01 2007

The Misfortunes of the "Artistic Critique" and of Cultural Employment

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In the work of sociologists and economists who are concerned with the transformations in capitalism and more specifically the changes in the artistic and cultural labour market, there is a tendency to use artistic activity and those conditions of professional practice as the model from which, they argue, neo-liberal economics draws its inspiration. This is an ambiguous discourse and it deserves to be examined more closely. *Le nouvel esprit du Capitalisme* [*The New Spirit of Capitalism*] has the merit of making the "artistic critique" one of the economic, political and social actors of the century just past, and of the post-1945 period in particular. But both the definition of what exactly the "artistic critique" is, and the role the authors assign to it in contemporary capitalism are puzzling in many respects.

The thesis that runs throughout "The New Spirit of Capitalism" is the following: the artistic critique (based on and demanding freedom, autonomy and authenticity) and the social critique (based on and demanding solidarity, security and equality) "are most often

developed and embodied by different groups" and are "incompatible".[1]

The torch of the artistic critique, which was handed over by the artists to the students in May 1968, was then apparently taken up by "trendy" individuals working in the media, finance, show-business, fashion, internet, etc. sectors, i.e. the "creatives" at the "top of the sociocultural hierarchy". The social critique, on the other hand, developed and embodied by the workers of May '68, was taken up by the 'little people', subordinates, those excluded by liberalism. Artistic critique and social critique are therefore "largely incompatible".

The "artistic critique" provokes in the authors an unease, even a kind of contempt, which they have difficulty hiding. Seen from their point of view, this is entirely understandable since the "artistic critique [...] is not naturally egalitarian; indeed it always runs the risk of being reinterpreted in an aristocratic sense" and "untempered by considerations of equality and solidarity of the social critique, [it] can very quickly play into the hands of a particularly destructive form of liberalism, as we have seen in recent years". Besides, the artistic critique is "not in itself necessary to effectively challenge capitalism, a fact demonstrated by the earlier successes of the workers' movement without the support of the artistic critique. From this point of view, May '68 was exceptional". Reading it, one also feels that the book is pervaded by a certain resentment against May '68 that for some years now has been prevalent among the French intellectual elites. Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who (it is argued)s as the key thinkers of '68 inadvertently sowed seeds of liberalism in people's minds, are bearing the brunt of that resentment here [in this text] as well as in the mind of the former Minister of Education.

So not only is the artistic critique not necessary, other than to "moderate the excess of equality in the social critique" that is in danger of "treating freedom with disdain"*, but what is more, it acts like a Trojan Horse for liberalism, to which it is related by the aristocratic taste for freedom, autonomy and authenticity, which the artists supposedly handed on to "the students" and which then went into circulation via "the trendy, left-wing *bobos*** ". Here Boltanski and Chiapello give us a re-run of the opposition between freedom and equality, between autonomy and security. This opposition dates from another era and, it must be said, has resulted in the failure of socialism as well as communism.

"No culture without social rights"

The concept of "artistic critique" doesn't hold up for theoretical as well as political reasons:

a) As far as this last aspect goes, B&C's theses were roundly refuted four years after publication. The misfortunes of Boltanski and Chiappello's "artistic critique" are many, but the greatest misfortune befell it with the emergence of the "*Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires*" *** and the resistance movement among the "artists" and the "technicians" in the performing arts sector of the cultural industry *(l'industrie du spectacle)*; indeed this coordinating group constitutes the most successful expression of that resistance. The six words of one of this movement's slogans "No culture without social rights" are more than enough grounds on which to base a criticism of B and C's book and to highlight all the weaknesses in their analysis of contemporary capitalism. If the slogan "No culture without social rights" is translated into B and C's terms, what is considered to be potentially aristocratic-liberal and incompatible with social justice will, as a result, become a

battleground, perhaps the only one, where the neo-liberal logic can be thwarted: "no freedom, autonomy, authenticity (culture), without solidarity, equality, security (social rights)".

Le nouvel esprit du Capitalisme was published in 1999, but it ceased to apply both theoretically and politically on the night of 25/26 June 2004, when the "*Coordination des* intermittents *et* précaires" was founded at the *Théâtre Nationale de la Colline*. When, developed and embodied as it was by "artists and technicians in the show-business industry", by cultural workers, the "artistic critique" became organized and adopted a name, it brought together what the authors held to be incompatible: the artist and the temporary worker, the artist and the intermittent (or casual) worker, the artist and the unemployed person, the artist and the *Rmiste***** living on minimum benefit payments.

