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Dividend

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Ritornello 6, 2006-2008

A Thousand Machines

[: *The narrative of man's becoming-machine as a purely technical alteration misses the machinic, both in its civilization-critical development and in its euphoric tendency. It is no longer a matter of confronting man and machine to estimate possible or impossible correspondences, extensions and substitutions of the one or the other, of ever new relationships of similarity and metaphorical relations between humans and machines, but rather of concatenations, of how man becomes a piece with the machine or with other things in order to constitute a machine. The "other things" may be animals, tools, other people, statements, signs or desires, but they only become machine in a process of exchange, not in the paradigm of substitution. According to Guattari, the primary characteristic of the machine is the flowing of its components: every extension or substitution would be communicationlessness, and the quality of the machine is exactly the opposite, namely that of communication, of exchange. Contrary to the structure, which tends toward closure, the machinic corresponds to a tendentially permanent praxis of connection.*

Machinic subservience, conducting modes of subjectivation beyond social subjection, is the governmental shadow-side of the potentiality even of advanced means of communication. The de-pendency on machines is multiplied in the continuous ap-pending to, sus-pending from the machines, being-pendant on the machines. The high art of machinic subservience interlocks a permanent online life with the imperative of life-long learning and the irresolvable merging of business deals and affects. The streams of desire of the ubiquitous ap-pendages generate new forms of dependency, which make the material penetration of the technical machine into the human body appear as a secondary horror scenario. And yet, the desiring machines are not simply tools of machinic subservience; the minor advantages of the resistive use of new abstract and diffuse machines in dispersion are by no means always already over-coded.

Concatenations of chainless machines, bound together *by the lack of any* bond. :]

Capitalism and Machine

Machinic capitalism does not signify a new phase of capitalism, a new "age of the machine," a further link in the sequence of industrial and post-industrial, fordist and postfordist capitalism or liberalism and neoliberalism. The machinic is a category that accompanies and traverses capitalism in its diverse instantiations, also helpful for distinguishing these historically different forms. From Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* through the Marxian machine fragment to the appendix of *Anti-Oedipus*, ever new interpretations of the machinic appear, but not in such a way that humans determine technical apparatuses or apparatuses determine humans. The machinic changes with the mutations of capitalism, adapts, deforms itself, and forms its surroundings at the same time.

In his “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” Gilles Deleuze explains these mutations of machine and capitalism as an arrangement in three phases: the societies of sovereignty combine levers, pulleys and clocks with the sovereign government of subjects, the disciplinary societies combine energetic apparatuses with the enclosure of subjects, and the societies of control operate with “machines of a third type”[1] and modes of subjectivation that may more than ever be called machinic subservience. This schema is not to be understood as a linear, techno-determinist or even teleological sequence, but rather as an irregular accumulation of diverse kinds of societies, which overlap today and modulate the machinic in ever new ways with the most recent developments of logistics and algorithmics, of data collection and data browsing, of social media and financial derivatives.

“Self-driving cars” are certainly technical apparatuses, but mainly they are machines. In the tautological formulation of the self-driving auto-mobile there is an almost desperate insistence on the magical possibility of self-movement. Most of all, though, it is the exchange, the communication, the connection through (data) streams, (data) traffic, which machinizes the relation of body-machines, thing-machines, and social machines, also in street traffic. People will still have the feeling of sovereignly steering (for example, when they enter one of the four-and-a-half destinations that they, on average, aim to reach daily), but at the same time, within machinic tracking everything steers and conforms itself, regardless of whether thing, human or social intercourse: no more enclosure, but self-conduct of all components in an open milieu, which move past one another as elegantly as possible and, depending on the identification of the individual thing (from the license plate of the car through the machinic facial recognition of

those in it, to the mass movements of diverse vehicles), comply with a multiplicity of openings and closures.

The concept of machinic capitalism,[2] which does not indicate a new phase of capitalism, but an increasing significance of the machinic in contemporary capitalism, does not imply a further version of the dichotomous preference given to objects (over subjects), animals (over humans), materialities (over the immaterial), realisms (over discourses). Rather, it concerns the flows passing through these dichotomies and through the single things – data flows, currents, desires, becomings, middles, dancing relations, the in-between of dividual sociality.

Becoming-machine of the devices, apparatuses, equipment: when technical apparatuses come into play, they are never only technical apparatuses, but foremost components of machinic intercourse. In this respect the notion of the machine invading the human being is already wrong: cardiac or brain pacemakers, for example, are more than technical apparatuses, non-human alien elements that turn the human being into a machine, an electronic tag is more than a substitute for prison walls, chips for locating animals are more than the dog leashes of the control society. Human enhancement is more than the improvement of human beings by technical artifacts, prostheses, implants, neural interfaces, operations, and substances. In all of these examples the machinic is not simply a means used by humans, but a specific relation, first of all a relation of appending.

In many situations it appears as though machines were not penetrating into human beings as much as humans are being drawn "into the machine." I am not only dependent on a "machine" external to me, which surveils and subordinates me, I also want to become part of the machine, append to it. In this sense, machinic subservience is entirely different from subjugation to the machine.

