

The Expropriation of the Force-(of)-Thought in Artistic Practices

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Abstract

This article aims to consider the apparatus of knowledge production and reproduction of it in the arts. It makes a connection between the war machines of capitalism and artistic practices, that can be traced back into the renaissance and enlightenment. One significant aspect to pay attention of the notion of expropriation and primitive accumulation and their role, which has been debated in political economy since Adam Smith. In this article it is connected with the concept of laziness, and its strategic representations in the modernist and contemporary art practices. The conclusion is to argue how performance has tactical function for the obstinacy against the neoliberal expropriation and its totality.

Introduction

The economy is the continuation of war by other means ... it is total war.

—Éric Alliez and Maurizio Lazzarato ¹

Instead of producing an inquiry of artistic research as a methodology for the practice of thought, or performance thinking, ² the aim here is to consider what kind of apparatus effectuates a production of knowledge in the arts, or how an “artist comes to being.” ³ Research concepts such as “exploration” or “experimentation” are tied up with the production of knowledge and have particular functions within this apparatus. In research as production of knowledge, both material and immaterial essences are expropriated. Moreover, the privilege of doing artistic research depends on apparatuses in which knowledge may be regarded as a product that may be disseminated. The question of such production is located in the relationship between manual and immaterial labour, or consumption of such knowledge, and how any knowledge will be exchanged within a particular context of the apparatus.

The aim here is to consider the connections between the war machines of state and financial capitalism in connection with artistic practices, and to review if there are similarities with other systemic periods of capitalism since the early Italian city-states of the fifteenth century and the expropriation of artistic practice in conjunction with capital. However, only a brief introduction to the topic is possible in this context. The argument here is that we need to regard the interconnection between state, war and financial capitalism in conjunction with artistic practices, because these devices have been creating and contaminating each other in the creation of innovative solutions for administrative, strategic, and managerial problems in the context of war and finance. At the same time, they have provided a place for artistic and philosophical innovations to emerge.⁴ This article presents only the beginning of a broader inquiry into the relationship between war machines, financial capitalism and artistic practice as research in the institution. The context for this inquiry is the lengthy discussion on the transformation of labour from manual to cognitive and affective labour. In this essay, I aim to outline how the limits of capitalism “represent the means of production of its development.”⁵

The Expropriation of Laziness

The concept of “primitive accumulation”, which was first used by Adam Smith (1776),⁶ and then critically examined by Karl Marx,⁷ has received significant attention in the work of writers such as Rosa Luxemburg (1913), David Harvey (2003), Giovanni Arrighi (2010), Maria Mies (2014), Silvia Federici (2014), Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt (2014), and most recently in Éric Alliez and Maurizio Lazzarato’s book *Wars and Capitalism* (2018). Primitive accumulation is a process of continuous creation and destruction, which is repeated in each hegemonic regime formation of capitalism; therefore, capitalism is not a natural progression from the peasant communities of the early market. Instead, “alongside, or rather above this layer, comes the zone of the anti-market, where the great predators and the law of the jungle operates. This—today as in the past, before and after the industrial revolution—is the real home of capitalism,” writes Fernand Braudel.⁸ In the context of financial capitalism, or our contemporary epoch of the Capitalocene, acts of primitive accumulation work under the cover of trade, argue Alliez and Lazzarato.⁹ It is the process of rupture, in which capital appears ripe for investment and dissolves the bond with the “earth” that producers become free labour as individuals in the particular process of the production of subjectivity, as analysed by Félix Guattari in his project on schizoanalysis.¹⁰ This expropriation is renewed in every present moment, which implies that all material and immaterial instances are potentialities in the accumulation of capital.

For the performance of the modernist avant-garde and conceptual art practices aligned with the previous epoch of industrial capitalism—including the state-capitalism of Eastern Europe between the early-1970s and late-1980s, and conceptual artists like Mladen Stilinović or Andrzej Partum—the question of expropriation is still an altogether different one than for the performance of conceptual art practices in the era of financial global capitalism of the twenty-first century. Instead of looking for a clue, we need to make a distinction with that period of Cold War and ask how the accumulation by force through standardisation of knowledge production found in contemporary artistic research functions, or what kind of production of subjectivity, i.e. expropriation is needed. In his often cited, but rarely scrutinised articulation of the three ecologies, Guattari clearly argues that we need to analyse how Integrated World Capitalism (IWC) is both a production of semio-capitalism and subjectivity—and that subjectivity is first and foremost a process of primitive accumulation: “in the mega-machine of the production of culture, of science and of subjectivity that is constituted today by Integrated

World Capitalism, which means to allow only those modes of expression and valorization that it can normalize and put into its service to subsist on this planet.”¹¹ Yet, artists like Stilinović, Partum or Tehching Hsieh focused on just “wasting time” in their art, and therefore only represent a particular segment of subjectivity, which is altogether different than the one needed for the presentation and representation of twenty-first century artists, who need to articulate their position within the Capitalocene and cyberwar. Any form of production reflects a *systemic change* and the *longue durée* of particular capitalist systems—starting from the Renaissance city-states to US hegemony, and beyond.