The strongest and fiercest resistance (the conflict has been going on for three years) to the French employers' liberal scheme of "social reconstruction" comes from cultural workers in the performing arts sector. It was the individual *"Coordinations des intermittents et précaires*", and not just the cultural workers, who developed and put forward a model of indemnification for 'workers in discontinuous employment', based on solidarity, security and justice. It was again these representative groups who indicated the battlegrounds for a system of unemployment insurance that is based on both security and autonomy and is capable of functioning even in the mobile labour market.

b) From a theoretical point of view, the concept of "artistic critique" introduces a whole host of misunderstandings. Only the top three have been taken into consideration here:

1. The divisions which liberal policies have created in society have nothing to do with the caricature of the social composition and the mapping of inequalities described in this book. Let's look again at the description of the social groups embodying the "artistic critique", according to B&C, and try to see why indeed it is such a caricature (bordering on populism):

"Moreover, it must be said that the artistic critique is today embodied by people at the top of the sociocultural hierarchy, university graduates, often working in the *creative* sectors (marketing, advertising, media, fashion, internet, etc.) or in the financial markets or in consultancy firms; their awareness of what, at the other end of the social scale, the life of a temporary worker or the life of someone who has no interest whatsoever in mobility is like, is virtually non-existent."

The divisions that the neo-liberal policies outline are not divisions between the new liberal professions and the new proles, between the trendy types and the unemployed, between a new "creative class" working in the "creative industries", and an old working class employed in the traditional industries. The inequalities exist within the so-called creative professions that, according to B. and C., embody the "artistic critique". Each of the professions that they cite as being engaged in the "artistic critique" is not a homogeneous entity but rather a collection of situations which are highly differentiated internally by status, salaries, social cover, workload, job. You can work in the same profession, enjoy wealth and job security or be poor and in highly precarious employment. Between these two extremes, there is an almost infinite gradation and modulation of situations and statuses.

The divisions are not between individuals who work in the media, advertising, theatre, photography on the one hand, and the

workers, employees, casual and unemployed workers on the other. The divisions cut across the new liberal professions because, quite simply, a certain proportion of the people working in these professions are poor, with little or no guarantee of secure employment.

Exactly the same could be said of almost all the professions cited by the authors, particularly in research and in the university sector, areas with which these authors ought to be more familiar. It is a situation that the movement of "casual-contract research staff" helped to bring to public attention, some months after the intermittent workers' movement.

Let's take an example for which there is supporting data. With Antonella Corsani and Jean-Baptiste Olivo and the various *Coordinations des Intermittents et précaires*, we carried out a survey on a representative sample of more than 1,000 intermittent workers, artists and technicians in the sectors of TV and radio, and live performance. Let's look at the internal distribution of employment (the hours worked) and of salaries (without unemployment benefit):

Table 1 : Relationship between NHW*** and annual salary (based on the *SMIC*)**

Salaries /NHW	507hrs-520hrs	520hrs-550hrs	550hrs-600hrs	600hrs-650hrs	650hrs-700hrs	700hrs-750hrs	750hrs-800hrs	800hrs-1000hrs	> 1000hrs	Total:
0-0.3	**3.56%**	**0.78%**	**0.67%**	0.00%	0.14%	0.12%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.26%
0.3-0.4	**3.64%**	**2.26%**	**1.06%**	**0.81%**	0.39%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.16%
0.4-0.5	**3.16%**	**3.21%**	**2.07%**	**1.01%**	0.19%	0.14%	0.14%	0.47%	0.41%	10.78%
0.5-0.6	**3.39%**	**2.84%**	**2.23%**	**1.18%**	0.40%	0.47%	0.48%	0.52%	0.15%	11.66%
0.6-0.8	**3.93%**	**2.51%**	**1.79%**	**1.61%**	**2.20%**	**0.93%**	0.90%	**1.30%**	**0.81%**	15.96%
0.8-1.1	**2.85%**	**2.99%**	**0.87%**	**2.27%**	**1.95%**	**1.37%**	0.60%	**2.68%**	**2.42%**	18.02%
1.1-1.25	0.91%	0.59%	0.83%	0.75%	**0.75%**	**0.88%**	0.47%	**1.43%**	**0.77%**	7.37%
1.25-1.5	0.44%	0.78%	0.30%	0.81%	0.19%	0.46%	0.60%	**1.47%**	**3.20%**	8.26%
1.5-2	0.66%	0.68%	0.25%	0.32%	0.26%	0.26%	0.13%	**2.00%**	**0.75%**	5.30%
2-3	0.37%	0.23%	0.33%	0.12%	0.53%	0.23%	0.23%	**1.10%**	**3.94%**	7.07%
3-4	0.00%	0.00%	0.12%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	**1.12%**	1.24%
4-5	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.10%	0.29%	0.49%
5+	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.13%	0.29%	0.42%
Total:	22.91%	16.86%	10.51%	8.89%	6.98%	4.96%	3.55%	11.19%	14.15%	100%

