

INTRODUCTION: MARKETS AND MACHINES

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This issue of *New Formations* covers a wide range of subjects from an international and interdisciplinary group of contributors. Their subject matter ranges across philosophy, anthropology, psychoanalysis, cultural history, political theory, geography, radical economics and critical media studies. A number of themes resonate across them in multiple ways, however. The culture and politics of neoliberalism, its conditions of historical emergence and its multiple instantiated forms, is a concern shared by several of our contributions from very different perspectives. The politics of material culture and of the technological infrastructures of contemporary institutionalised forms of power is another. Modes of resistance, both to neoliberalism and to any form of political domination or economic exploitation, are a third area of shared concern for many of our contributions, several of which also share an interest in psychic, affective and emotional dimensions of social and political relationships.

In his essay on the fantasy of neoliberal sovereignty, Peter Bloom considers the relationship between Foucauldian and Lacanian understandings of sovereignty and disciplinary power. Bloom argues that identification with a powerful sovereign provides individuals with ontological security in the face of complex micro-processes of power and broader depersonalised forms of subjection associated with neoliberalism. As such, in his account the appeal of a sovereign fantasy lies in its promise to grant individuals a sense of 'sovereign' agency which they experience as lacking in their existence as 'agency-less' disciplinary subjects of neoliberalism. Bloom argues that to truly move beyond neoliberalism it is necessary therefore to not only challenge its disciplinary body but also cut off its sovereign head.

Following on from this argument, Roi Wagner asks how one might radically resist the state, when material and ideological circumstances foreclose a non-statist horizon? To tackle this question, his paper considers points of view of communities that know no stateless world, but still reject contemporary state governmentality as such, rather than just this or that government. The paper opens by fleshing out the claim that there is no 'world' outside the state. Then it looks into Zapatista resistance, among other examples, to see how resistance to the state works where there is no independent world from which the state is to be resisted. Wagner uses the work of Pierre Clastres and liberation theology so set up a model that he calls 'transcendentalisation of the state' - a form of governmentality that retains the state as constitutive framework, but undermines its power to enforce its authority. He fleshes out this model with case studies from Israel/Palestine and the Euromed civil forum.

Marisol Sandoval considers a quite different form of political resistance in her study of worker co-operatives in the cultural sector. She investigates the potential of worker co-operatives to help improve working conditions and radically reimagine cultural work in an era of growing precarity and disempowerment for cultural workers. Sandoval argues that while co-ops work to democratise ownership and decision-making, empowering workers by giving them more control over their working lives, co-ops are nonetheless constrained by competitive market pressures, creating tensions between economic necessity and political goals. Her article argues that co-ops can be understood as a radical pre-figurative political project, but can also be mobilized in a reformist attempt to create a more ethical capitalism or be integrated into neoliberal discourses of entrepreneurship and individual responsibility, but ultimately argues that radical co-ops can play an important role within a larger movement that mobilizes collectivity to confront neoliberal individualization and 'capitalist realism'.

In her essay 'Markets without subjects', Morgan Adamson analyses recent discourses around financial subjectivity and debt, popularized in the wake of the 2008 crash. Through an examination of the history and development of the Nasdaq market (the world's first electronic stock exchange which came to serve as the engine for the 'New Economy' and the dot-com boom of the 1990s), her paper complicates recent theoretical conversations around the way that financial capitalism shapes political subjects in the neoliberal era in order to take into account the machinic and pre-individual operations of financial markets and the computational infrastructures that undergird them. It argues that the Nasdaq offers insight into the unfolding of a unique socio-technical apparatus that defines contemporary capitalism, one not adequately accounted for in either the popular or scholarly discourse on finance written since the crash. Paying particular attention to the role of the Nasdaq in producing the myths of the New Economy, Adamson examines how the Nasdaq model was instrumental in an attempt to resolve the contradictions of neoliberal capitalism.

Also concerned with the integration between technologies, subjectivities and modes of agency, Ben Robert's article - '*An exemplary contemporary technical object*' - explores the work of Mark B.N. Hansen and Bernard Stiegler in relation to technology, experience and cinema. It highlights the differences between their positions and evaluates their ongoing usefulness for 'technocultural' studies. Roberts opens by describing and evaluating Hansen's critique of Stiegler on cinematic temporality, arguing that their very different reading of Gilbert Simondon's work (and especially his concept of individuation) are crucial to understanding the difference between Hansen and Stiegler. The article then moves on to look directly at Stiegler's approach to cinema through an analysis of his reading of Alain Resnais's film *On connaît la chanson* (*Same Old Song*), showing how the frequent citation of popular French song in this film underlines Stiegler's concept of the 'industrialisation

of memory'. The economic and cultural problematic that Stiegler locates in the film is contrasted with the seemingly positive reappropriation of culture industry which Lawrence Lessig describes as 'remix culture'. Roberts concludes by discussing what is at stake, theoretically and politically, in Stiegler and Hansen's different ways of thinking about cinema.

Ben Highmore's contribution to this issue - *'Feeling it - Habitat, taste and the new middle class in 1970s Britain'* - constitutes a quite different study of relationships between sense, selfhood and material objects. In 1964 the furniture designer and entrepreneur Terence Conran, along with various partners, opened a shop in London selling furniture and household goods. It was a 'lifestyle shop' called Habitat. By the late 1970s it was a fixture of many cities and towns across Britain. In this essay, Highmore treats Habitat as a taste formation, as part of a structure of feeling that was specific to what many social commentators were calling the 'new middle class'. This essay charts some of those feelings and the material culture that supported them, and argues for an approach to taste that treats it as an agent of socio-historical change as well as a practice that maintains and reproduces social class. The feelings that Habitat could be seen to activate ranged from 'cottage urbanism' and improvised sociability to a sense of middle-class-classlessness. Habitat's role was ambiguous, nurturing both middle class radicalism and the marketization of democratic impulses. In the transition from welfare state socialism to neoliberal hegemony Habitat's role was both surreptitious and substantial.

The politics and ethics of potentially ambiguous emotions is the central theme of the final article of this issue. Richard Phillips' *'Curious about Others: Relational and Empathetic Curiosity for Diverse Societies'* deals with the fascinating topic of 'sociable curiosity'. Phillips argues that wondering and finding out about others (empathetic curiosity), and being curious with them (relational curiosity) - can draw people together, bridging differences and social distances. This promises more than the distant connections that are increasingly recognised and endorsed as mechanisms of coping with diversity and living within societies that have been characterised as diverse. It reaches towards more active and definite engagement with others. But curiosity - associated as it is with taxonomy and therefore with exploring and sometimes disrupting and recasting categories - can also be a vehicle for more fundamental explorations of social difference. Understandings of sociable curiosity are distilled in Phillips' paper through readings of theoretical literature on curiosity, wonder and taxonomy, and through a series of more tangible encounters, drawn from experiences of anti-war activism and museum projects in the UK, which bring sociable curiosity into focus.