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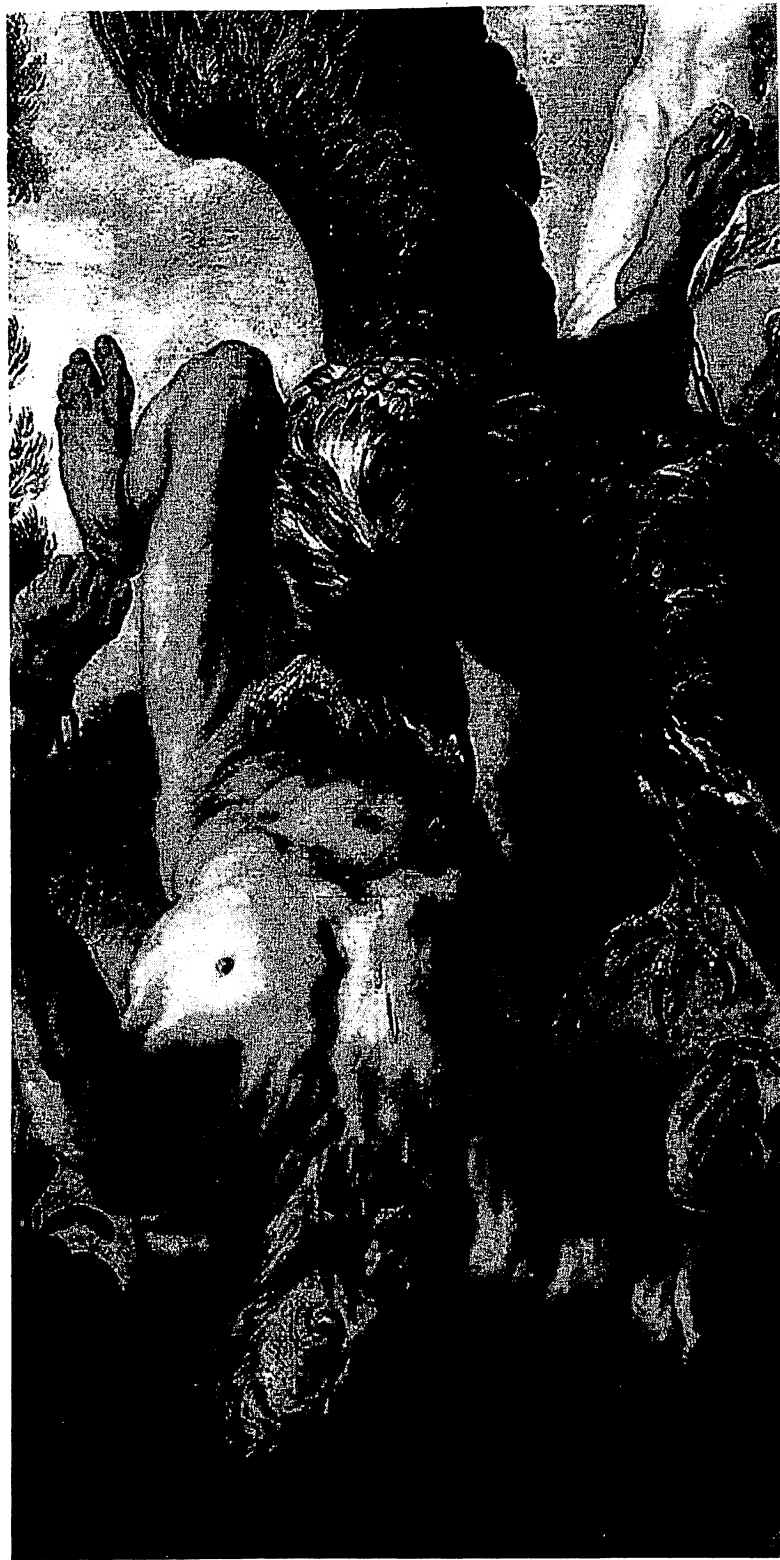
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# (PSYCHOANALYTIC) BIOPOLITICS & BIORACISM

a. kiarina kordela

The present, very timely, issue of *Umbr(a)* is organized around the observation that the “three points [that] crystallize the worst of our present situation” are “the neutralization of politics, the proliferation of new crises, and the total management of life.” I pick the final point — biopolitics — as the direct focus of my essay and, thus, modify the ensuing question as follows: “How would a psychoanalytically informed understanding of ‘the worst’ inform contemporary *biopolitics*?” Addressing this question amounts to addressing, as we shall see, the apparently ultimate question raised by the editors of the issue: “What is the worst that can happen to a subject? Is biological death truly the worst [...]?” Given that in tackling these concerns I will be introducing a psychoanalytically informed theory of biopolitics, this essay also addresses the possible alternative menace through which the editors voluntarily retract their own question to the penultimate position: “or, could it” — the worst — “rather be life lived outside the insights offered by psychoanalysis?”<sup>1</sup>