What comes across very clearly is that the majority of intermittent workers (56.4%) earn an annual salary of between half the guaranteed minimum wage in France – known as the *SMIC*, this stands at around 1,200 euros gross – and just above that minimum wage. However, at either end of the spectrum, 9.1% earn a sum equivalent to more than twice the minimum wage, while 13.1% earn less than 0.3 of that minimum wage.

Table 2 : Average salary, median salary and standard deviation by profession

Professional Activity	Average salary (euros):	Median salary (euros):	Standard deviation:
Circus/Music Hall performer	15159	10448	127592
Stylist - Make-up artist	17709	16438	71202
Communications	9100	7904	37003
Actor	10765	7689	101514
Costume designer - Dresser	11542	9389	57531
Dancer	9353	7900	33525
Set designer	16750	14853	101121
Lighting Technician	13526	12428	52904
Photographer	16970	13794	81601
Production Designer	12192	12400	52237
Film Editor	17334	16769	77318
Musician - Singer	8582	7353	43683
Producer	16682	13791	101455
Director	16128	14254	82724
Sound Technician	14966	14137	63197
Other	8231	8253	10489

So the majority of intermittent workers barely live above the threshold for indemnification (507 hours), but there is an unspecified number of "artists" who are not indemnified and who live in a state of even greater precarity, juggling casual work, *RMI* and other benefit payments for those on the lowest incomes. Remember that, in Paris, 20% of those in receipt of minimum benefit payments state their profession as "artist". If what we call 'visual artists' are included in that group, the "artists" are a highly diverse category, not amenable to classification within those "molar" and all-embracing categories of artists, individuals working in the media, etc.

2. B. and C. have taken the artist and artistic activity as the model of the liberal economy, whereas this model was constructed on [the idea of the individual] as "human capital", as an entrepreneur of her/himself. We are going to use Foucault's work *"Naissance de la biopolitique"* to account for the misconception according to which it is claimed that the model of contemporary economic activity is to be found among artists.

As Foucault reminds us, neo-liberalism needs to reconstruct a model of *homo economicus* but, as we shall see shortly, this has very little to do with either the artist or artistic "creativity". Neo-liberalism does not seek its model of subjectivation in the artistic critique since it already has its own model: the entrepreneur, a figure that neo-liberalism wants to extend across the board to everyone, artists included, as in the case of the French intermittent workers. In the "reform" of intermittent employment, the new period of indemnification for intermittent workers is considered "a capital" derived from indemnified days, which the individual has to manage as "capital".

What is this little word "capital" doing among wage earners? How does it work? It states that unemployment benefits are part of the multiplicity of "investments" (in education and training, mobility, affectivity, etc.) that the individual (the "human capital") has to make in order to optimize his performance. Foucault's analysis can help us to see what the neo-liberal logic is "positively" targeted at, what it encourages people to aim for through its model of "human capital". Capitalization is one of the techniques that must contribute to the worker's transformation into "human capital". The latter is then personally responsible for the education and development, growth, accumulation, improvement and valorization of the "self" in its capacity as "capital". This is achieved by managing all its relationships, choices, behaviours according to the logic of a costs/investment ratio and in line with the law of supply and demand. Capitalization must help to turn the worker into "a kind of permanent, multipurpose business." The worker is an entrepreneur and entrepreneur of her/himself, "being her/his own capital, being her/his own producer, being her/his own source of revenue." 2 Individuals are expected to deliver not the productivity of labour, but the profitability of a capital investment (of their own

capital, a capital that is inseparable from their own selves). The individual has to regard her/himself as a fragment of capital, a molecular fraction of capital. The worker is no longer simply a factor of production; the individual is not strictly speaking a "workforce" but rather a "capital-competence", a "machine of competences".