In this article performance art is regarded as a practice that is both conceptual and corporeal. This means that it has one foot in the avant-garde tradition of conceptual practice that evolved during the Cold War, and the other in the more theatrical practices that are nowadays considered as “live art”. However, there is no such thing as standard performance art. Still, we could consider the one aspect of conceptual art that relates to the philosophy of the arts. In the argument for contemporary performance art, it will then not suffice to reduce performance art to either merely corporeal acts or purely conceptual performances and performative actions. Rather, I would propose to call contemporary art “material-discursive” practices, in alignment with the new materialist ethos proposed by Karen Barad.¹² However, by simply using the new materialist approach, it is the “old” materialist forms of expropriation of bodies and thinking, that is missing.

Moreover, a shift from “avant” to the already redundant suffix of the “post” in twenty-first-century intellectual discourses should be regarded as a form of actual “standardisation” of thought—a Total Thought—that ought to be criticised and viewed as a colonial practice, as has been argued by Nina Power (2017), Marina Gržinić (2014) and many others. Following Barad, it is the apparatus, in other words, the institution, that is the material-discursive entanglement, where it makes no sense to standardise different forces of thought. At the same time, it is precisely this entanglement through which the “standardisation” of the production of knowledge takes place. This is also a place where performance art as conceptual tactics emerges.

In the Cold War period, the artistic tactics of “wasting time” or laziness had a significant function. However, these tactics did not fit into the official strategies, neither in the West nor in the Eastern Bloc. The tactics of indifference, as Bojana Kunst posits, may be “understood as an intervention of liberated singularity; in communist societies, such movement sabotages the whole social machine.”¹³ She continues how in the context of global, neoliberal capitalism the artist must “have abandoned this strategy and to work constantly,” where “every gesture [...] must necessarily be turned into work [...] in connection with the institutions and other elements of the system that make the artist’s work visible and evaluate it as work.”¹⁴ The laziness for Stilinović had no value at the time, while in our context doing nothing may already have a speculative value in the economic system of cognitive labour. There are now very few opportunities for the luxurious privilege of the white, European male artists, like Marcel Duchamp, to “never work[ed] for a living”, as Stilinović argues.¹⁵ He continues to argue that there is no “art without laziness”, but that such a position is hard to maintain for the twenty-first century artist. Instead, if we follow his argument that “there is no art without consequences”, similar to what Hsieh argued, artistic practice would still use the tactics to “manipulate that which manipulate you”, whether it is the state or the integrated world of production.¹⁶ The laziness reflects on the “truth of mankind” as the state “towards which all humanity

has to strive", according to Malevich (1921).¹⁷ It is similar to the refusal to work as proposed under Operaismo, argued theoretically by Mario Tronti (1965) or Antonio Negri (1979), and the "right to be lazy" by Paul Lafargue (1883)—a sabotage of the "*society based on production*[...] the aim of society in general."¹⁸ In any case, laziness as refusal—since it is an act in itself—is already a sin for Thomas Aquinas and near to melancholic *acedia*, as Yann Moulier Boutang writes.¹⁹ It has no virtues, and certainly does not sit well with the Protestant work ethic of Northern Europe, which regarded laziness not only as wasting time and capacities, but wasting options to earn more money. Braudel references Leon Battista Alberti, who writes in the *Libri della Famiglia* in 1434, that "If you have money, do not wait, do not keep it lying idle at home, for it is better to work in vain than to be idle for nothing, because even if you gain no profit by working, at least you do not lose the habit of doing."²⁰ If laziness for Aquinas was the mortal sin and obstacle to salvation, then for the early capitalist ethos and subsequently being lazy or refuse business would mean "losing the habit", which should not be put to waste. The question of laziness is not merely a "preference", as it would be for Bartleby, but a conscious act of refusal—a performative position against the "century of work [...] pain misery and corruption" as Lafargue writes.²¹

Artistic practice reflects on the production of knowledge, positions and subjectivity within each apparatus—it reflects on how artists come to be. That what Stilinović calls manipulation is, in fact, expropriation through primitive accumulation. What is more, there is a conflict between the state warmachine and the "nomadic" or originary warmachine. Instead of leaving the artist in peace—and in poverty—where artists would voluntarily choose the path of the busy cultural workers, the structures for production and the axiom for the production of subjectivity have changed instead. When reception or consumption conflates with production, as Erika Fischer-Lichte argues, by writing that "there no longer exists a work of art, independent of its creator and recipient; instead, we are dealing with an event that involves everybody—albeit to different degrees and in different capacities. If 'production' and 'reception' occur at the same time and place, this renders the parameters developed for a distinct aesthetics of production, work, and reception ineffectual."²² Production and reception conflate into *an event*. In a curious sense, this seems to follow the change in the general structures of production, which aims to rebuke how production means implicitly a *division of labour*, which necessarily forces men to exchange goods, services and products, as Braudel writes.²³ The production of knowledge, "as" performance, may not escape the necessarily forced division of labour—no matter how slight and insignificant the difference may be. It instead seems that such conflation between production and reception, aligned with the proposed similarity between manual and intellectual labour, is a necessary manoeuvre for the production of knowledge in the present context.