## (PSYCHOANALYTIC) BIOPOLITICS

According to Michel Foucault, the thinker who introduced the concept, biopolitics is a form of power that emerged with and continues to accompany capitalist modernity; according to others, notably Giorgio Agamben, it has existed since antiquity's linkages of *nomos* (the law) and *physis* (the state of nature).<sup>2</sup> Though I could argue that, in a sense (and a very psychoanalytic one), biopolitics has actually existed since the very tribal beginnings of any social formation, I would also acknowledge that the two positions do not really contradict each other. Rather, their apparent discord is indicative of the fact that biopolitics, like any political concept, undergoes fundamental mutations, adjusting and developing according to the historical formations in which it is exercised. Here I want to focus on the specificities of biopolitics within the particular historical era of capitalist secular modernity.

Value is something that existed in the most primitive societies, given that, as Aristotle noted, "the technique of exchange [...] has its origin in a state of affairs often to be found in nature, namely, men having too much of this and not enough of that."<sup>3</sup> Yet, Aristotle was, by historical necessity, incapable of grasping the value form as it is required for the development of capitalism. It is for this reason, as Karl Marx comments, that when faced with the possibility that the equation "5 beds = 1 house' [...] is indistinguishable from '5 beds = a certain amount of money,'" Aristotle could only feel indignation and declare that it is "in reality, impossible [...] that such unlike things can be commensurable."<sup>4</sup> For Aristotle, Marx continues, this equivalence means "that the house should be qualitatively equated with the bed, and that these things, being distinct to the senses could not be compared with each other as commensurable magnitudes" (151). Aristotle therefore "abandons [...] the further analysis of the form of value," concluding that this "form of equation can only be something foreign to the true nature of the things," reduced only to "a makeshift for practical purposes" (151). Aristotle cannot conceive that what is "really equal, both in the bed and in the house," the "common substance" shared by both, is "human labour," and that it is not the sensuous bed and house that are actually compared in exchange but sheer quantities of abstract human labor-time (151). It is *only* "in the form of the commodity-values [that] all labour is expressed as... labour of equal quality" (152). Therefore, Aristotle's analysis of the form of value had to remain incomplete from the perspective of capitalism "because Greek society was founded on the labour of slaves, hence had as its natural basis the inequality of men and their labour-powers" (152). In contrast, value produces surplus-value "only in a society where the commodity-form is the universal form of the product of labour," whereby "the dominant social relation is the relation between men as possessors of commodities" and "the concept of human equality" has "already acquired the permanence of a fixed popular opinion" (152).

The emergence of capitalism presupposes a concomitant transubstantiation of labor-power and value, not unlike the parallel transmutation of energy that, at the same time, revolutionized scientific thought and produced the very machines that the capitalist mode of production would require. Jacques Lacan's rhetoric characteristically reflects the historical weaving of the two processes:

Not that energy hasn't always been there. Except that people who had slaves didn't realise that one could establish equations for the price of their food and what they did in their *latifundia*. There are no examples of energy calculations in the use of slaves. There is not the hint of an equation as to their output. Cato never did it. It took machines for us to realise they had to be fed. And more — they had to be looked after. But why? Because they tend to wear out. Slaves do as well, but one doesn't think about it, one thinks that it is natural for them to get old and croak.<sup>5</sup>

Herein resides the entire *raison-d'être* of capitalist biopolitics: it is not natural for the proletariat to "get old and croak." In capitalism, the body's capacity of labor-power must be maximized. This is why Marx writes that the "worker's [...] productive activity," his labor-power, "is his vitality itself."<sup>6</sup> To maximize this vitality, therefore, biopolitics must first of all know what labor-power is.