This idea of the individual as an entrepreneur of her/himself is the culmination of capital as a machine of subjectivation. For Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, capital acts as a formidable "point of subjectivation that constitutes all human beings as subjects; but some, the capitalists, are subjects of enunciation [...], while others, the proletarians, are subjects of the statement, subjected to the technical machines." 3 We can talk about the fulfilment of the process of subjectivation and exploitation since, in this case, it is the same individual who splits in two, becoming both the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement. On the one hand, s/he brings the subjectivation process to its pinnacle, because in all these activities s/he involves the "immaterial" and "cognitive" resources of her/his "self", while on the other, s/he inclines towards identification, subjectivation and exploitation, given that s/he is both her/his own master and slave, a capitalist and a proletarian, the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement.

If we continue to take Foucault as a point of departure, the claim that freedom was introduced into capitalism by the events of May 1968 and by the students can be strongly criticized. According to Foucault, liberalism is a mode of government that consumes freedom; to be able to consume freedom, it is first of all necessary to produce and promote it. Freedom is not a universal value, the enjoyment of which ought to be guaranteed by government; rather, it is the freedom (freedoms) that liberalism needs in order to function. Freedom is quite simply "the correlative of devices of

security" that Foucault describes in *Naissance de la Biopolitique*. The great difference from Keynesian liberalism is that this freedom, which must be created and organized, is above all the freedom of business and of the entrepreneur, while the freedom of "labour", of the "consumer", of politics, elements which were at the heart of the Keynesian intervention, must be radically subordinated to it. It is always about the freedom of the entrepreneurs.

3. The problem: the concept of the "artistic critique" refers us to a notion of artistic activity that belongs to the past and one that, in the terms outlined by B&C, may never really have existed.

"But we know very well that, since the 18th and above all the 19th centuries, the artistic critique, allied as it was with conceptions of art as "sublime" and the artist as a "genius", has often been accompanied by a contempt for the 'commonplace', for the 'petty bourgeois', for the narrow-minded, middle-class *'beaufs'* , etc. Admittedly, the 'people' or the 'proletariat' might appear protected from such contempt, but that was only because the critics nurtured an idealized, purely abstract image of it. The 'people', as an entity, was seen as 'admirable'. However, when the supporters of the artistic critique chanced upon real representatives of the 'people' with their 'mundane', 'reactionary', etc. concerns, these could only have been a disappointment."

This image of the artist corresponds perfectly to the image imposed on intermittent workers by the Culture Minister through the cultural employment policies. It is the liberal members of the French Ministry of Culture who have this image of the artist today.

4. "Since the mobility of 'little people' is most often something imposed on them, it is not really likely to generate a network. Buffeted by circumstances that are dictated by the end of their

contracts, they run from one employer to the next so as not to drop off the radar completely. They circulate like goods in a network whose links they have no control over. They are then exchanged by others, who use them to maintain their own connections. As we explain when we refer to the nature of exploitation within the network, the mobility of the great person, the source of fulfilment and of profit, is the exact opposite of the mobility of the little person, which is nothing but poverty and precarity. Or, to use one of our formulas: the mobility of the exploiter is counterbalanced by the flexibility of the exploited."

It is the poorest, the most minor "little people" who have carried the intermittent workers' movement. It is the most minor "little people" who have shown themselves to be a great deal more "creative", more "mobile", more "dynamic" than the employees' trades unions developing and embodying the social critique. Among their numbers, the coordinating groups count not only intermittent workers, but casual workers, unemployed people and people living on the *RMI* minimum benefits too, and it is this group of "little people" which has initiated and managed one of the most innovative conflicts of recent years.