The distinction is necessary, but confusing, making it difficult to see the differences in the forms of expropriation. The production of knowledge should not only follow the demand, but stimulate it, so that there would be a market for products of knowledge such as artistic research. It is not a natural process, because it is connected to capitalist structures, but it follows the law of the *anti-market*, which aims to destroy different forms of exchange. Capitalism is not based on competition, but on war. But no capitalist production relies on expropriation or money alone: it also relies on credit and debt. The event of knowledge production as performance does not equal the debt between the producer and the receiver—or how the receiver has in a sense credited the producer of the artwork. Social productivity, discursivity or affects are not free from debt and credit, whether they are processual and immaterial or not. Still, such production of immaterial labour and knowledge in the arts is also the "process of development of labour as a force in conflict with capital."²⁴ This

conflict will not disappear by stating that performance will refuse to become reproduced or through merely wasting time, because, in the apparatus of the speculative market and the immaterial post-Fordist economy as totality it is impossible to be lazy.

In the classical political economy, everyone has the capacity to sell their labour force. One's capacities are one's properties, which one has power over and can sell, but through labour a product becomes an "alien thing", an expression of one's life, which one is coerced from.²⁵ From this point of view, the black and white photograph of Hsieh sleeping outside, somewhere in Manhattan in 1981 is the artefact that is coerced from him, but the actual *performance* by him, wasting time for one year, is his *work*, but not his labour. It is that what is not aimed to become a product. Curiously, it is not Total Art, but only a partial performance. However, this is not the case with affective or cognitive labour, where the coercion already takes place in the processes and communities of production. However, the logic for primitive accumulation by coercion is similar even with the earliest examples of capitalist expropriations as they emerged in the thirteenth century, where the division of labour and exchange in the labour markets required that a person's skills became a commodity. Braudel writes how "[t]he labour market was the market upon which a man offered himself, without any of his traditional means of production, if he had ever had any: a piece of land, a loom, a horse or cart. All he had to offer was his arm of hand, his 'labour' in other words."²⁶ These skills are continuously dispossessed from the labourer through violence, fraud, oppression and looting, which Rosa Luxemburg connects with primitive accumulation.²⁷ Indirectly they play on debt, credit and ownership of land, as they manifest themselves first in Venice, Firenze and Genoa.

In the contemporary context of cognitive and affective labour, with knowledge production as aim, we need to consider how Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt argue that: "[t]he original expropriation by capitalism is always renewed in every present moment."²⁸ Primitive accumulation is not a phenomenon strictly reserved to manual labour, but applies to *all* human skills and capacities. I propose to use a term coined by French philosopher François Laruelle, namely the *force-(of)-thought*, [*force (de) pensée*],²⁹ which correlates with the term labour force. It is the generic human capacity, which in itself may not be expropriated, but in specific contexts and within specific apparatuses, the *force-(of)-thought* may become *productive*. Primitive accumulation, as it occurred in medieval Europe and colonial practices, was always a disruptive process, involving making capital ripe for investment, and where a violent tear of the bond between individuals as producers and the land was necessary. Hoarding is a violent process and never a natural development from previous forms of exchange and work. These skills and capacities are not specialised, but only in the context of neo-liberal, cyberware-based economies value may be extracted, where specific and professional status may be attributed to individuals and groups, which may create surplus value from simple encounters, affectual meetings or within the thinking process, in other words, from the *force-(of)-thought*. The artist comes into being within this network of immaterial thought as the producer of knowledge.

Alliez and Lazzarato write how "financial capital is not a perversion or an anomaly of the supposedly industrial nature of capitalism but its realization", which makes no difference between forms of production, but "appropriates in the same way the production of so-called 'cognitive workers' and the production of the slaves of the textile industry brought up to the modern era of the 'fixed-term contract' by its most 'immaterial' actions."

³⁰ The seemingly peaceful exchange in an art institution within a capitalist apparatus may be mobilised for unlimited production, and for the production and acceleration regarding war machines. It is a *total war* with the characteristics of peace. A performance without a clear distinction between the participant and the performer, receiver and producer, seen as a peaceful event is a continuation of the war in “peaceful” terms and production. The blurred boundary between production and reception in peaceful terms is situated in the contemporary context of the civil war, which aims for the unlimited expropriation of life and lived-ness by capital.

The Long War of Capitalism

Truth also needs propaganda.

Karl Jaspers ³¹

War is the continuation of politics by other means, according to Clausewitz’s famous dictum. ³² It is a political action. In the context of financial capitalism, the economy is the “continuation of war by other means.” ³³ In this context, *total war* is where the economy is an “element, a strategic modality of the whole constituted by war.” ³⁴ The total war functions through the war machine, where the war is no more the object, but in turn, the object is *peace*—the target of a war machine is the entire population and territory. ³⁵ The total war is autonomous from the state. Here, the political goal is economic and the economic target is political, where the “war machine of total peace is none other than the absolute unlimitedness of capitalist globalization itself, the assertion that war and peace have become indistinguishable is still reliant on the Clausewitzian opposition between war and peace as well as the European context that balances it.” ³⁶