The pull of machines, their attraction, has undoubtedly led to new, very bodily desires, to relations of appending, streaking, and enveloping. Material size plays no role in this: regardless of whether it is a small mobile telephone or the extended facilities of the NSA – all that is relevant is appending to the networks, the clouds, the machines. Appending to the machine also means being dependent on the machine. The desire to be online, for instance, has aspects of being permanently reachable, Internet addiction, and apparatus fetishism at the same time. Yet the latter is more than just a means of distinction, compulsion to consume, or simply the desire for the latest devices and gadgets. There is also an urge for increasingly strong haptic techniques of streaking, swiping, stroking. Swiping across screens, thus streaking screens, simultaneously de- and reterritorializing the screens, this is undoubtedly just as much a new cultural technique as the accelerated thumbs of the smartphone generation. Streaking/swiping the screens also has something of a haptic differentiation that goes far beyond identifying letters in text messages, in email or social media messages on the smartphone. Swiping across the screen not only means streaking the device, gently striating it, but also affectively approaching it, stroking it. To the extent that this ephemeral stroking carries out the same movement in the same place, it corresponds to a reterritorialization. To the extent that it does not stroke the same place twice, but instead scrolls over the surfaces of virtual content, streaking them, stroking over them, it is deterritorialization.

The more the material relation of proximity, the development of appending to the machines is differentiated, the more it appears as though human beings wanted to "get into the machine." Yet "getting into the machine" is a notion similarly false as that of the "machine penetrating into the human." Perhaps it is more of an

endless convergence with the technical apparatuses, which endlessly differentiates both material and immaterial intercourse. It is a relatively small step from typing letters on keyboards to swiping across screens, which could be expanded in the future. Verbal control is a potential mode of this expanded assembling, or also using body parts other than fingers and hands. Feet could come into play, for example, as with a sewing machine, a drum, an organ, or a wah-wah pedal, or the whole body – like the sound assemblage of a one-man band, singing with a drum on the back and a tambourine under one foot.

Large desktop touchscreens are taking the place of keyboard operation, and yet notebooks, pads, smartphones are still carried around today, as personal means of production, as fetishes, gadgets. Future machinic environments might be more readily conceived in terms of the logic of enveloping than of appending or physically touching. Whether we want it or not, whether we know it or not, most data is already largely in the clouds. All that is missing then is omnipresent access to the data-pumps that we can plug into anywhere without further mediation, or, one step further: a way of dealing with data clouds that is by no means incorporeal, but imperceptible. Touchscreens drive the development of apparatuses from visible appendage toward an increasingly invisible envelope. Machinic sensors do not necessarily have to work through touching the apparatuses. Gestures, hand signs, body language instead of Google Glass and data gloves. Perhaps the theremin is the instrument of the future. No external, visible envelope that comprehensively envelops everything, but rather an endless (self-) enveloping of every single person, access, at the same time, to the machinic environment, to the extent that the control of the codes allows it.

Ghostly music, glissandi generated without touch, hands and arms gliding through the air, electromagnetic fields moved by the electric vibrations of the body. Gliding, flowing, floating, flying music. Just as Leon Theremin began to play his instrument nearly a hundred years ago, the people of today are beginning to play the technical instruments, the apparatuses, the equipment that surrounds, besieges, envelops them, the environments and surrounds, and they are played by them. There is something of virtuosity at work here on both sides. But as said before, this is not a matter of instrumental relations, of machines as tools and means of human beings or vice versa. We are not playing instruments, but rather playing with them, the way children play with other children, with things and machines.

In the 1970s some children played with remote-controlled cars, boats, and airplanes. These were wonderful tools for teaching especially boys to control machines at an early age. The overkill that was to be avoided in all cases was the removal of the boat/car/airplane from the range of the remote control. Fifty years later it will be a question of keeping all single things, not only apparatuses but also people, within the range of remote control, whether in gaming, in street traffic or in everyday life. Only the remote control is missing, and so is the person who operates it. Just as the automobile does not really move itself, the self-driving car will not drive itself either. Where people once divested themselves of effort, now they are divesting themselves of control. Machinic self-conduct means a complex interplay of various components that comply with and assemble into an assemblage. Self-assembling and assembling the assemblage.

And not only the streets want to be machinically regulated, but airways increasingly also require machinic engagement. With regard to the acquisition of drones, while politics insists almost too

conspicuously that drones are controlled by humans, it can be said with Stefano Harney and Fred Moten that "drones are not un-manned to protect American pilots. They are un-manned because they think too fast for American pilots."[3] The dys- and pan-topic fantasy of logistics aims to limit human beings as "controlling agents" as far as possible, to liberate the flow of commodities and weapons from human time and human error. This does not mean that humans become superfluous: to the extent that they survive them, they will continue to have to explain the collateral damage of drones. It is inherent to their "signature strikes" that they are not always completely free from errors. The drone brings death or it brings mail from Amazon, based on algorithmically produced risk or potentiality profiles. Most of all, it promises precision beyond human exactitude. Targeted, smart, reliable, damage-minimizing precision in a machinic environment. The drone is the machinic animal of the present, and at some point it will also unfold itself, multiply itself.