Marx defines labor-power as "the use-value which the worker has to offer to the capitalist, [and] which," crucially, "is not materialized in a product, does not exist apart from him at all, thus exists not really, but only in potentiality."<sup>7</sup> In Paolo Virno's poignant paraphrase, labor-power designates not "labor services actually executed," but "the generic ability to work."<sup>8</sup> As such, "[l]abor-power incarnates (literally) a fundamental category of philosophical thought: specifically, the potential," that is, "that which is *not* current, that which is *not* present" (82). Nevertheless, potentiality "becomes, with capitalism, an exceptionally important commodity," so that "instead of remaining an abstract concept, [it] takes on a pragmatic, empirical, socioeconomic dimension" (82). For capitalism, biopolitics "is merely an effect [...] or [...] one articulation of that primary fact — both historical and philosophical — which consists of the commerce of potential as potential" (83-84). As Virno argues, "where something which exists only as *possibility* is sold, this something is not separable from the *living person* of the seller"; the "living body of the worker," in contrast, "is the substratum of that labor-power which, in itself, has no independent existence" (82). The body and life understood as "pure and simple *bios*, acquires a specific importance in as much as it is the tabernacle [...] of mere potential" (82), and it is "[f]or this reason, and this reason alone, [that] it is legitimate to talk about 'bio-politics'" in capitalism (83).

Foucault is therefore correct when, at the outset, he argues that capitalist biopolitics concerns, "the species body." However, what is at stake is not "the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity."<sup>9</sup> Rather, the body as the object of biopolitics is *potentiality*, insofar as the latter obtains within capitalism an *empirical, socioeconomic dimension* in the form of *labor-power*.

Possibly the first systematic account of the capitalist transubstantiation of the body is offered by Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*, a work whose impact remains to this date invaluable: [T]he body [...] is [...] the point of view [*le point de vue*] on which I can no longer take a point of view. This is why

at the top of that hill which I call a "good viewpoint," I take a point of view at the very instant when I look at [*regard*] the valley, and this *point of view on the point of view* is my body.<sup>10</sup> This is why "I can not take a point of view on my body without a reference to infinity" (433-434). Crucially, this infinity is introduced not because of what Sartre calls the "infinite possibilities of orienting the world," the infinite gazes from which the world could be perceived, but because of the self-referentiality between the gaze [*regard*] which is my body and the world in which my body is (419). It is the infinity that emerges by dint of the fact that the body as "a point of view supposes a double relation: a relation with the things *on which the body is* a point of view and a relation with the observer *for whom the body is* a point of view" (433). In other words, the body involves infinity because "my being-in-the-world, by the sole fact that it *realizes* a world, causes itself to be indicated to itself as a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world by the world which it realizes" (419). In realizing the world that realizes my body, my body — as a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world — is both the cause and the effect of the world; the body is an effect that is itself the cause of its own cause. As such, the body, which is nothing other than the gaze, is self-referential. The infinity in question is the temporality of this self-referentiality of the body.

Turning now to the earliest representation of the secular capitalist transmutation of philosophical thought, we can understand that the body or the gaze, which is sheer potentiality — the power of actualizing itself — is what Baruch Spinoza calls "substance." In "Nature," Spinoza writes, "there is only one substance," which is "the cause of itself," so that substance is "God, or Nature," as "*the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things,*" that is, as precisely the effect that is the cause of its own cause.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, we can give to the temporality of the self-referentiality of the body its proper name: not "infinity" but "eternity," since the "eternal nature" of substance, which is "necessary and not [...] contingent," exists "under [the] species of eternity [*sub specie aeternitatis*]."<sup>12</sup> The necessarily self-referential potentiality, or power of self-actualization, that we call the body or the gaze, exists under the species of eternity. Inversely put, this is the secular transmutation of eternity, which since the inception of capital and secular thought designates the temporality of self-referentiality.

There is a kind of knowledge in which human thought can "perceive things under a certain species of eternity" and "conceive[...] the Body's essence under a species of eternity."<sup>13</sup> Human beings, however, would be incapable of functioning without their ability to operate outside the sphere of both eternity and self-referentiality in that quite more familiar territory where everything appears as a multitude of distinct objects in time. As Spinoza writes, in their everyday mode, human beings employ, depending on the clarity of their distinctions, two other kinds of knowledge, "imagination" and "reason."<sup>14</sup>