The origin for the war machine is nomadic, “outside” of the state, and without a state. Pierre Clastres argues in *Archaeology of violence* (2010) that Hobbes’s interpretation of such natural condition, which leads to a presumed “war of every man against every man” was incorrect, because it proposed that the savages do not have a proper society because perpetual war makes society impossible. Hobbes’s argument according to Clastres was that war and violence are part of the biological reality “related to humanity as species [...] a sort of *natural* given rooted in the biological being of man”, which connects a nomadic war machine with a “hunter” logic, which for Clastres is a complete opposite of war. ³⁷

Among the tribes that practised cannibalism, war was not directly connected with hunting for human flesh, but war was regarded as pure aggressiveness, in contrast to hunting. Clastres argued that war is not connected with scarcity or struggle for life, poverty or hostile environment, but instead “the primitive economy is, on the contrary, an economy of abundance and not of scarcity: violence, then, is not linked to poverty.” ³⁸ War is not a negation of exchange or commerce, nor an accidental event. The nomadic tribe is an undivided “We”, based on

an alliance, but not with standards or universals such as the state. The nomadic war machine is against the State. It is a control of the war machine against the idea of the One dominating power or the exploitation by the master. In contrast to this, the state war machine aimed for total war is a generalised war, diametrically opposed to the nomadic war machine. There is a difference between such a total war and the nomadic *permanent* state of war, which aims for alliances and not towards constructing an apparatus. Such a nomadic war machine is not a society waiting to be progressed into a *proper* state, in the Hobbesian sense.

For Clausewitz, then, a war is not total war, but a war pursued by the state, which requires sensitive and discriminating judgements, skilled intelligence in the “fog of war” which is the “realm of uncertainty [...] wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty.”³⁹ Judgement and skilful intelligence are needed because “action takes place, so to speak, in a kind of twilight, which, like fog or moonlight, often tends to make things seem grotesque and larger than they are. Whatever is hidden from full view in this feeble light has to be guessed at through talent, or simply left to chance. So once again, for lack of objective knowledge one has to trust talent or luck.”⁴⁰ Warring requires techniques, management, skills of economy and security. It needs a model for organisation and management of the soldiers as “labour force” with tactics to respond to unpredictable events. It needs capital and investment.

An excellent example of such a “joint stock” risk-taking entity was the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which was able to combine the most advanced engineering, innovative managerial, and the best accountancy skills. The state and jointstock companies shared the possibility for strategic attack, the power to start war and adapt to unpredictable circumstances. The logic of such joint stock companies was in the knowledge that if the adversary had better management of labour and administration, they would be the winner of the conflict, not necessarily the most aggressive side. Warring is therefore not only about the occupation of a territory, but it needs strong connections with finance and administrative skills in a two-headed unit. Pepijn Brandon writes how “The adaptation of commercial methods of accounting for bureaucratic institutions, for which the Dutch Admiralty Boards were worldwide frontrunners, was an important step in the introduction of a specifically capitalist form of rationality in the management of the state.”⁴¹ These techniques were developed to “discipline[e] the workforce at the naval shipyards according to the requirements of large-scale manufacture [...] It did not only involve the introduction of new hierarchies, but also the challenging of long-held perceptions of the nature of work, time, leisure, property, and consumption of alcohol and tobacco on the job [...] Such themes play a large role in the historiography of the ‘making of the working class’.”⁴² Modern businesses need the development of managerial hierarchies, accounting and administration, where the “organizational revolution” that started with the railroads in the 1850s finds its culmination and full development in the 1910s, when economic activities were structured and ready for the contemporary economy—and the organisation of the war machine of industrial capitalism.

The war machine is the most powerful engine of innovation. During the systemic change towards US hegemony, after World War II, several financial and global arrangements were put in place, such as the agreement in Bretton Woods, which led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) linked with the Federal Reserve and the World Bank, whose purpose was “aimed at stabilizing parities between select national currencies [...] via fixed

rate of exchange between the US dollar and gold”, and where global “production” was taken over through these instruments.⁴³ These systemic changes are also significant in regards twentieth-century modernism, and the effect on artistic practice—and not only through the use of “soft power” by the CIA after World War II. Where the previous global hegemony of the British Empire had found its impetus in high finance after the great depression, which led to the birth of the *belle époque* in the 1870s, this was in the words of Giovanni Arrighi a “signal crisis”, that “designate[s] the beginning of every financial expansion [...] every long century, the ‘signal crisis’ [...] of the dominant regime of accumulation.”⁴⁴ It is a decisive moment in the shift of the accumulation of capital from trade and production to speculation; it signifies how the dominant regime may not continue to profit from reinvestment but has to prolong its time of domination through high finance. It is the autumn of a particular system.⁴⁵ A “terminal crisis” will happen later, for instance, at the end of World War II for the British Empire, when a new system has already been putting itself in place, in this case the US global hegemony with its new instruments like IMF and Bretton-Woods in 1945, or the Marshall Plan and CIA in 1947. Arrighi has argued that the terminal crisis of the US hegemony took place in 2001, or in 2008 at the latest, and that “[a]lthough the United States remains by far the world’s most powerful state, its relationship to the rest of the world is now best described as one of ‘domination without hegemony’.”⁴⁶