Facebook: Self-Division and Compulsion to Confess

"Facebook enables you to connect with the people in your life and share with them what matters to you."[4]

> "One has to be completely taken in by this internal ruse of confession in order to attribute a fundamental role to censorship, to taboos regarding speaking and thinking; one has to have an inverted image of power in order to believe that all these voices which have spoken so long in our civilization – repeating the formidable injunction to tell what one is and what one does, what one recollects and what one has forgotten, what one hides and what hides itself, what one is

> thinking and what one thinks he is not thinking – are speaking to us of freedom."[5]

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught machinic subservience and self-compliance, confessional communication and self-division. That is what Facebook *also* is: in addition to being a means for self-presentation, com-munication, and manically showing off one's life, in addition to being a hotspot of future social media bubbles, in addition to being a tool for Facebook and Twitter revolutions, in addition to being an indelible memory of millions, it is also a medium of confession, indeed a compulsion to confession, and in this sense it is a medium not just of com-munication, but also of self-division.

Facebook enables me to further optimize this machinic practice of division. The "formidable injunction" of our civilization to "tell what one is and what one does, what one recollects and what one has forgotten, what one hides and what hides itself, what one is thinking and what one thinks he is not thinking," is in good hands with Facebook. With one limitation: what does not apply, or only under certain conditions, is the external compulsion inherent to the word "injunction." Here everything revolves around machinic subservience, the will to confess, the desire to communicate.

In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, using material on medical tests, psychiatric examinations, pedagogical reports and family controls of sexuality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Foucault describes a new form of power, which is based foremost on various new forms of confession: "it required an exchange of discourses, through questions that extorted admissions, and confidences that went beyond the questions that were asked."[6] Against what Foucault calls the repression hypothesis, he brings the intensity of confession into play, the

ineluctable relation of power and pleasure: “Power operated as a mechanism of attraction; it drew out those peculiarities over which it kept watch. Pleasure spread to the power that harried it; power anchored the pleasure it uncovered.”[7]

As pastoral power, Christian morality combines the compulsion to confess with the desire to admit. It can refer to a long genealogy of confessional practices since the High Middle Ages. Since these medieval upheavals, power as a mechanism of attraction, a siren call to confession, has multiplied, enticing from all sides, spreading its sounds across all social strata. It not only entices me to relieve myself in confession, but also with the promise that I could decipher my most inner secrets just by making them public: “The obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points, is so deeply ingrained in us, that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth lodged in our most secret nature, ‘demands’ only to surface [...].”[8] This is the central statement of Foucault’s confession theory. The idea of a truth only waiting “in our most secret nature” to surface, is also the basis for the ubiquitous propaganda of transparency today. Its primary procedure is to connect an identitarian self and its truth that *must* step out of the dark; if this does not succeed, then it can only be because transparency is shackled by a power, a force, a compulsion that it must liberate itself from. Reversal of the perspective to power: instead of seeing a manifold power at work, which operates by invoking confession and permanently producing desires to confess, every kind of power is regarded as a homogeneous block of the potential repression of confession. Confession, in contrast, has a liberating effect from this perspective, it helps to escape from silence, sets truth free. Division here assumes foremost the excessive form of confessional communication and publication.

Stolen truth, that which the public has been denied, the de-privatized wants to surface.

Against the backdrop of this appeal to enable the freedom of confession, the private increasingly falls into the defensive. Privacy appears as a concept in the limited meaning of data protection, at most: in the field of social networks, discourses focus on the illegitimate storage of personal data and the impending loss of privacy. Privacy is supposed to provide an answer to the question of how this data may be protected from access by others: protected, first of all, from state repression against single persons, but also from the valorization of the (accumulated) personal data by commercial actors. In light of increasingly excessive state surveillance programs and commercial misuse of personal data, these are problems that need to be taken seriously; at the same time, however, they are barely varied repetitions of the one-sided narratives of decline, which have lamented the decline of either the public or private sphere in ever new combinations. And these narratives often fall below even the level of old science fiction motives of the surveillance society from *1984* or *Brave New World*.

Beyond the data protection discourses, or rather parallel to them, the "internal ruse of confession" gains a new explosiveness. What does it mean when a desire spreads that does not lament the decline of the private sphere at all, but seems instead to flirt with a voluntary abandonment of all privateness? What does it mean when in social media people are not simply forced to convey their data, and this even for the economic ends of others, but when they downright develop a compulsion to de-privatization? Taking the example of Facebook: the problematic aspects of the business model of Facebook lie not only in the exploitation of unpaid labor, in the identification of users for advertising clients, or in the opacity of the privacy policy and the privacy settings of Facebook.

The underexposed side of social networking is the desire to publicly communicate oneself, to render (up) one's data, to divide oneself.

This new desire for "self-division" in social media is based on the urge of virtual sociality to surface, an urgent necessity for visibility, which is connected to a new notion of privacy as deficiency. Of course, deficiency, lack, being-deprived, has always been inherent to the concept of the private sphere; in antiquity it was a lack of office, a lack of publicity, a lack of the possibility of political agency. In the sociality of contemporary social media, however, privacy becomes more of a problem because it implies invisibility, the decoupling from the lifeblood of social networks. Felix Stalder describes this new fear of – now digital – disappearance as the reverse side of the promise of authentic communication in social networks: "In order to create sociability in the space of flows people first have to make themselves visible, that is, they have to create their representation through expressive acts of communication. [...] There are both negative and positive drivers to making oneself visible in such a way: there is the threat of being invisible, ignored and bypassed, on the one hand, and the promise of creating a social network really expressing one's own individuality, on the other."[9] So rather than supposing the core of the authentic self in privacy and leaving it there, it is sought and produced in the expressive practice of confession in the social networks, in order to also ward off the danger of delivery, disjunction from the life-sustaining social networks. The fully active maintenance of the machinic connection sustains the infrastructure for the manic practice of confession, and at the same time it protects against slipping into the dark fields of activities that are not or are only barely visible and therefore dangerous or

simply not commodifiable, because they are not available for valorization.

