if that sphere feels unreachable. The screen is the boundary that ensures the connection of the worker to life and to its subsumption.

One of the reasons why technology enhances the tautological enclosure of life is because, as workers who work to transform their lives, we are denied any condition of intermediation that helps in understanding the relation between our own domain and the exterior one. Technology has always been employed for maximizing production and in so doing has cancelled any possibilities that workers might have had for exteriorising their inner self realities. To understand the relevance of this fact, screens today – indeed, any machine employed to work in the lineage of factories – can be put into relation to Donald Winnicott's theory of the transitional object and its space of transitional phenomena. This theory can help in understanding with more clarity the relevance that machines have concerning the mediation of men and women's inner and outer reality.

Winnicott (2005)[1953] developed this theory in the field of psychoanalysis in the early fifties. His concern as paediatrician and psychoanalyst was the exploration of the fundamental relation that is established between the mother and the infant in the first

stages of life. He raised awareness of the challenging task of guiding the newborn successfully towards developing a sense of feeling that life is something worth living. Winnicott clarified that his theory did not only concern the mother and the baby alone. Indeed, he consistently reminded us that a task through which babies learn to intermediate between their inner and the outer reality is, however, a lifelong ability that needs to be constantly rehearsed.

We can recall some of the crucial elements of this theory in order to understand it in relation to the role that screens play today as technological transitional objects. According to Winnicott, when a baby comes into the world it lacks the capacity to distinguish between its inner reality and the external life. The baby sees the mother as part of itself, as if they were one living entity. Therefore, the task of the mother is to guide the newborn and help it to manage the transition from its initial inability to distinguish the inner from the outer towards the acquisition of the ability to recognize itself and to accept the world. Transitional objects help the baby and the mother in the achievement of this. (ibid. 2005; pp. 1–21)

A transitional object is one that is not part of the infant's body yet is also not fully recognized as belonging to external reality. Such objects help the child towards a relation with external reality and function as a connection between the baby and the mother. The transitional object helps the baby in balancing the illusion of inner reality and the disillusionment of external reality while it learns to distinguish the difference. Such a process of reality acceptance is never completed and the intermediation between the inner and the outer should always be present and understood as a contingency of relations. Winnicott calls this necessary intermediate the 'essential paradox' of life. (ibid.; p. 204) No human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality, and the release of this strain is only possible if there is an intermediated area of experience through which the individual incorporates a sense of life as something worth living. (ibid.; pp. 1–21, esp. 16–18) What I believe happens with technology in the way it has been employed in production is a constant erosion of Winnicott's essential paradox of life, especially if we take into account that work is the means for transforming life. In production, the tool is the extension of the hand of the worker, which mediates between labour and life's transformation. It is the prolongation of the worker's gesture and as such is not part of the worker's body. Yet it is also not fully recognized as belonging to the external reality of what is produced.

The impossibility of distinguishing work from life is not only characteristic of our present condition but is the most extreme symptom that confirms that the way technology is being employed in production is erasing our capacity for exteriorization. Tools can be considered a particular transitional object that mediated between the illusion of the inner reality and the disillusionment of the exterior reality: between life and production. The capacity that tools had as transitional objects that helped in mediating the essential paradox started to become lost when this function was cancelled in the factory with the introduction of machines following a radical scientific management. From then onwards, workers began to lose their capacity for relating their inner self with the outer production. The sense of working for transforming life was disassociated from production.

According to Beller (2006/2007; n.p.), in the genealogy of media seen from the present perspective, cinema can be accounted as the precursor of TV, computing and the Internet. The cinematographic machine facilitated the strategy to economize the eye by showing how the screen could be used for this means. The screen seems as well to be the only remaining technology that establishes the agency between humans-machines in the factory of today. Hence, to complete the proposal of the new archetype, the screen would have to be considered in production, yet it should also be transformed into an ally for a new human-machine agency and a new technological hybridization that breaks with life's enclosure. It needs to be used to see something on it; also to be able to see 'behind' it all the life that has been captured and made to seem beyond comprehension. Its intermediary function should be re-conceptualized by turning it into something meaningful for life, recuperating the vision of the eye and the social libidinal energy. The cinematograph, the first media technology, can be of help in such a task.