Proof that B. & C.' s theory is very limited comes from the fact that liberalism has not more widely extended the working conditions of intermittent workers, the only artists with the status of wage-earners. And yet it has imposed on them the economic constraints borne by that model of human capital, the entrepreneur of her/himself. Indeed it is the cultural workers – the artists and technicians of live performance – who have to adopt the behaviours and lifestyles associated with "human capital".

Menger and the misfortunes of permanent employment in the culture industry

By advocating a policy of permanent employment in the culture industry, Pierre-Michel Menger establishes the limits of possible and reasonable action in the cultural labour market: the "regulation" of the "excess" of intermittent artists and technicians. Menger's work clearly shows the complicity, the interweaving, the complementarity and the convergence of the "right" and of the "left" around the battle for employment. His latest book is entirely based on the "disciplinary" opposition between normal and atypical, as the title clearly indicates: *Les intermittents du spectacle : sociologie d'une exception*.4 For Menger, "it is not about ordinary unemployment any more than it is about ordinary work [...] The regulation of unemployment among intermittent workers is the regulation of atypical cover against atypical risk. But flexibility beyond the norms has very serious consequences." 5

Extraordinary unemployment and employment, atypical risk and atypical cover against risk, flexibility "beyond the norms": we are at the very heart of disciplinary "exception". Menger frames his arguments on the cultural sector and the system of intermittent employment within an elaborate conceptual structure designed to enclose the questions posed by the intermittent workers' movement within the reassuring framework of what is abnormal, exceptional, atypical.6 The employment policies to be implemented must eradicate the exceptional and ensure that the labour market functions normally again, allowing for both the reconstruction of the entrepreneur's function (her/his autonomy) and the re-imposition of the wage-earner's function (her/his subordination), so that rights and duties can be assigned to each of them.

To express it in the Durkheimian terms of the scholar, a “direct, organized hierarchy” must be re-established in a labour market deregulated by behaviours that do not conform to the normality of the capital/work relationship. We know that these functions are not natural; they must be created and reproduced through the continuous intervention of employment policies. That is precisely what the reform has been used to do.

While Menger’s analysis of intermittent employment seems to be the opposite of the neo-liberal version, his conclusions fit perfectly with theirs. Given that “the number of individuals who enter the system of intermittent employment is increasing far more rapidly than the volume of work they have to share among themselves” 8, the cultural labour market is characterized by an extreme level of flexibility that leads to increased competition between intermittent workers. The increase in competition between workers has negative consequences for their conditions of employment (shorter and increasingly fragmented contracts), for their pay (a downward trend in salaries) and for their bargaining power with companies.

The “assessment” that there are too many intermittent workers for it to be possible for all of them to be guaranteed good conditions of employment and indemnification imposes the same solution as the reform does. The numbers of intermittent workers must be reduced by making access to the system of unemployment insurance more difficult, but also by selecting candidates for entry into the performing professions via a series of restrictions on that entry (qualifications, State-controlled education and training). The primary consequence of the fight against extreme flexibility, against underemployment and against the low wages of intermittent workers, and of the fight too to guarantee stable, continuous employment, “good” pay and “good” indemnifications for a minority of intermittent workers is that the “excess” of these

workers is redirected to the system of minimum benefit payments******, of courses and short-term work placements, to precarity, to basic survival, to poverty.

The initial data on the effects of the reform demonstrate the triumph of neo-liberal policy and the complete subordination of the cultural employment policies. 9 What is being played out here once again is precisely what has been happening in other sectors of the economy for the past 30 years. In its disregard for the current conditions of production, the cultural employment policy – aimed at creating "real", stable, full-time jobs – actually divides and fragments the labour market by creating an increasing disparity in jobs. All it does is fuel the differentiation, multiply the number of inequalities and thus pave the way for the neo-liberal management of the labour market to become established and widespread. (Cultural) employment policies are subordinated to the liberal logic because, with their aim of reducing competition in the "corporation", they only segment and differentiate further down the line, and increase the competition between workers who are "guaranteed" and those who are "not guaranteed", between stable jobs and casual employment. In this way, they facilitate the policy of "optimizing differences", the differential management of inequalities in the governing of behaviours in the labour market.