It is no longer a small number of authority figures that are the addressees of machinic confession, those to whom one confesses in a decidedly personal relationship, but an increasingly larger, often incalculable number of "friends." However, this relationship is only rarely social in the traditional sense – if at all, sociality usually appears in the inverse form of the shitstorm or other abuses on the Internet, as an asocial sociality. Machinic confession persists in the mode of conduct between the self-identifying self and its truth in front of the opaque wall of a social confessional, Facebook. Although Foucault did not know Facebook, he described the way it works very well: "Its veracity is not guaranteed by the lofty authority of the magistery, nor by the tradition it transmits, but by the bond, the basic intimacy in discourse, between the one who speaks and what he is speaking about. On the other hand, the agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks [...], but in the one who listens and says nothing; not in the one who knows and answers, but in the one who [...] is not supposed to know."[10] The unknowing, incalculable and silent majority of "friends" dominates the scene. Their sharing, as invoked by the Facebook slogan, pledged to be as smooth as possible, "smooth sharing," consists of pressing a button, of clicking on a link, the share button. The effect of the truth discourse, however, is to be found among those who confess something or everything about themselves.

On Nietzsche's scale from compulsion through "voluntary obedience" to "instinct," the movement thus far has gone in the direction of what Nietzsche calls "instinct," which he links, first of all, with habituation, in other words naturalization and normalization, and secondly with pleasure. These two aspects are

directly coupled in Facebook's practice: the habituation to machinic appendage concatenates with the machinic desire for total sharing. "Division" functions for Facebook not – or not only – in the sense of the illicit appropriation of personal data by state or economic actors, but also in the desire of the data-producers for dividualization, in a kind of "freely obedient," "voluntary" division, self-determined self-division. Facebook is based on invoking the liberating effect of confession, on the figure of privacy as a deficiency to be avoided and on the presumption that machinic confession is not compelled, but instead implies voluntariness, desire, pleasure, and – with Nietzsche – "vanity."

Multitudes of Data. New Dividual Scales

Nietzsche's view remains, even in the critique of what is all too human, a view of the human being, most of all the individual human being. His thesis of the self-division of man in morality remains stuck – as essentially does also Foucault's ethics of confession – at the question of the compliance of individuals. Yet what social/media technologies like Facebook do cannot be explained solely with a view of human beings or individuals and their relationship to a collective, nor can it be explained with a subjugation of human or non-human individuals to machines. The machinic-dividual itself goes far beyond techno-media apparatuses and individual desires.

Nietzsche wrote: "In morality man treats himself not as individuum but as dividuum." Yet there is no "dividuum." In the strong substantive sense, "the dividuum" does not exist: as in the philological evidence, in which the Latin word occurs only rarely, and even then only as a weak, heteronomous substantive, it makes little sense to speak of "a dividual" or "dividuals." Even "in

morality," individuals cannot become dividuals, but in and through dividualization they can indeed become conforming, compliant, obedient individuals. "In morality" ever new forms of subservience, of conformity, of adaptation emerge, ever new "compliant characters," yet this subservience, insofar as it remains at the level of the individual, does not grasp the dividual.

Over a hundred years after Nietzsche, Gilles Deleuze posits the transition from the disciplinary to the control regime with a similar formulation relating to the concept of the dividual. With this he takes up the ideas of his friend Michel Foucault, with whom he was jointly responsible for the critical French edition of Nietzsche's complete works. According to Deleuze's explanations in the "Postscript on the Societies of Control," the disciplinary regime has two poles, in which it is equally interested. It masses together and individualizes, constituting the mass as a body and modularizing its members as individuals – entirely in keeping with Nietzsche's notions of morality and the self-dividing individual, entirely in keeping with Foucault's interpretation of the mode of governing of pastoral power: *omnes et singulatim*. Deleuze reformulates this equal interest of pastoral power in its two poles: the disciplinary society is marked at the individual pole by the signature, as unequivocal indication of the thereby identifiable author, and at the mass pole by the number or administrative numeration [*numéro matricule*] that identifies the position of the individual in the mass. It is this relation, by no means oppositional, but rather mutual, between "single-ones" and "one-all," which is exemplarily attributed to the compositions of German Romanticism in *A Thousand Plateaus*, in which the groupings of power are fully diversified, but only as "relations proper to the universal."[11] The romantic hero acts as a subjectified individual under the conditions of an orchestral whole.

Always *omnes*, all as one, one-all, orchestra – *et*, and – *singulatim*, single-ones, single voices, related to the one-all.