The early 1970s already signified a shift in the cultural strategies of that hegemony, which had started to promote the “American Century” in Europe in 1947 by exporting cultural assets such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra or artists like Jackson Pollock, Arshile Gorky, Alexander Calder, Edward Hopper and others in an exhibition that was organised by the Congress for Cultural Freedom and MoMA, and which toured in European cities of Paris, Düsseldorf, Stockholm, Oslo and Helsinki in 1954.⁴⁷ Orthey supported favourable intellectuals in Europe, such as Czeslaw Milosz or Herbert von Karajan. The “battle for men’s minds” needed another kind of soft power strategy to promote the concept of “freedom”, which we nowadays call neo-liberalism.

Such a long war of capitalism, which started in the Italian city-states and created a Renaissance, has always been significant for artistic practices, because the “happy moments” of investments coincide with innovative periods in the arts, and investment for surplus becomes possible. The systemic changes with the moments of signal crisis have been crucial for the development of both finance and the arts—from the high Renaissance with the speculative banking of the Medici in Florence, or the high finance of the Genoese bankers, which made it possible to finance the exploration towards the new sea route to India alongside the territorial expansion machine of the Spanish Empire. Another happy moment coincides with the period of Enlightenment during the Dutch regime as a sea power of the House of Orange during the seventeenth century, the time of the innovation of the use of *surplus capital* in the consumption of cultural products and the patronage of the arts.

We can see how something similar takes place when the signal crisis happens for the US hegemony between 1968 and 1973—including the political crisis of the Vietnam War, the crisis of consumer capitalism, and most crucially the discontinuation of the Bretton Woods agreement, and the freeing of the dollar from the gold reserve. It is the beginning of the US speculative market, when “the anti-communist crusade began losing legitimacy both at home and abroad. The crisis deteriorated quickly, and by 1973 the US government had retreated on all fronts.”⁴⁸ It is a moment of a strong institutional critique through innovative artistic practices,

but it is also the continuation of “war through other means”. More importantly, this was a moment when “the ruling groups within the United States had decided that, since the world could no longer be governed by them, it should be left to govern itself.”⁴⁹ Following this, we see the “winter years”, of alternative movements in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Since we are now experiencing the moment of a systemic change, in which the hegemony of the US is waning, while it still holds a grip as the dominating figure culturally and financially, it is clear that one systemic regime is ending. Following the logic of the terminal crisis, there is no surplus of speculative funding that would support the arts, but rather more territorial struggle over power, land and materials. It is not the happy times of the arts or a new “enlightenment” period, but rather the opposite. Due to the systemic change, the funders, audiences and position of contemporary art practices in society are collapsing or radically transformed. The springtime elsewhere is at the point of primitive accumulation, that is to say, a moment of experimentation with new forms of expropriation. It is the moment of “pulling the roots of the lower layers of material life,”⁵⁰ where a new hegemony is searching for domination—whether this will be Chinese territorialism, or crypto-capitalism, we do not know—it does not consist only on expropriation of material life, like in early mercantilist industrialism, but now applies to *all capacities* of human, non-human, material and immaterial production. This moment of spring aims for the expropriation of *futures* too. It is the moment of reorganisation of new potential variations. What is crucial is that no matter how this process will develop, it is necessary that both state and finance are integrated, so that a capitalist system may evolve, and reproduce itself. The reproduction of capitalism requires that expansion will meet limits, and create an overabundance of capital, which will eventually lead to high-finance, like in the early twentieth century, or in the US-led global economy of the 1990s. From this perspective, modernism was a period that started during the signal crisis of the British Empire in the 1870s, and lasted until the terminal crisis of US hegemony in 2001—the long twentieth century.

Since then, new terminologies and new axiomatic techniques have been connected with forms of primitive accumulation in the formulation of cognitive capitalism, affective labour, than a to- and necropolitics or gore capitalism, not to forget the debate around the original date for the start of the Anthropocene, or Capitalocene. These movements seem to be part of the systemic change, but there is no clear indication which direction this chaotic war machine is heading towards. From this point of view, artistic practice followed the signal crisis of the US in the 1970s when it moved into the “philosophic speculative interventions” as institutional critique in conceptual and performance art, like Art Workers Coalition or Art and Language. Given that the “renaissance of modernity” is now over, the systemic change seems to reveal only the abundance of chaos, despair, gore, precariousness and uncertainty caused by the war machine of global financial capitalism.

Alliez and Lazzarato argue how these war machines should be read as axiomatic, instead of discursive or signifying. They are axiomatic because they are performative and need no signification.⁵¹ The Cold War was the “civil war” on subjectivation and subjection through “normalisation, modulation, modelling” as Gilles Deleuze and Guattari wrote.⁵² The civil war on the population puts us in a feedback loop with the external wars in the axiomatic war machine. The Cold War was the systemic change for the colonisation of the daily life, or “Americanization of the world”, to create new ideas and expand production through *communication*.⁵³ Whatever

the present systemic change will entail, it is certain that the inventions of the Cold War apparatus will be utilised and developed further.