We can continue thinking of the screen as I suggested earlier with the example of the manuscripts of early modern craftworkers, that is, as the interface for registering and sharing the collective embodied experiences. For CsA, what is filmed are always lives lived 'as such before, during and after the movie'. Once lives are filmed, they are presented to the *nosotros* through projections. They are commented upon, discussed, reorganized and filmed again. Corrections are made after experience is embodied in front of the camera, notated on the film and projected for contemplation and observation, for collective revision opening them to care and exchange.

With the practice of these techniques, the screen of the cinematographic machine becomes a device filled with life. The cinematographic gesture relies on the double function of the cinematograph by opening an intermediary space between the screen that films what is performed and the screen that presents it for discussion in the assembly. The verbal activity in which one says what one thinks and how one lives is notated in the screen that records the words transformed into embodied experiences that, as part of the inner realities of each worker, are presented on the screen of the projector. Each and every worker, the *nosotros* in the assembly, helps the rest in relating each other's illusions with the exterior reality of the world.

While this human-machinic agency works together, attention slowly recuperates its Latin root *attendere*,<sup>111</sup> by shifting one's attention to others and by taking care of one's own life experience and those of others. These rehearsals transform workers into the naturalists of a new age. The cinematographic gesture helps them connect life with the eye, with words and with their bodies. And this becomes a transitional field of intermediation between the inner and the outer realities, illusion and disillusionment. Theirs is the task of stating something that had been visible from the beginning of time – life –, but that has remained mute in front of men and women's eyes.

The screen that today makes us blind and careless can be full of life observation and reflection for seeing oneself and the other and for recognizing each other, for negotiating our subjective beings, our life events and our life projections. In this case, all the skills and judgements regarding our lives will not be subsumed by the machine as processes of 'estranged' labour but rather the contrary. The machine 'learns' (by recording and projecting) our different approaches to life and instead of subsuming them – 'valorising information' –, it films and screens them to facilitate a life casting process through which, in contradistinction to what is happening to us, men and women constantly relate their inner self with the outer reality, improving their skills and judgement concerning their life events and visions.

In CsA's view of production, cinema is an engagement with life made possible by the cinematographic gesture. For CsA, life is the existence of the being becoming real only if one is free to exteriorise one's own existence and cinema is there to offer anyone the opportunity to acknowledge that reality of life. The whole operation of filming and

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<sup>111</sup> 'In French as in English, *attention* is a word derived from the Latin *attendere*, "to shift one's attention to" or "to take care".' (Stiegler, 2012; p. 1)

projecting transforms the assembly into a space of transitional phenomena and the cinematograph into a transitional object that helps release the strain of relating the illusion of the inner with the disillusionment of the outer, reminding the *nosotros* about the paradox of life and breaking its tautological enclosure. Returning life to life by rehearsing its paradox and enhancing the sense that life is worth living.

## CONCLUSION



**Img. 56:** Cristobal Simancas (on the ladder) placing a movie screen, c. 1932. Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid



Until very recently, to my elder son, Mateo, who is nearly ten, everything had the quality of a real event. It didn't matter if what he was seeing was presented on a screen or taking place in a street, in a theatre, or wherever. He had the capacity to consider real what he saw with his eyes or even what he heard with his ears. For him, a movie was always a real story that had happened to someone. Hence actors were normal people to whom the stories he saw were part of their lives. It was the same with books. He always believed the stories we read to him, making space for them to become real in his imagination. They were nothing more and nothing less than extensions of reality. They were occurring there, although taking place somewhere else in the world and not within reach of his eyes. As real as considering that he might someday encounter Pinocchio, Pippi, Ulysses, Cain or Abel, and so forth.

Last summer our village re-enacted an important historical event that dates back to the year 1457. The ship landing in Corcubión carried the troops of Archbishop Rodrigo de Luna and a fight ensued with the villagers who were to defend themselves from attack. The whole village attended the recreation of that historic event, and Mateo believed it was really taking place. While we were watching the fight between medieval knights and the villagers from the beach, Mateo felt both scared and confused. He came to me looking for a confirmation for what he thought was real: people actually fighting each other with sticks and swords. It didn't matter if what he saw was not of the present and that people were wearing clothes of another century and riding horses.

In the story of Pinocchio, which Mateo enjoyed for several years, there are a many episodes that can easily transgress a child's boundaries of the real and the unreal. A piece of wood that talks to Geppetto and, once sculptured into the shape of a body, is given life, with a soul and a body, even though Pinocchio is a puppet dreaming of becoming a real boy. Or the Fairy with Turquoise Hair, a woman who is dead but who always returns to life to rescue Pinocchio. Or the coins that are seeds that, when planted in the Field of Wonders, sprout, grow and blossom, loaded with coins. Or the shark that eats people who can live inside its body...