A completely different regime is that in which the mass is individuated by group individuations and cannot be reduced to the individuality of the subjects and the universality of the whole – in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari describe this completely different relation of (now no longer one-all, but rather) dividual one-crowd and single-one with musical examples from Debussy, Mussorgsky, Bartok, and Berio. Here the mass is not individuated by persons, but by affects, and to this extent the single-one is not individual and related to the universal, but rather singular. Deleuze developed the dark side of this new "dividual scale"[12] a decade after *A Thousand Plateaus* in the "Postscript on the Societies of Control" – and Nietzsche still seems to sound through Deleuze's formulation:

> "Individuals have become 'dividuals', and masses [have become] samples, data, markets, or 'banks'."[13]

That which is dividual (unlike Nietzsche, Deleuze uses the adjective dividual) and the banks, though banks are meant to a lesser extent in the traditional sense, and more so as databases: yet not only the bank as a place populated by counters, clerks and payment forms seems oddly outmoded to today's ears, when describing dividual data flows in the societies of control. Even the image of the database still contains far too much of a territorium that can be clearly situated, a storage space that is administered, arranged and ruled by human beings. The reality of today's dividual data sets, enormous accumulations of data that can be divided, recomposed and valorized in endless ways, is one of worldwide streams, of deterritorialization and of machinic expansion, most succinctly expressed as Big Data. Facebook needs the self-division

of individual users just as intelligence agencies continue to retain individual identities. Big Data, on the other hand, is less interested in individuals and just as little interested in a totalization of data, but all the more so in data sets that are freely floating and as detailed as possible, which it can dividually traverse – as an open field of immanence with a potentially endless extension. These enormous multitudes of data want to form a horizon of knowledge that governs the entire past and present and so is also able to capture the future.

The collection of data by economic and state actors, especially secret services, insurance and banking industries, has a long tradition, but it has gained a completely new quality with machine-readability and the machinic processing of the data material. This quality applies not only to credit rating agencies or intelligence agencies, but also to all areas of networked everyday life, all partial data of individual lives, about children, divorces, debts, properties, consumption habits, communication behaviors, travelling habits, internet activities, movements in real space, whereabouts, health, fitness, eating habits, calorie consumption, dental care, credit card charges, cash machine use, to name only a few. Refrigerators, ovens, thermostats, smart-guide toothbrushes, intelligent toilet bowls, networked offices, networked kitchens, networked bedrooms, networked bathrooms, networked toilet facilities – all controllable via smartphone, all accessible via cloud. This machinic data can potentially be combined, for instance for the logistics of individual thing-movements, and made accessible according to dividual logics.

In order to traverse, divide and recombine these data, cooperation is needed from those who were previously called consumers. Participation means the most comprehensible free (especially in the sense of unpaid) data exchange possible, not only sharing existing

data, but also producing new data. Data valorization plays out in the terrain of externalizing production processes and activating consumers, as it has been intensified since the 1990s in all economic areas. Crowds, multitudes, dispersed masses – their modes of existence and living are captured, stretched, appropriated and exploited beyond the realm of paid labor. Scoring, rating, ranking, profiling. Consumers who are activated and generate value with their activity do not have to be paid. The open source model of program development by the crowd has meanwhile become established as a business model and spread to all economic sectors. Free labor in free association, but to the advantage of the enterprises of the New Economy.

And instead of the added value thereby produced being invested in higher wages, the "free labor" of the freelance data brokers results in exactly the opposite consequences, namely a further devaluing and elimination of paid labor. The economy of partition and domination becomes a no less dominating economy of dividing/sharing, boosted by self-government. A sharing economy that lifts the minus of community from the Christian genealogy into contemporary machinic capitalism. Appeals to cut spending, degrowth compulsion, austerity by other means.

The economy of sharing/dividing data commodifies not only automatically accruing and occurring data, it also stimulates the production of data beyond all professional activity. This has been easy to track recently in the context of physical self-measurement and bookkeeping about body data. In my old-fashioned format of Kieser Training, this bookkeeping is still limited to an analog procedure. The machines appear as relatively plain and at least not visibly networked apparatuses for bodily fitness, which are explained as rationally as possible in both their function and effect and enable concentrated individual training without disruption.

But the machine is not only the mechanical equipment in which I harness myself, it is especially the board onto which I clamp in the table where I note my small steps of progress. Whether there is progress or regress raises the tension, the pressure, the desire. In the desire of appending to, being harnessed in the machines, it happens that I overheat. Self-division functions well here, data division not yet.

The concurrence of individuals measuring themselves on the one hand and producing dividual body data on the other remained reserved to the Quantified Self movement. Whereas the confessional techniques of self-government in social media primarily produce discursive outputs, their quantitative representations consisting mostly in the number of likes, the permanent measuring of the self is to be commodified directly and simply as the production of quantitative data. First of all, Quantified Self implies observing oneself as permanently as possible. Together with confessional literature and lifelogging, the machinic connection of physical and discursive self-techniques is probably even more relevant than that of the lineages that link the single techniques with their historical genealogies: the Quantified Self with the old growth marks on the door frame, the charts of weight measurements from the family scale, and other classical body records, lifelogging with writing log books, diaries, travel journals, and other records. Yet a further combination drives the commodification to an extreme: feeding quantitative and qualitative data into the social networks, with the speed of their feedback adding aspects of sociality and social control to the individual privacy of body data and the discursive narratives.