John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt write that contemporary “conflicts revolve around ‘knowledge’ and the use of ‘soft power’.” ⁵⁴ “Perception management” requires the use of methods of disorientation, instead of coercion, and the securing of knowledge, as much as possible, of itself or its adversaries. They continue how: “Psychological disruption may become as important a goal as physical destruction [...] information-age threats are likely to be more diffuse, dispersed, multidimensional nonlinear, and ambiguous than industrial-age threats.” ⁵⁵ Knowledge is a necessity for the development of the techniques of “soft power”. This term, introduced by Joseph Nye in relation to US hegemony, indicates the ability to attract, convince or to agree through other means than coercion. It is a necessary part of the contemporary war machine—already used in all capitalist systems through sophisticated use of administration and diplomacy: “Soft power can rest on the appeal of one’s ideas or the ability to set the agenda in ways that shape the preferences of others. If a state can make its power legitimate in the perception of others and establish international institutions that encourage them to channel or limit their activities, it may not need to expend as many of its costly traditional economic or military resources.” ⁵⁶ The war machine needs to use “formidable” tools of soft power, such as the arts and sciences or knowledge production in general. Nye and William Owens continue how “American popular culture, with its libertarian and egalitarian currents, dominates film, television, and electronic communications [...] American leadership in the information revolution has generally increased global awareness of and openness to American ideas and values.” ⁵⁷ Knowledge is the continuation of war by other means.

Force-(of)-Thought

On a poster that reads *Animal manifest*, presented in 1980 by the Polish conceptual artist Andrzej Partum, he writes that:

evolution in nature is not progress, it is only a change directed to annihilation of its own matter [...] progress—can only be applied to the development of human technology which, as pseudonature, can destroy or improve it, and without influence the cosmos, will stay passive before the universe. The emotional development of man is determined by technology [...] Technological upsurge is always dogmatic. A man lost in the development of technology is worth less than an object produced by new technology. The benefits of production become more important than progress itself and the skill of the maker of products.

This excerpt chimes with the radically immanent ideas presented by Laruelle, when he writes that the “universe is deaf and blind, and we can do nothing other than love it and assist it” in his short text “Universe Black”. ⁵⁸ If technology is dogmatic, that is to say, if the production of knowledge requires management and standards, then for the term *force-(of)-thought* it is rather the immanent base for any standards that is not standardised itself. It is simply the *force* of thinking prior and deferred from any appropriation or expropriation. The production of

knowledge aims for the production of proper thought, not in the linear sense, but through *noopolitics*⁵⁹. The manipulation and modulation of memory, a collaboration between brains, which consist of controlling attention and memory, is the modulation of the highest part of the intellect. Primitive accumulation expropriates the instances of memory and knowledge. Yann Moulier Boutang describes this as follows: “whereas industrial capitalism could be characterised as the production of commodities by means of commodities, cognitive capitalism produces knowledge by means of knowledge and produces the living by means of the living.”⁶⁰ Scarcity does not define the network but excess does; where the network is simple enough to allow various and complicated instances of knowledge to flourish, the raw material of knowledge is abundant and derivative.

Lazzarato writes how “the cycle dissolves back into networks and flows that make possible the reproduction and enrichment of its productive capacities.”⁶¹ Instead of an artist “coming into being” through the practice of handling tools and matter, the condition is that the artist and the artistic researcher is an “intellectual proletarian [...] who is recognised as such only by the employers who exploit him or her.”⁶² The purpose of labour and the purpose of an action is found in the action itself, where the process is more significant than the outcome.⁶³ The performance of the artist’s purpose is in the actions themselves, in the absence of the finished product. The progress of capitalism is not a natural process, but the standardisations of the *force-(of)-thought* are artificial, technological and part of the subjectivation process.

If we regard these processes via systems theory, feedback loops or non-linear programming, as seems customary, we inevitably connect thinking and practice with the war machine, because the military industry was the breeding ground for these innovative tools. The standardised techniques of thinking were developed initially for either military or financial systems. This is not only an industrial war machine, but one that has been progressively and adaptively in development for over seven hundred years. There are systemic changes, which are linked with the territorial power of expansion and the financial power of intention. Therefore, such propositions that capitalism is dying seem only fantastical, short-sighted and lack perspective when we consider how capitalist systemic change has already been taking place for a few decades. Alliez and Lazzarato write how “Capitalism will not die a ‘natural’ death because its ‘economy,’ unlike what Marxist orthodoxy states, is inseparable from war and the *new war economy* of which neo-liberalism is the name and the necessary reality.”

⁶⁴ We need to contextualise such wishful thinking with the *longue durée* of capitalism, and the fact that it is a system of war, not just a system of the organisation of labour.