Lacan tells us, additionally, that "in order to constitute itself" as a consciousness that operates on the basis of imagination and reason, "the subject [...] has separated itself off" from the "gaze" — i.e., from the self-referentiality of the body that pertains to eternity.<sup>15</sup> Inevitably, this separation entails a "lack" which, albeit constitutive (without it the subject could not constitute itself as a conscious being), does not prevent the subject from seeking ways to fill it. Just as, although it "is no longer anything for" the infant that can

feed itself without breastfeeding, the “object of weaning may come to function [...] as privation,” the act of weaning from eternity may likewise generate its own search for surrogates.<sup>16</sup> The separation of the subject from the self-referential gaze leaves behind it a yearning for eternity.<sup>17</sup>

It is precisely on this level that biopolitics intervenes. To say that *bios* is the potentiality of the body or the gaze is tantamount to saying that *the object of biopolitics is the subject's relation to eternity*.

To be sure, a veritable restitution of this primal gaze would result in the radical de-constitution of the subject; therefore, the biopolitical machinery resolutely shuns eternity and aims instead at proxies that provide only a controlled and safe illusion of eternity. But in order to unravel its mechanisms, we must delve into the capitalist transmutations of time. We must first examine what modes of temporality organize imagination and reason in secular capitalist modernity, and then how these can possibly succeed in providing substitute illusions that fulfill our yearning for eternity.<sup>18</sup>





## CAPITAL TIMES

In the *Grundrisse*, Marx distinguishes “production time” from “circulation time.” Production time is a finite diachrony, the linear time from the beginning to the end of the production of a specific product. In this realm of production, products exist in their material specificity and cannot be arbitrarily substituted by any other use-value — the means and material of an automobile factory can produce only cars. Labor itself enters production time as a specific use-value, that is, as a unique, specialized, non-exchangeable activity, which is bound to specific materials and takes place within a finite span of time. The moment the product — and with it, the labor, in the form of “objectified” or “congealed labour-time” within the product — enters circulation it becomes an exchange-value, that is, something that can be exchanged for anything else, regardless of its specific inherent physical qualities which, as a matter of fact, no longer exist.<sup>19</sup> For at the moment the commodity abandons the realm of production and enters circulation, it dies, as it were, as a physical object of utility and is resurrected as an immaterial, and hence immortal, value within circulation time. “Circulation time is [...] the time it takes [capital] to perform its motion as capital,” that is, as exchange-value or abstract symbol with no inherent material qualities.<sup>20</sup> As Marx stresses, “[n]ot an atom of matter enters into the objectivity of commodities as values; in this [they are] the direct opposite of the coarsely sensuous objectivity of commodities as physical objects.”<sup>21</sup> Matter exists only in production time, which is the exclusive realm in which commodities and laborers are subject to physical decay and mortality. Thus, while production time is marked by “continuity,” circulation time “is the interruption of continuity contained in the character of capital as circulating,” and whose tendency is “circulation without circulation time,” that is, simultaneity or synchronicity, a mode of time in which the instant and infinity coincide.<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, it is only catachrestically that circulation can be said to involve “time,” for it is a flat slice of space in which infinity springs out of the instant *in the same instance* that sucks it back into it, without any passage of time.

Here we see the capitalist transfiguration of two cardinal categories throughout history, time and infinity. On the one hand, there is the minor transformation in which the repetition of circular time no longer corresponds to the recurrence of seasons, but rather is expressed as the recurrence of finite spans of production, both of which can repeat themselves infinitely. This means, as it has at least since Aristotle, that only the species (be it the bovine or the laborers’) continues to exist infinitely, whereas each particular specimen of the species (each ox or laborer) has a finite life. On the other hand, however, infinity now makes a second reappearance, not in the heavens but in the mundane realm of the market, as the temporality of exchange-values. This means that not only the species but the specimen itself is immortal — as long as it hovers in that vacuum of circulation time, in which both the instant and matter are turned into their opposites, infinity and immaterial abstraction, as in a Moebius band. Living as a value in the flat slice of circulation overcompensates for the loss of a threatening eternity by offering the much more tempting shelter of immortality.

There is only one last temporal transfiguration that is required in order for the immortality of circulation to be experienced by beings who, notwithstanding their permeative identification with the synchronic collapse of instant and infinity — facilitated equally by value and the signifier — nevertheless do experience themselves as living in linear time.