A further zone of the expansion of dividual data is that of search engines. What is searched is perhaps not so interesting in itself, but the accumulation of search data determines both individual and

dividual forms of data processing. Machinic search processes lead by principle to the probable, to what is dominant for the majority, to what is normalized and certainly to what is economically lucrative for the search engines. Google & Co. tailor search results individually (geographical position, language, individual search history, personal profile, etc.), but also in keeping with their commercial interests. Over time, all the individual profiles become increasingly valuable as part of Big Data. In theory, however, searching is still determined too much by humans and thus dangerously uncontrolled. This is why there is currently a massive transition to machinic industries of recommendation, which save the consumers the trouble of engaging in a relatively undetermined search process. Before users even begin to think of searching, they can count on recommendations. These recommendations are not always presented to the customers by fully automatized systems: algorithms often collaborate with humans to develop fine gradations and endless combinations of possibilities based on the previous habits not only of the individual customers, but also of their social and territorial surroundings. The results are unrequested and yet suitable individualized recommendations for books and other purchases from Amazon, travel recommendations from Air Berlin, film recommendations from Netflix, and even these specializations are increasingly dissolving.

The compliant character is receptive to machinic recommendations. Machinic control is expanding as far as it can: everything is suggested, wherever possible there are no more open, unmeasured search movements. Yet not even the boundary between the measurable and the immeasurable is stable. The measuring gauges seek to reach further and further into the immeasurable. Not only the measurable is to be measured, but also as much of the immeasurable as possible is to be shifted into the

domain of the measurable. That is the endless desire of the modulating mode of collecting data: to maintain control not only over the measured and measurable territories, but also to penetrate into uncontrolled realms not previously desired and to measure them as exactly and comprehensively as possible. White spots in real and virtual spaces, videos that have not interested anyone before, internet links that have never been clicked on.

The government of the number, the measuring gauge, the standard measure reaches its limitations, and in the regime of control the code therefore replaces the polar system of signature and number: whereas disciplinary regimes are distinguished, according to Deleuze, by the identification and counting of individual bodies and mass-bodies, the signature of the control society is the "coded 'dividual' matter to be controlled."[14] In a story by Guattari, where Deleuze does not interpret the plot as fiction, a city is imagined in which the dystopia of the gated community appears to have been overcome. The city is not divided by barriers, walls, blockades into licit and illicit zones, but is modulated by a machine that records the position of the single elements in an open milieu. Thanks to their dividual electronic cards, those who inhabit the city can leave their apartment, street, neighborhood, but – and this is the catch: "the card may also be rejected on a particular day, or between certain times of day."[15] This is not something like a technical defect, the fragility of the electronic material. There are certain hours or even only seconds, during which certain territories may be entered. That the card is invalid may be due to the individual carrying the card, whose signature does not allow certain movements. Yet perhaps the problem of validity is not even due to the identity and number of the individual, but rather to conspicuous movements of single things and multitudes, which cause the temporary closure of a territory. In this respect, the card

itself is less dividual than is the machinic assemblage, the codes of which control the openings and closings of relays, and which move through a large number of individual cards as "dividual matter to be controlled."

Ritornello 7, 1798/1853

Undulism

[: Somewhere in Leningrad, September 2014, a drunken late-summer night. Too late to get a ride with any car. Someone calls a taxi. The taxi driver speaks English. Instead of a taximeter, a complex digital display, indexes, graphics. Dancing bars, wave-like movements, display of dividual lines. He explains that he only drives a taxi on the side, accelerates to 90 km/h and winds his way, skidding a bit, through the hold-ups of the late traffic. He is primarily concerned with trading and algo-trading. The fluctuations on the display are constantly moving, and he seems to be somehow manipulating them. The fog of a twenty milliliters alcohol level blurs with the waves of the stock prices. Faster and faster, I have to throw up. Crash, rip, write-off.

The wave-like [*ondulatoire*], the continuous modulating, the constant deforming of the "human of control" repeats a rare term from Karl Rosenkranz' catalogue of ugliness. In *The Aesthetics of Ugliness* it appears at the beginning of Rosenkranz' discussion of types of formlessness, amorphy, aesthetic shapelessness, the absence of every boundary to the outside. Rosenkranz distinguishes between two different types to conceptualize *becoming as passing*, the shading of the distinction into nothing: whereas in nature the unbounded up and down of the waves can be considered beautiful,

in art the *undulistic*, wave-like is an exclusively negative symbol of nebulization, effeminacy, debility.

