

The Capital-Labour/Capital-Life Reading Group

This Winter 2012-13, About a Bicycle will host a series on economics, with a focus on how Capitalism functions (or doesn't) now. We'll explore texts that will address capitals transmutation during the recent global economic crisis, the precarious conditions of labour and life, economic principles that situate capitalism's avant-gardes and the avant-gardes of its opposition, and the current state of financialization and its "obscene superego" that floods public and cognitive values, and how (beginning with the introduction of standardized time) the machinery of Capital becomes internalized as a moral imperative.

Like a line from Waiting for Godot, "there is no outside" from Empire, from a world system that is a totalizing and affective reality, often debilitates social subjects from pushing beyond postmodern impasse [capitalism breeds impassiveness], a space in which the social is fluid (anything goes), while the economic beats the subject in line to the rhythm of surplus-value production. Keeping in mind the relevance of Marxian economics (and the factories that still operate in those conditions), we will focus on Finance and its most recent crisis. We'll begin the session with an intensive 3-week reading of Christian Marazzi's *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, which has acted as a departure from what we know and a necessary blueprint for interpreting the financial crisis as a fluctuating, yet stable vortex of capital accumulation. In order to confront cultural predispositions to success and failure within the Market, we will think about the procedural creation of scarcity and how it dictates the Market's preference for rarity.

How do we revert our attentions from something "new" and idealized while still imagining a post-utopian social reality? When so much of our relationships are based upon competition and the desire for more, how do we emotionally educate ourselves outside of this paradox? Can we cannibalize the "esoteric neolanguage" of finance and ideology and transfigure it into a more recognizable beast? Let's talk about public employment and education, imposing the financial system, refusing to work for free because "that's just the way it is/how it works" (the slavery of cultural production/our cheaply-produced imported goods), the type of labour we put into

assembling commodities and the type of pleasure we derive from it because we “made it ourselves”, the abolishment of rent, artistic/poetic/knowledge production we subscribe to that create these “new” openings and also claustrophobic blockages to alternative socioabilities.

Autumn/Winter Schedule 2012–2013

Week 1: (Nov 21 – hosted at Ana’s)

The group’s intentions and theme for the session (Finance, economy, labour, urban space, virtual space, capital)

Introduction and Appendix of **Christian Marazzi’s The Violence of Financial Capitalism.**

“The Becoming of the Crisis” + “Financial Logics” (pp.9–42, pp.123–135)

Ch.XV1, “Absolute and Relative Surplus Value” from Marx’s Capital

(The pages in this book are small and two pages can be printed on one side of a page.)

Week 2: (Nov 28 – hosted at Danielle’s)

“On the Becoming–Rent of Profit” + “A Crisis of Global Governance” (pp.43–82)

Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy – Tiziana Terranova

BREAK

Week 3: (Dec 12 – hosted at D’s)

“Geomonetary Scenarios” + Afterword (pp.83–122)

Postscript for Control Societies – Gilles Deleuze

XMAS BREAK

Week 4: historicizing Marazzi (Dec 27 – hosted at A’s)

“Remaking Laissez–Faire” – Jamie Peck

the_road_to_serfdom – F.A. Hayek (gloss over the introduction and read The Abandoned Road, The Great Utopia, and, Why the Worst Get on Top)

Week 5: (Jan 4 – hosted at A's)

“Taming Time: Media of Financialization” – Joseph Vogl

Ch. XV, “Machinery and modern industry”– section 1 – from Marx’s Capital

Week 6: (Jan 10 at D's)

“The Ideology of Free Culture and the Grammar of Sabotage” – Matteo Pasquinelli

“The Notion of Expenditure” – from Georges Bataille’s Visions of Excess

BREAK

Week 7: (Jan 24 at D's)

“Economics: Postmodernism and the Market” from Fredric Jameson’s Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.

“Financial imaginaries: Toward a philosophy of the city” – Reinhold Martin

Week 8: (Feb 1 at A's)

“Breaking the Silence: the hidden injuries of neo-liberal academia” – Rosalind Gill

“Hunger Artists and Internships in the Arts” – Ross Penn

BREAK (2 WEEK)

Week 9: (Mar 1 at A's)

“All the World Needs a Jolt: Social Movements and Political Crisis in Medieval Europe” +

“The Accumulation of Labour and the Degradation of Women: Constructing ‘Difference’ in the ‘Transition to Capitalism’” (pp. 21–131) from Silvia Federici’s Caliban and the Witch

Week 10: (Mar 7 at Danielle's)

Ch.VI "The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power" + Ch.VIII "Constant Capital and Variable Capital" from Marx's Capital

"From Capital-Labour to Capital-Life" - Maurizio Lazzarato