Here biopolitics faces the same puzzle that Marx encountered when, having distinguished between production and circulation time, he also had to note that “if the striving of capital in one direction is *circulation without circulation time*, it strives in the other direction to give *circulation time value*, the value of *production time*.”<sup>23</sup> The tension that troubles Marx is that the accumulation of surplus-value cannot occur either in the finite diachrony of production time or in the synchronic infinity of circulation, nor even in the combination of the two taken together. For, in experience, it takes a *passage of time* for the total sum of value available in a given flat slice of synchronic circulation to increase. Similarly, the subject cannot have access to the illusion of immortality by simply bringing together its mortal existence as use-value and its immortality as exchange-value. Both surplus-value and the illusion of immortality require that a sort of valve, as it were, open up which would release infinity and let it flow out of the realm of circulation into linear time, allowing that which takes place in linear time to endure infinitely. Such an infinite duration would have to be distinguished from the diachronic temporality of production and physical bodies that, capitalism or no, always have an expiration date. Rather, infinite duration is the linear yet perforated time of the perpetual succession of synchronic discs of circulation required for surplus-value to accrue and, since this is its nature, to continue to do so. It is precisely this valve that surplus-value forces open, thereby, as Éric Alliez puts it, “opening up the duration of the durable” to infinity.<sup>24</sup> Thus we arrive at the last transformation of time brought about by the advent of capital, through which the primordial nature of the durable to remain, however long-lasting and resilient it may be, always confined within its durance, was transmogrified into the limitless duration of the undead. In its ever-ascending or descending (for economic crises are necessary too) spiral, the time of infinite duration unfolds by leaps, perpetually taking us from one synchronic disc of circulation to the next, *ad infinitum*.

This infinite duration is the temporality of repetition with ever more “same difference,” the straight-line spiral that is the monstrous twin of that “straight-line labyrinth,” of which Gilles Deleuze, following Borges, speaks.<sup>25</sup> The latter is time at the end of “the story of time,” a time that, having “broken the circle” of both “the well centred natural or physical” seasons and of the recurrence of the synchronic discs, has “unrolled [...] itself and assumed the ultimate shape of the labyrinth,” to become the time of the “eternal return” that, ever since Freud, we know as the “death instinct” — the “repetition by excess which leaves intact nothing” of the given conditions and “causes only” the “new, complete novelty,” the “yet-to-come to return.”<sup>26</sup> The infinite duration of surplus-value is as much the zombie-like masquerade of the death drive as the illusory disguise of eternity.

As we have seen, it was through exchange-value that capital landed infinity on earth in the form of circulation time. And, simultaneously, through surplus-value, capital released infinity to flow out of

circulation, into the realm of duration, thereby inevitably splitting linear time into two lines: the finite and the infinite. The first is our familiar realm of diachrony which, as we have seen, is inhabited with physical mortal bodies. The second, by contrast, being a duration infested by infinity, is populated by infinitely durable bodies — undead ethereal bodies, which, not unlike surplus-value, consist of not an atom of matter, yet, not unlike matter, exist in linear time, but also in infinity.

The biopolitical cultivation of the illusion of immortality therefore involves the constitution of gazes and labor-power in ways that foster the subject's identification with infinitely durable value, that is, with something that both emerges through synchrony and endures in linear time infinitely.

## SURPLUS-ENJOYMENT

Herein lies the importance of surplus-enjoyment, the most conspicuously evident object of biopolitics. For, like surplus-value, in the image of which Lacan notoriously fashioned it, surplus-enjoyment presupposes both the synchrony of exchange-value and the metastasis of infinity onto linear time.

Although Aristotle was not able to grasp all the intricacies of value, and synchrony eluded him entirely, he nevertheless discerned fully the effects of the colonization of linear time by infinity on human enjoyment. He was led to such oracular insights by observing nothing more than the limited practice in his time of *chrematistics* (χρηματιστική), that is, trade for the purpose of “money-making” or acquiring profit or interest (*tokos*, which Marx adopts in his analysis of capitalism in its literal translation as “offspring”). Unlike *ekonomia* (οικονομία) or “household-management,” which is a natural practice “carried on far enough to satisfy the needs of the parties,” *chrematistics* is not part of “nature” because it is concerned with “how the greatest profits might be made out of the exchanges.”<sup>27</sup> And one of the reasons why it is not part of nature is the fact that, unlike “household-management...[that] does have a limit,” in *chrematistics*, “there is no limit to the end” money-making “has in view,” so that it opens up the sequence of individual exchanges (miniature circulation discs) unto infinity.<sup>28</sup>