Unemployment and invisible work

The analysis of unemployment results in the same disciplinary distinction between the normal (unemployment insurance as it was introduced in the post-war period) and the atypical (unemployment insurance as it has been used, diverted, appropriated by intermittent workers). Menger, like all experts on cultural employment policies, wants to return the unemployment-

benefits system, distorted by intermittent employment (since it also finances the activities, cultural and artistic projects and long-term plans of intermittent workers), to its so-called "natural" function of simple cover against the risk of job loss. But, like the experts, Menger seems to ignore the fact that, in a system of flexible accumulation, the meaning and function of unemployment is altered. The distinct, clear-cut separation between employment and unemployment (unemployment being viewed as the reverse of employment), having been established in a very different system of flexible accumulation (standardization and continuity of production and therefore stability and continuity of employment), has been transformed into an ever tighter interweaving of periods of employment, periods of unemployment and periods of education and training.

When you analyse the cultural sector, what strikes you first of all – indeed you can't miss it – is the disjunction between work and employment. The length of employment only partially describes the actual work, which in fact goes beyond it. The "work" habits of intermittent workers (education and training, apprenticeship, the circulation of knowledge and experience, conditions of cooperation, etc.) are routed through employment and unemployment, but they are not to be reduced to this simple opposition.10 Since the early '70s, the time spent in a job only partially encompasses practices of work, education and training, and cooperation by intermittent workers; unemployment cannot simply be reduced to a period of time spent out of work. Unemployment insurance is not limited to covering the risk of job loss. It guarantees the continuity of income that facilitates the interweaving of all these practices and temporalities and allows it to be reproduced; this is income that is not completely the wage-earner's responsibility here as it is in other sectors.

Employer/wage-earner

The statements – slogans of employment – prevent Menger from grasping the significance of another transformation that not only disrupts the clear-cut distinction between work and unemployment, but also disrupts the functions that the "Code of work" allocates to wage-earners (subordination) as well as those it assigns to entrepreneurs (autonomy). Menger is unable to distinguish between the "legal definition of wage-earners as a body" and the real transformations in wage-earners' activities. So the fact that "some 86% of current jobs today are permanent contracts"*******, means he is exempted from asking questions about what [wage-earners] do and how they go about doing it.

The distinct, clear-cut separation between wage-earner and entrepreneur is increasingly irrelevant, particularly in the system of intermittent employment in which, over the years, a figure neglected by statistics and sociological analyses has emerged. In our research, we have referred to this figure as an "employer/employee". This hybrid figure has been established and managed by intermittent workers to adapt to the new demands of cultural production and at the same time bring their own personal projects to a successful conclusion. The employers/employees elude the traditional codifications of the labour market. They are neither wage-earners, nor entrepreneurs, nor freelancers. They combine their different functions without necessarily being confined to any single one of these categories.

This development of hybrid statuses creates many problems for the governing of the labour market. The Latarjet report on the live performance sector identifies it as the main factor in the poor functioning of that sector. It recommends a return to a "normal"

functioning of professional relations, which would end this "exception" by re-establishing the subordination of the wage-earner (with her/his rights) and the autonomy of the entrepreneur (with her/his duties and responsibilities). This obsession with a return to normality is quite simply a disciplinary mechanism that seeks to suppress and devalue these new forms of activity.

In contrast, our survey on intermittent workers means we can entirely subscribe to a comment in the *Cerc******** report on "Job security" that does not seek to turn all these hybridizations, exposed by the system of intermittent employment, into an exception or an anomaly - indeed far from it. "In place of a clear separation between work and unemployment, between salaried employment and freelance work, we find a sort of "halo" of employment with an unspecified status – someone is both unemployed and a wage-earner, for example, or a freelancer and a wage-earner – while the various types of temporary contracts (short-term and intermittent contracts, temporary work) are on the increase.

The alleged "exception" of intermittent employment is becoming the "norm" in the wage-earning system, something the groups representing intermittent workers have been claiming since 1992. The "ordinary" or "classic" categories that Menger wishes to reinstate within the system of intermittent employment are difficult to apply even in the "normal" sectors of the economy. Contrary to what he maintains, the difference between intermittent unemployment and the unemployment found in other sectors is a difference of degree, not of kind.