The expropriation of artistic work is not on the level of corporeal exploitation, but it takes place *inbetween*: in the relationships, collaborations, networks and while *making connections*. In this context, the emphasis of artistic research is not put on the finished product, because it may be outright irrelevant. Knowledge production appears in the process of research or the event of an experiment. Research is a standardised process of knowledge production, where the inquiry of “what you will find out”, is an incentive for the necessary standards that need to be fulfilled. Research is done in collaborations that are not organic or natural, but synthetic and artificial, in which knowledge production needs expropriation of human capacities, which relies on the materiality and plasticity of a body, its skills and capacities that are expropriated for the production of knowledge. Any of the immaterial performances, where labour capacities are not up for standardisation of the universal gestures of

thought, but where capacities are singular, chaotic and idiosyncratic, or where an artist is “wasting time”, are only materially discursive soup—or fog of war. The capacities and bodies as potentialities are necessary for the production of value. A performance artist may do artistic research on the minute and idiosyncratic capacities and events of a body, but how can they begin to consider that such knowledge production is also a reversion to simple labour, and expropriation of the primitive property, where labour always returns to simple labour? ⁶⁵

During the permanent crisis, we may not accommodate ourselves with a generous position of laziness or indifference. We may not fade into the background or disappear into miraculous waves. We do not know what thinking is, but since this is the nature of the *force-(of)-thought*, at first we need to recognise this as the primary target of expropriation. The emphasis of artistic practice and knowledge is on the *force*—or obstinacy—against standardisation and mobilisations for wars that are not our own. If we look at the early 1980s, conceptual art practices mentioned above, such as “The Office of Poetics” (Biuro Poezji) by Andrzej Partum, ⁶⁶ or by Ewa Partum, Jarosław Kozłowski, The Collective Actions (—————) and many others, then what we can distil from these practices are tactics—not for survival, but for refusal and obstinacy, for non-standard practices. As Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka writes in her book *History of visual text. Poland after 1967* (2012), about the concept of the “Total Book” by Zenon Fajfer, “which is complete and homogeneous as regards text, images and meaning [...] which requires from the user a new, more active, more involved and multidirectional process of reading than typical, linear literature.” ⁶⁷ A non-standard artistic practice that is a force against the wars of capitalism is not a creation of “worlds”, it is not fiction, but they involve non-standard strategies of *fictioning*. ⁶⁸ Paradoxically the “total book” as tactic is both a refusal to the “total education” or “life-long learning” of neoliberal capitalism and more akin with the “partial education” presented by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten. It is less than one and a “refusal of the integer”, ⁶⁹ that is to say, not either or, but rather more and less—a non-standard practice of the force of thought.

Notes:

1. Alliez, Eric and Lazzarato, Maurizio. *Wars and Capital*. South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e). 2018. pp. 160-162.
2. Nauha, Tero. “A thought of performance”. *Performance Philosophy Journal*. Vol 2. No 2. Available online at <http://www.performancephilosophy.org/journal/article/view/76> (accessed 2018-12-02.)
3. Bolt, Barbara. “Artistic Research: A Performative Paradigm?” *Parse Journal*. No. 3. 2016. pp. 129-142.
4. Braudel, Fernand. *The Perspective of the World*, New York, NY: Harper & Row. 1984. p. 246.
5. Alliez and Lazzarato, *op. cit.*, p. 351.
6. Smith regards such accumulation only as something “in nature” that needs to have existed “previous to

- the division of labour” and “stock”, or that is “previously necessary”, where the accumulation leads to improvement. See Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edited by Edwin Cannan. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1976 [1876]. pp. 291-292.
7. Marx’s concept of “Ursprüngliche Akkumulation”. See Marx, Karl. *Das Kapital: Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie. Erster Band*. Hamburg. Berlin: Dietz Verlag. 1991 [1867]. p. 560.
 8. Braudel, Fernand. *The Wheels of Commerce*. New York, NY: Harper & Row. 1982. p. 230.
 9. Alliez and Lazzarato, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
 10. See, for instance, “Subjectivity and history” in Guattari, Félix and Rolnik, Suely. *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*. Translated by Karel Clapshow and Brian Holmes. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e). 2008. pp. 35-178; or Guattari, Félix. *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*. Translated by Andrew Goffey. London: Bloomsbury. 2013.
 11. Guattari, *Schizoanalytic*, p. 49.
 12. Barad, Karen. “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Vol. 28. No. 3. 2003. p. 810.
 13. Kunst, Bojana. *Artist at Work, Proximity of Art and Capitalism*. Hants: Zero Books. 2015. p. 109.
 14. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
 15. Stilinović, Mladen. “In Praise of Laziness”. In *Parallel Slalom: A Lexicon of Non-aligned Poetics*. Edited by Bojana Cvejić and Goran Sergej Pristaš. Belgrade: Walking Theory. 2013. p. 335.
 16. Stilinović in Suvakovic, Misko. “Art as a Political Machine Fragments on the Late Socialist and Postsocialist Art of Mitteleuropa and the Balkans”. In *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art under Late Socialism*. Edited by Ales Erjavec. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 2003. p. 122.
 17. Malevich, Kazimir. “Laziness as the Truth of Mankind”. 1921. n.p. Available online at http://www.workaffair.greteagaard.net/satelite_files/malevich_laziness.pdf (accessed 2018-11-30.)
 18. Tronti, Mario. “The Strategy of Refusal”. In *Autonomia: Post-political politics*. Edited by Sylvère Lotringer and Christian Marazzi. New York, NY: Semiotext(e). 1980. p. 28.
 19. Moulrier Boutang, Yann. “Mental Quilombos in the Production of Value: Flights and Counter-forms of Mania Under Cognitive Capitalism in a Postcolonial World”. In *The Psychopathologies of Cognitive Capitalism: Part Two*. Edited by Warren Neidich. Berlin: Archive Books. 2013. pp. 138-139.
 20. Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, p. 580.