But the example with the greatest interest for us is the place to which Pinocchio goes, the Land of Toys, tempted by his good friend Candlewick. A place where there is no school, only attractions; no adults, only kids; no responsibilities, only play all day all year round. Such a dream place was not a fantasy for Mateo. For Mateo that place existed, even though he was never lucky enough to have physically enjoyed it. It is not that it was not real. It was rather that he didn't see it in front of his eyes, but it could have occurred someday, as actually happened with the medieval knights riding horses and fighting on our local beach.

The 'incapacity' that enables Mateo to conceive the world as a complexity of realities – treasured by the world itself and which one should haunt, seeing them become real before our eyes – is similar in nature to what is animated by the authorless cinematographic production. Production is proposed by CsA as a space of negotiation of the real and the imaginary, making both appear in front of everybody's eyes by pursuing what reality resists revealing. When work captures life's capacity to transform the world, it renders people incapable of seeing life's infinite possibilities. Such possibilities, which one neither sees nor imagines, might again be accessed by making them appear, to oneself and to others, on the screen, to see them becoming real: to at least wonder about their place in reality through sharing and discussion with the *nosotros* in order that one day we might inhabit such infinite possibilities.

### ***NegraBlanca. Nos llaman las estereras*<sup>112</sup> [\*Note]**

Blanca is located on the banks of the river Segura and is one of the populations in the network of small municipalities that have historically given life to the valley of Ricote. It was first conquered by the Muslims who called it *Negra* (Black), and thereafter reconquered by the Christians and renamed *Blanca* (White). Subsistence in the area has been traditionally based on agriculture, which was made possible by using the river as a resource, constructing an infrastructure of canals to irrigate the fields.

During the 150-year period from 1840 to 1980, the *esparto*<sup>113</sup> became a second resource in the area, introducing an industrial model that constituted a symbol of progress within

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<sup>112</sup> *Nos llaman las estereras* (They call us the *estereras*). *Esterera* is the name given to the craftworker who employs the *esparto* in her productions.

<sup>113</sup> *Esparto* is called in English *esparto grass*. It is a fibre produced by two species of perennial grasses and it is used for crafts. The women dedicated to this craft are called in Spanish *Estereras*

the rural context of the valley reaching international distribution. Before this period, the *esparteros* collected the plant in their communal lands and made utensils that facilitated both their agricultural work and their domestic life.

In Blanca, the *esparto* manufacturing industry began in 1929. Before the Spanish Civil War, a large number of women organized their work under cooperative models connected and supported by the network of the socialist *Casas del Pueblo* of the Second Republic. Workers in the cooperative taught the making process to other women who wanted to find work in the field becoming *estereras*. But these cooperatives did not represent a model exclusively of labour organization. For a period before the war, different cooperatives in the valley organized a market for the exchange of products with which they self-sustain their lives. This organizational system did not survive the war, and under Franco the control of production was taken over by patrons.

The film *BlancaNegra* was produced under the methodology of CsA in Blanca in 2013. More than a hundred people from the village became involved in constituting a *nosotros*, a cross-generational assembly formed by people born to the village or who had migrated there for work. The reality and the imaginary with which each was willing to engage in the film were extremely varied. Helena Fernández de Llanos, who was part of the CsA team, sums up the stories that were to be included in the film in this way:

In December, we concluded phase one with all the stories compiled. What we had was heterogeneous: a house that hosts the stories of the past, if you look closely, a woodcutter who faces popular contempt and who kidnaps a child out of despair, the work of *esparto*, which was a mode of sustenance in the area, along with the fruit for much of the twentieth century. Children, past in the present, there is a sculpture made in bas-relief of Franco's face in a small square, his nose is missing... And there is the man who sees everything: a timeless being of Arab origin, transiting between times and spaces. A being that protects and facilitates the way to walkers by means of dreams or by Moorish alleys. (Fernández de Llanos, 2016; pp. 67 and 78)

In *NegraBlanca*, there are several scenes dedicated to remembering some of the experiences of people's lives in the past and especially their working activities. *Nos llaman las estereras* is a piece in itself, made independently from the film. It was

explicitly assembled with the intention making clear some of the complexities that unfold in CsA's processes of production. CsA always places at least one camera in the field of reality that constantly records the making process as it is taking place. This means that from the very moment in which production is inaugurated with the question 'If you could make a film, what film would you do?' all the assemblies, screenings, scene preparations, script discussions and so forth are registered and are available to be included in the film – if the *nosotros* so decides. What is presented in *Nos llaman las estereras* is an exemplification of something that is very common to CsA's process of production: the scene is not only recorded as a scene, but as a life event.