This, in turn, has immediate repercussions on people's enjoyment: “desire for life being unlimited” under any circumstances, *ekonomia* or *chrematistics*, people seek to satisfy life in the former case by satisfying the needs of life, whereas in the latter case, “they desire also an unlimited amount of what enables it [life] to go on.” For, Aristotle continues, “where enjoyment consists in excess, men look for that skill which produces the excess that is enjoyed.”<sup>29</sup> The unlimited practice of *chrematistics* eliminates the possibility of enjoyment by rendering it also unlimited: an enjoyment not in any thing but in excess, a surplus-enjoyment. Conversely, Lacan argues, if “on a certain day” there were no other form of enjoyment available but surplus-enjoyment, then it would become “calculable, [it] could be counted, [and] totalized,” and that would be the day “where what is called accumulation of capital begins.”<sup>30</sup> It would also be the day on which “the impotence of conjoining surplus-enjoyment [*plus-de-jouir*] with the master's truth” — part of

which, notoriously, is to have conquered death — “is all of a sudden emptied,” so that just like “[s]urplus-value adjoins itself to [s’adjoins au] capital,” surplus-enjoyment adjoins itself to the master’s immortality: “not a problem, they are homogenous, we are in the field of values.”<sup>31</sup>

It is, therefore, with good reason that surplus-enjoyment is increasingly shifting toward the center of psychoanalytically informed analyses of capitalism. Grasping its biopolitical function as a mediator of immortality is however indispensable for the analysis of capitalism to advance. As Yannis Stavrakakis, among others, has emphatically argued, it is time to shift the emphasis in the analysis of the mechanisms of capitalism from the latter’s production of so-called “false needs” and desires to the “administration” of desires and enjoyment.<sup>32</sup> Working in this direction, Todd McGowan has accurately observed that, in consumer society, “[t]he moment of acquiring the object represents the end, not the beginning, of our enjoyment.”<sup>33</sup> For, as Ceren Özselçuk and Yahya Madra poignantly comment, “consumption as a means of enjoyment is bound to fail,” but “this dissatisfaction is not a reason to abandon shopping.”<sup>34</sup> Their explanation for this apparent paradox is that “As long as the subjects of capitalism continue to believe that an ultimate enjoyment is possible, capitalism will continue to feed off of the very disappointment that the act of consumption produces[,] and shopping will go on ceaselessly.”<sup>35</sup> Yet, McGowan’s own thesis seems to imply that shopping can go on ceaselessly only as long as subjects do *not* believe that an ultimate enjoyment is possible. Shopping continues not because an ultimate enjoyment is possible but because it *must* continue for enjoyment, and life, to be limitless. As surplus-enjoyment enables infinity to conquer life, shopping, albeit central, is just one among the many biopolitical mechanisms — in this case, a frustration-machine — through which the illusion of immortality can be sustained.

Recapitulating, whether we say that *the object of biopolitics is bios, the body, the gaze, or surplus-enjoyment*, the important point is that what is meant is not “the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life,” but *the administration and management of the subject’s relation to mortality and immortality*, as a compensation for the loss of eternity.<sup>36</sup>

## INFORMATIZED CAPITALISM AND BIORACISM

To avoid the impression that biopolitics is all about frustration, I would like to conclude by drawing our attention to another mechanism of the biopolitical administration of im/mortality that seems to me to obtain exponential centrality in late global capitalism. Just over a decade ago, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argued that in today’s informatized capitalism (which is dominated by “the computerization of production” and its “immaterial labor”) “the heterogeneity of concrete labor [say, tailoring versus weaving; Marx’s favorite examples] has tended to be reduced [...]. [Both labors] involve exactly the same concrete practices — that is, manipulation of symbols and information [...]. Through the computerization of production, then, labor tends toward the position of abstract labor.”<sup>37</sup> Evidently, based on the above line