The undulistic is *the lassitude of delimiting, where it would be decidedly necessary; the opaqueness of the distinction where it should come clearly to the fore; the unintelligible of the expression, where it should be marked*. For Rosenkranz there seems to be a clear line of separation between the natural beauty of transience and an ugly becoming of formlessness, which he states with the terms nebulism and undulism: he charges what is nebulous and insufficiently wave-like with being washed out, fading, and unsettling. In Goethe's essay "The Collector and His Friends" from 1798 the term undulism already appeared as an indication of what is soft, weak, bending. Undulists are like those who do not want to become adults, who play in the waves, artists as well as collectors, lacking earnestness: *They were also called* Serpentine. *This serpentine and soft style manifests itself in artists as well as amateurs by a certain weakness, sleepiness, and if you will, sickly gracefulness. Such works are in demand by those who wish to find in a work of art something that is a little more than nothing at all, who never see the varied colors of a soap bubble in the air without delight. They are wanting in meaning and power, and are therefore generally acceptable, as nullity in society.*

In the age of the mole, modulation was called undulism. The snake was the animal of the societies of control, and the flowing surface of the wave in the water, on land and in air was an excellent medium for wave-riding, skating, sky-surfing. The streams of the algo-trading accelerate, hesitate, go to hell ... and recompose themselves again, disintegrating, picking up speed. :]

Algorithm, Logistics, Line

The algorithm sparks capital's old fantasies of ending its dependency on living labor at last. If no longer managers, bankers, brokers, but rather programs carry out calculations and computations and react to these kinds of calculations and computations, then it appears that humans no longer operate with programs, but rather programs with humans. It is not only that they subordinate themselves to machines, that they become part of the machine like the workers in Marx's Fragment on Machines, but that they are to be wholly swept away by the self-expanding fantasy of their screens. This is the image Stefano Harney draws in his text "Algorithmic Institutions and Logistical Capitalism"[16] of the inventive and simultaneously (suicidally) murderous effect of the algorithm. In the fantasy of logistics, things speak directly with things. Reduction of all machinic relations to thing-relationships, inversion of anthropocentrism: instead of human beings, things are essentialized.

Yet Harney also describes how, with the help of the algorithm, long before its expansion in finance, in the operations management of bodies, machines, instruments, trucks, warehouses and factories, our own hands, our own labor, our own desire allowed a world to emerge that wanted to become a world without us. Operations management is the science and practice of the relationship between variable and constant capital *in motion*, perhaps even more influential and insidious in daily life than finance. The assembly line is the starting point for all the considerations of this once marginal area of management theory. And it is the assembly line from which Harney also develops his central concept of the *line*. Workers and machines appear along "the line" by "making" the line. In this way, a more complex puzzle is composed than the perspective on machines, on workers, or even the one-sided relation of the human to the machine. What counts is the

machinic relation of humans, machines, and all the other components to the line and its motion. All these components draw the line and are drawn by it, taken into service for the continuous handling and improvement of the process, not for the sake of a static product, but for the incessant optimization of the line.

Logistics is a sub-discipline of operations management, which moves objects, moves itself with objects, moves all the way through objects. The contemporary history of logistics begins with containerization, with the expanded value chain of global markets. "Logistics, reverse logistics, user communities, and later relationship marketing, came to be seen as part of a continuous process that could be continuously improved before inputs entered the factory, while they were transformed in the factory, and after outputs left the factory."[17] Concentration on the product, its efficiency and quality, is replaced by a line running in spirals and feedback loops, and its previous linearity and directedness must be rethought: now as an endless, a-linear line, a line going in all directions, a line that collects, accumulates, assembles, no longer an assembly line but a line of assembly.

Working on/in/along the line has multiple implications. Working on the line means, first of all, a certain danger, a constant balancing act. However, there is also an allusion to the digital networking of online work. And when the fantasy of logistics increasingly regards humans as a factor to be eliminated, this does not mean that machinic capitalism functions without humans. For the human components, "the line" implies the expanded assembly line, the *fabbrica sociale*, as it has been formulated in postoperaist theory, the "social factory," which has simultaneously installed itself as the binding bond of a cooperation that has become servile. Christian Marazzi describes this development in its final stage as the all-encompassing implementation of the Google model. This pseudo-

horizontal model, which centers no longer on the product, but rather on the relationships between product and consumption, is even expanding into the non-virtual fields of industry and services. It relies – as described above – on the activation of consumers as users, even "in the hyper-material world of the automobile."[18]

Within the enterprise, the line also relates to a vertical line, primarily in the term of line managers. As Harney writes, the main function of the line managers of "algorithmic institutions" consists of operating the algorithmic metrics in a servile manner. Even if the word strategy comes up in all corners of the enterprise, it has been completely hollowed out in its meaning of managers acting strategically. Instead of proceeding strategically, as in the past, the task of management now consists of minimizing exposure to the error-proneness and slowness of human decisions. Managers literally do not know what they are doing. They try to keep the line in motion, in the end merely to execute it so as not to disrupt the algorithmic institution: "Typically such an institution has deployed algorithmic metrics to the point where line managers are entirely deskilled and can act only as enforcers and police within the institutions. They set no direction, and have no explanation for the direction the organisation takes. They are consequently and typically defensive, bullying, insecure, and reduced to mouthing phrases from the institution's leader. They appear to be micro-managing but in fact this is only the metrics possessing them and operating through them."[19] The incomprehension of everything that is to be conveyed from top to bottom goes with vertical servility, deskilling with policing postures. Meanwhile, at least in the fantasy of operations management and company leaders, the algorithms exercise self-management, successors to the Marxian automatic subject. Only one task remains for management, both old and new: line managers are mostly concerned with protecting

the algorithmic self-organization from the resistance of the workers. The compliant character is predestined to keep the entire assemblage compliant.