Yet, while this sort of material is standard to CsA's productions, *Nos llaman las estereras* remains exemplary. Compared to other materials of this type, in the making of this short assemblage there are many of the components with which CsA challenges their own methodology. It doesn't always happen in CsA's films or in the recordings of their processes – not even in *NegraBlanca* itself – that there is a conflation of the three categories of 'film experiences' that CsA proposes, namely: re-living life, documenting the present and testing the future. (Tudurí, 2013; pp. 65–67) Moreover, in this scene it is very clear how, on the one hand, 'the film process becomes tiny in front of the incommensurability of the event of people living', and, on the other hand, how the shooting becomes 'an "empty space of possibilities" where, departing from each personal Reality (individual and collective at the same time) performances and dialogues can be rehearsed'. (ibid.).

The people in the film, the *nosotros*, are not acting but living out the scene in order to also be able to produce it. The *nosotros* is not just recalling memories but re-living them and renegotiating their meaning: what they are and what they could become. The scene would then be screened to the *nosotros*, placing it in front of everybody's eyes, not only as a mere scene in a film but also – as Mateo thinks of movies – as an experience belonging to someone's life.

### **Theory and practice**

As I pointed with emphasis in the introduction of this thesis, my attempt has not been to think of labour production as the production of economy. I set myself the task of thinking

of production as a process that organizes work in a manner that enables society to look at life and, maybe, if one persists, come to transform the theory of value imposed by capital. I emphasize this because, through my attempt to distinguish the empowering capacities of CsA's practice, I have realized that the gestures that I consider capable of empowering the transformation of the modern notion of production, in this case rehearsed by CsA, can also be practiced, embodied and performed on different occasions and in different formats.

Today, the factory that inspired this thesis is disbanded, for insufficient resources could be invested in keeping it open. However, and precisely for this reason, I want to underline the importance I have given to the idea of the gesture when theorizing the singularity of CsA's practice. Even if there is no factory in which to produce in this way – no walls or machines within them –, the gestures of production remain operative and at hand to be rehearsed by anyone and at any time. Theorizing them has proved a way to read what was never written, to make it be more understandable and to put it at a wider disposal.

I have given an account of CsA's methodology using gestures because, as gestures often do, they connect a necessity and animate its exteriorization. Once novel gestures enter the domain of the real they can actualize men and women's powerful compulsion to become similar and to behave mimetically, increasing the possibilities for changing the old archetype of production. This thesis explains these gestures within the logic of the exemplary practice that encouraged them, but once they are recognized it is up to each of us – curators, producers and workers – to find ways to rehearse them within our specific practices and lives. This is how theory and practice can animate each other.

**[\* Note]**

The author encourages readers to watch *Nos llaman las estereras*. The conclusion is composed of the written material and by the audiovisual piece, and both articulate its function.

*Nos llaman las estereras* can be watched at <https://www.cinesinautor.es/negrablanca>

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**\*Notes:**

1.

Chapter four of this thesis refers to a series of interviews carried by the author under different formats between the years 2013 and 2015 as well as to a series of correspondences between the founders of CsA collective maintained since 2005. These materials are not referenced in this bibliography because they have not been published and are not publicly available. In case of any interest in accessing the materials, please contact the author of this thesis.

All the films referred to in chapter four by Cine sin Autor can be found on their Web at <https://www.cinesinautor.es/>

The project *Correspondencias*, also referred to in Chapter Four, was made public by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation in a DVD format. However, it can be accessed at [http://www.interactuem.org/video.asp?id\\_fichero=674](http://www.interactuem.org/video.asp?id_fichero=674)

The authorless film *BlancaNegra* has a blog that accounts for the process of production of the film <https://hacemosunapeli.wordpress.com/>

CsA production done in Toulouse can be consulted at <https://cinemasansauteur.wordpress.com/>

2.

All materials referenced in this bibliography as published on the Web have been verified and their addresses updated between May and June 2017

3.

All material quoted in this thesis and whose source of reference are not the English have been translated by the author unless otherwise indicated.