1 Cf. this and subsequent quotations in Luc Boltanski et Eve Chiapello, “Vers un renouveau de la critique sociale”, an interview with Yann Moulier Boutang, in *Multitudes*, N° 3, Paris, 2000 (online at http://multitudes.samizdat.net/Vers-un-renouveau-de-la-critique.html).

* Translator’s note: the use of *faire fi à* rather than *faire fi de* is a grammatical error noted by ML.

** Translator’s Note: *bobos*, an abbreviation for *bourgeois-bohèmes*.

*** Translator’s Note: organization established to coordinate intermittent and casual workers and represent their claims for indemnification due to the precarity of their employment.

**** Translator’s Note: person living on *RMI = Revenu minimum d’insertion*, a form of income support.

***** Translator’s Note: Number of Hours Worked from *NHT: Nombre d’heures travaillées*.

2 Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique : Cours au collège de France (1978–1979)*, Paris: Seuil, 2004, p. 232. [Title translated in English as *The Birth of Biopolitics*]

3 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux. Capitalisme et Schizophrénie II*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1980, p. 571. [Title translated in English as *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*].

4 Pierre-Michel Menger, *Les intermittents du spectacle : sociologie d’une exception*, Paris: EHESS, 2005.

5 Pierre-Michel Menger, *Profession artiste: Extension du domaine de la création*, Paris: Textuel 2005.

6 Pierre-Michel Menger compares the extreme flexibility of intermittent employment (abnormality) with a relative stability in the other sectors of the economy (normality). This assessment is highly debatable because it has been arrived at by contrasting data on intermittent employment, evaluated in terms of flow, with data relating to the rest of the economy, which is measured in terms of stocks. If we also interpret the latter in terms of flow, as an *Insee* study (*Insee Première*, N° 1014, May 2005) and the 2005 Cerc report on "Job Security" have done, it is obvious that flexibility (of employment) is far from being a specific exception within the system of intermittent employment: "Every year the number of wage-earners rises in many companies and falls in others without a corresponding rise or fall in the balance of total employment figures. These gross trends in corporate employment cannot be compared with the net variations in total employment. So, in seven years, in the period between 1995 and 2001, it is possible to calculate 17.6 million annual employment transactions for a net balance of 1.6 million jobs." Every year, millions of people lose their job and millions more find another (there are 33,753 transactions in and out of the job market daily). In its 2002 report on "Job Security", the *Cerc* comes to the same conclusions, from its survey of the private sector alone. "In 2002, the total employment figure (for metropolitan France and its overseas territories) stood at around 25 million people, with 23 million in salaried employment. From 2001 to 2002, the number of those in employment grew by around 170,000 people. But this rise is the result of a flow in appointments and departures, both of which reached extraordinarily high levels. Thus, in a field of around 13 million private-sector wage-earners, companies made 5.2 million

appointments during 2002 (excluding temporary contracts and non-renewable contracts of less than a month's duration to cover absences due to wage-earners' annual leave). So the rate of recruitment is close to 40%. At the same time, around 40% of wage-earners left their jobs.

8 Pierre-Michel Menger, *Les intermittents du spectacle : sociologie d'une exception*, Paris: EHESS, 2005.

****** Translator's Note: e.g. the *RMI* and a raft of other benefits available to those on the lowest incomes.

9 None of the objectives of the "regulation" proposed by Menger has been achieved. Since 2003, the salaries of intermittent workers, who have remained within the system and who constitute the culture industry's "human capital", have fallen while unemployment benefit has gone up, in particular for those categories working directly for the culture industry (cinema and television). The rise in income (salary plus allowances) of intermittent workers who have not left the system and who constitute the culture industry's "human capital" is financed by interprofessional solidarity; yet the *CFDT [French trade union]*, *Medef [representative body of the majority of French employers' interest groups]* and the official experts do not find fault with any of this.

10 Pierre-Michel Menger claims to have studied this field for thirty years, yet he blithely and systematically confuses these two temporalities. His analyses and recommendations are concerned with "employment" exclusively, while the concept of "work" is never considered.

******* Translator's Note: In a *CDI* or *contrat à durée indéterminée*, the duration of employment is not contractually specified.

******** Translator's Note: *Conseil de l'emploi, des revenus et de la cohésion sociale,* French government institution researching the links between employment, income and social cohesion.