21. Lafargue, Paul. *The Right to be Lazy*. Edited by Bernard Marszalek. Oakland, CA: AK Press. 2011. p. 29.
22. Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Transformative Power of Performance. A new aesthetics*. Abingdon and New York, NY: Routledge. 2008 [2004]. p. 18.
23. Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, p. 26.
24. Arrighi, Giovanni. "Towards a Theory of Capitalist Crisis". *New Left Review*. 1/111. September-October. 1978. p. 7.
25. Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*. Translated by Ben Fowkes. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. 1993 [1867]. p. 470.
26. Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, p. 52.
27. Luxemburg, Rosa. *The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg, Volume II, Economic writings 2*. Edited by Peter Hudis and Paul Le Blanc. Translated by Nicholas Gray and George Shriver. London: Verso. 2015. p. 432.
28. Kluge, Alexander and Negt, Oskar. *History and Obstinacy*. Edited by Devin Fore. Translated by Richard Langston, Cyrus Shahan, Martin Brady, Helen Hughes and Joel Golb. New York, NY: Zone Books. 2014 [1981]. p. 81.
29. "The force-(of)-thought is the theoretical instrument of philosophy's non-philosophical transformation. It is only an organon, the force of decision-making, itself determined in-the-last-instance by the Real". See Laruelle, François. *Introduction to Non-Marxism*. Translated by Anthony Paul Smith. Minneapolis, MN: Univocal Publishing. 2015. p.44.
30. Alliez and Lazzarato, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
31. Jaspers, Karl in Saunders, Frances Stonor. *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. New York, NY: The New Press. 2013. p. 97.
32. Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2007. pp. 28-29.
33. Alliez and Lazzarato, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 287.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
37. Clastres, Pierre. *Archeology of Violence*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e). 2010 [1980], p. 243.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 245–250.
39. Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 46.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 88–89.
41. Brandon, Pepijn. *War, Capital, and the Dutch State (1588–1795)*. Leiden: Brill. 2015. p. 317.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
43. Arrighi, Giovanni. *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times*. London: Verso. 2010. p. 287.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 384.
47. Saunders, *op. cit.*, pp. 226–227.
48. Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, p. 309.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 309.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
51. Alliez and Lazzarato, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
52. Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. London: Continuum. 2004 [1980]. p. 458.
53. Alliez and Lazzarato, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
54. Arquilla, John and Ronfeldt, David (eds.). *Networks and Netwars. The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand. 2001. pp. 1–2.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
56. Nye, Joseph S. Jr. and William A. Owens. “America’s Information Edge”. *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 75. No. 2. 1996. p. 2.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

58. Laruelle, François. *Laruelle, From Decision to Heresy: Experiments in Non-Standard Thought*. Edited by Robin Mackay. Falmouth: Urbanomic. 2012. p. 403.
59. Maurizio Lazzarato writes that “Noo-politics (the ensemble of the techniques of control) is exercised on the brain. It involves above all attention, and is aimed at the control of memory and its virtual power. The modulation of memory would thus be the most important function of noo-politics.” Lazzarato, Maurizio. “The Concepts of Life and the Living in the Societies of Control—”. In *Deleuze and the Social*. Edited by Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sørensen. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2006. p. 186.
60. Moulrier-Boutang, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
61. Lazzarato, *The Concept of Life...*, p. 137.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 137–318
63. Virno, Paolo. *The Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. Translated by Isabella Bertolotti, James Cascaito and Andrea Casson. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e). 2004. p. 52.
64. Alliez and Lazzarato, *op. cit.*, p. 382.
65. Kluge and Negt, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
66. Biuro Poezji functioned at the home of Partum in Poznańska 38/14e in Warsaw from 1971 to 1984 as an “independent” and “non-institutional” institution. See Dawidek Gryglicka, Małgorzata. *Historia Tekstu Wizualnego. Polska po 1967 roku*. Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2012. p. 540.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 751.
68. For “fictioning” a practice in the world is in contrast to “fiction”, which always resembles the real. Through abstractions of creating “conditions for thought”, philosophers always return to the world, which is their “proper gesture” of thought; likewise, fiction has the same relation with the world. However, fictioning does not return to the world but remains abstract and in a strict sense does not exist. Fictioning is radically futuristic. See Nauha, Tero. “From schizoproduction to non-standard artistic research”. In *The Dark Precursor: Deleuze and Artistic Research*. Edited by Paulo de Assis & Paolo Giudici. Leuven: University Press. 2017. p. 252.
69. Harney, Stefano and Fred Moten. “A Total Education”. In *How Institutions Think: Between Contemporary Art and Curatorial Discourse*. Edited by Paul O'Neill, Lucy Steeds and Mick Wilson. Cambridge: The MIT Press. 2017. p. 170.