of thought, one could object to Hardt and Negri's argument that labor-power, whether it uses weaving machines, needles, book printers or computers, is sheer "potentiality" and, in this sense, "abstract," and that it has been so not since the shift to informatized capitalism but since the inception of capitalism. Yet, there is a grain of truth in Hardt and Negri's observation, namely, there has indeed been a shift through the computerization of production; not, however, a shift from material to "immaterial" or from actual to potential labor. This shift, rather, is one in which the first shift introduced by capitalism, which transplanted the abstract concept of potentiality into the empirical socioeconomic field, now *metastasizes beyond labor itself to infest both the raw material of the means of production and the objects produced*, all of which are now forms of language or affects.<sup>38</sup> While in the past, the material and the products of the means of production were indeed material and, as such, subject to the linear time of physical decay — production time — now they are colonized by abstract symbols, "language and communication," and hence are imbued by their temporality: synchrony or circulation time.<sup>39</sup> To make this historical shift clear I turn to Marx's "general formula for capital," according to which "the circulation M—C—M' [money—commodity—money] presents itself in abridged form, in its final result and without any intermediary stage [...] as M—M', i.e., money which is worth more money."<sup>40</sup> The shift in question, then, means that if in the past "C" — the material object of production time — were eliminated from the formula only insofar as it was repressed or fetishistically disavowed, now it is actually eliminated.

Or is there anything in our informatized capitalism that still sustains production time? Hardt and Negri "distinguish three types of" informatized labor: (1) "industrial production," which too "has been informatized"; (2) the "labor of analytical and symbolic tasks"; and (3) the "production and manipulation of affect."<sup>41</sup> The final two dominate the mode of production in advanced capitalist countries, while the first, "industrial production[,] has declined in the dominant countries [and] has been effectively exported to subordinate countries, from the United States and Japan, for example, to Mexico and Malaysia." This difference, Hardt and Negri continue, "should not lead us back to an understanding of the contemporary global economic situation in terms of linear stages of development," which would assume, for instance, that "an auto factory built by Ford in Brazil in the 1990s might be comparable to a Ford factory in Detroit in the 1930s." For, unlike the latter, the factory in Brazil today is "based on the most advanced and most productive computer and informational technologies available."<sup>42</sup> However true this may be, the geopolitical difference between our two contemporaneous worlds remains incommensurable, and this not only because undoubtedly there is much more shopping going on in the "dominant countries." Industrial production continues, however informationalized its methods may be, to produce *material* products, unlike analytical, symbolic, or affect production. And this means that in the "subordinate countries," the materiality of the products provides their inhabitants with access to production time and, hence, mortality. By contrast, in the advanced capitalist countries, in which the dominant mode of production involves not only abstract labor and raw materials, *but also abstract products*, circulation time becomes the dominant, increasingly exclusive, mode of temporality, reassuring ever-increasing parts of this population of their immortality. If this is so, what the dominant countries are exporting, along with industrial production, is mortality itself.

Needless to say, this geo-biopolitical map of the world can appear only to a gaze that has been biopolitically administered in order to see circulation time as the incubator of immortality — something which, as this line of argument indicates, is possible only in the “dominant countries.” It is the map as drawn in and by the imaginary of these “countries,” perpetuating in its own specific mode of late, informatized, capitalism the old and sharp discrepancy between the maps of the “dominant” and those of the “subordinate.” And though maps are imaginary on both sides of the divide, the divide itself is real — which is why it cannot really be described but only circumscribed by often extremely reductionist and even caricature-like terms, such as “dominant” and “subordinate,” and, for that matter, “immortal” and “mortal.” But this increase in reduction and incongruous hyperbole is only the index of the intensification of the divide, and that culmination of conflict that we call war has always been carried out in the name of burlesque superlatives.

In one of their characteristically optimistic moments, Hardt and Negri conclude that because of its “cooperative interactivity through linguistic, communicational, and affective networks [...] immaterial labor [...] seems to provide the potential for a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism.”<sup>43</sup> I wish they were right...but this will not be my conclusion. Mine will pass through a critical observation made by Foucault in 1976, namely, that: “racism [...] is in fact inscribed in the workings of all [...] modern States” (i.e., all biopolitical states). Foucault also added that the racism in question is “not a truly ethnic racism, but racism of the evolutionist kind, biological racism.” He still had in mind the protection of biological life, “the idea that the essential function of society or the State, or whatever it is that must replace the State, is to take control of life, to explore and reduce biological accidents and possibilities.”<sup>44</sup> I think we are way beyond that point. As I have argued, the level on which biopolitics operates is not biology but the body as potentiality and self-referentiality. This means that, whatever other tasks it may perform in the process — possibly including many that sustain biological life, at least of some people — its agenda is not to administer biological life and mortality, but rather an imaginary division between mortality and immortality. Accordingly, the racism in question is certainly not “truly ethnic” but also not “biological”; it is properly biopolitical — a bioracism in which the *ad hoc* biorace of the immortals launches war against mortality. For some years now it is being called the “war against terrorism”; soon it may bear a new name. Whatever its label, in a bioracial conflict the ever-reconstitutable assemblage of bio-immortals will continue to assault with escalating arbitrariness and impunity members of the ever-shifting group of bio-mortals. For the latter, whoever they happen to be, will increasingly be considered, as has been the case with all racism, not as humans. Perhaps they will not even be considered animals, as less and less rights apply to them, human or otherwise.

1. The quotations in this paragraph are from the editors' call for papers that was sent to the contributors.
2. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 35.
3. Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. T. A. Sinclair, revised by Trevor J. Saunders (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 82; 1257a5.
4. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 1.*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 151; citing throughout Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. V, Ch. 5. Subsequent references will appear parenthetically within the text.
5. Jacques Lacan, *Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 75.
6. Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin Books & *New Left Review*, 1993), 267.
7. Ibid.
8. Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, trans. Isabella Bertolotti, James Cascaito, & Andrea Casson (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 82. Subsequent references will appear parenthetically within the text.
9. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 139.
10. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, Pocket Books, 1956), 433; *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), 369. Subsequent references will appear parenthetically within the text.
11. Baruch Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 420, 412, 544, and 428; *Ethics*, part I, prop. 14, cor. 1 and prop. 7, dem., part. IV, preface, and part I, prop. 18.
12. Ibid., 481; part II, prop. 44, cor. 2, dem.
13. Ibid., 481 and 609; part II, prop. 44, cor. 2, and part V, prop. 29. It is, however, as Spinoza maintains, "[f]rom this kind of knowledge," under the species of eternity, that "there arises the greatest satisfaction of Mind there can be [...] Joy [...]." (Ibid., 611; part. V, prop. 32, dem). As I argue elsewhere, it is this modality of "knowledge" that defines human beings in their ethical dimension. See Kordela, "Spinoza: A Thought beyond Dualisms, Creationist and Evolutionist Alike," in *Spinoza Now*, ed. Dimitris Vardoulakis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 494–537.
14. Ibid., 478; part II, prop. 40, schol. 2.

15. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 103.
16. *Ibid.*, 104.
17. As is entailed in my connection to Spinoza's Joy, derived from knowledge under the species of eternity, and (Lacanian) ethics, it is this yearning that instigates humans to act ethically.
18. In other words, and to conclude my brief subtextual references to the relevance of eternity to ethics, biopolitics is a mechanism of power that also usurps the ethical dimension in exchange for a surrogate of eternity.
19. Marx, *Capital*, 130.
20. Marx, *Grundrisse*, 659-660.
21. Marx, *Capital*, 138.
22. Marx, *Grundrisse*, 663 & 659.
23. *Ibid.*, 659.
24. Éric Alliez. *Capital Times: Tales from the Conquest of Time*, foreword by Gilles Deleuze, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 7.
25. Gilles Deleuze. *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 111.
26. *Ibid.*, 90-91, 111, & 115.
27. Aristotle. *The Politics*, 82-3; 1256b40.
28. *Ibid.*, 84; 1257b25.
29. *Ibid.*, 85; 1257b40.
30. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 177.
31. *Ibid.*, 177-178, translation modified; Lacan, *Le Séminaire. Livre XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse, 1969-1970*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 207.
32. Yannis Stavrakakis, "Re-activating the democratic revolution: The politics of transformation beyond reoccupation and conformism," *Parallax* 9:2 (2003): 56-71.
33. Todd McGowan, "Enjoying what we don't have: Psychoanalysis and the Logic of Accumulation," Paper presented at the conference Rethinking Marxism, Marxism and the World Stage, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, November, 2003.
34. Ceren Özselçuk and Yahya M. Madra, "Economy, Surplus, Politics: Some Questions on Slavoj Žižek's Political Economy Critique of Capitalism," in *Did Somebody Say Ideology? On Slavoj Žižek and Consequences*, ed. Fabio Vighi & Heiko Feldner (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholarly Publishing, 2007) 82.
35. *Ibid.*, 82.



36. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, 140.
37. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 292.
38. Ibid., 293.
39. Ibid., 404.
40. Marx, *Capital*, 257.
41. Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 293.
42. Ibid., 287.
43. Ibid., 294.
44. Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 260-262.