And finally, working on the line also literally means working on the line itself, constantly improving and expanding it, appending something to it, all the way to the point of "setting a new line." That is also the new function of the leading management, the bosses, who are not managers but leaders. Due to its complexity they can no longer command the enterprise. Setting a line now means interpreting the line, narrating it like a story. Following the line, understanding it in following and narrating it in understanding, they trace it, redraw it with each new turn, with each sudden break, with each unexpected leap. In this paradoxical logic, leading means following the line. The constant reforming and deforming of the line is the omnipresent foundation for working on it. If the line is continuously improved in every moment of the present, then its future is also to be determined. Metrics replaces measurement, the algorithm relies on a new relative, derived, derivative, metrical measurement that measures efficiency only to speculate with it. The ongoing modulation and smoothing of the measurement, the incessant recalculation needs the complex logic of the algorithm. In this way, the line becomes a speculative line: not one that primarily has the value of a commodity, a business, a corporation in view, but rather the process and the speculation with the line itself. What the line becomes is the goal of all computations.

Lastly, the line is also the abstract-dividual line that traverses many single things. It connects not only the social factory as a new assembly line, it also collects, combines the parts of diverse single things that fit together to derive added value from this new arrangement. In his book *Knowledge LTD*, Randy Martin writes

about this inversion of the classical production process: “The mass assembly line gathered all its inputs in one place to build a tightly integrated commodity that was more than the sum of its parts. Financial engineering played this process in reverse, disassembling a commodity into its constituent and variable elements and dispersing these attributes to be bundled together with the elements of other commodities of interest to a globally oriented market for risk-managed exchange. Each of these movable parts is reassembled by risk attribute so that they become worth more as derivatives than their individual commodities [...].”[20] Logistics is no longer content with economic diagrams and flows, with calculations and predictions, with representations that precede the action of the managers. As Stefano Harney and Fred Moten write in *Undercommons*, it not only wants to purify the flow of goods from human time and human error, but to live in the concrete itself, in space at once, in time at once, in form at once.[21] In this run on the concrete, mathematical calculations no longer simply calculate risks to control and minimize them, but instead play with ever greater risks. They are supposed to see into the future, produce futures, calculate probabilities based on currently achievable data. What is improbable can nevertheless occur, and then it is called a “black swan.”[22] In this respect, improbability is still within the framework of managing and exploiting risks, which now no longer apply solely to the subsistential risk of vulnerability, of precariousness, but also to derivatives or secondary risks that can arise in the collection and recombination of large masses of data, machinic-dividual risks.

At the same time, the algorithms are always on the prowl for what lies outside their territory and its im/probabilities, veritably defined by what they not yet are and what they may possibly never become. And the traders of the *Blank Swan*[23] are hounding along with

them when they create, under/write, draw up derivative contracts virtually out of nothing: whereas black and white swans are based on probabilities, the blank swan is the animal of the unknowable, what is outside the realm of every probability calculation. For the ex-trader Elie Ayache, the blank swan is the non-knowledge of the future, which has become the market. The human factor of machinic capitalism, in this perspective, consists in creating the event of drawing/writing: the work of the traders consists in writing and drawing the derivative as a *creatio ex nihilo*. The image of the preconditionless *tabula rasa* permeates their fantasies. Without prior knowledge, foresight or predictions, they transport themselves, according to Ayache, into the future.

And the relationship to the future still stands at the center. Even though it is supposed to be a future without predictions, the traders in hot pursuit of the future forget about the present. Just like the white swan and the black swan, the blank swan remains in the logic of algorithmics and logistics, always on the prowl for what it is not. "There is some/thing logistics is always after," write Harney and Moten, and in a slight shifting motion that is typical for them, they call this before, this outside of, this beyond of logistics – deviating only a little from its harried opponent, eternally algorithmically catching up: logisticality.[24]

Derivatives. Subprime-Crisis, Debt-Crisis, Financial Crisis

In the mode of patriarchal partition and of *dividuom facere*, as well as in the pastoral panorama of disciplinary power, minted money and gold rule as the standard measure. The control regime, on the other hand, refers, according to Deleuze, to floating rates of exchange, to modulations that introduce a percentage of diverse standard currencies as codes. Today betting on exchange rates, on

whether they rise or fall, implies an endless mode of dismembering and recomposing the dividual line.

The US subprime crisis of 2006 and 2007 has often been interpreted in a one-sidedly moralistic way, at least in Europe. Here the simple irresponsibility of bankers who did not check their customers closely enough, there the stupid, enticed, seduced debtors who borrowed money they would never have. Much is wrong with this image, including the general assumption of the stupidity of those affected, the false assessment of the banking business as morally conditioned, the misperception of the development of financial instruments, which occurred not only in the crisis years in a narrower sense, but at least over the last two decades. Most of all, however, the premise that the banks assumed extreme risks *en masse* without questioning or being questioned cannot be upheld after taking a closer look at the machinic operations of financialization. The group of stereotypes around the predations of "predatory capitalism" and the platitude of "predatory lending" as well as the stubborn insistence on a separation between real economy and financial economy both belong to this problem complex of the false, because purely moral, interpretation of the course of events. In contrast, with Angela Mitropoulos and her radical re-interpretation of the financial crisis as "usury from below" in *Contact and Contagion*, a decided subject status can indeed be attributed to those "affected" by the subprime-crisis: "It is too easy to assume that those who took out the loans had no sense of risk or, rather, did not strategise within the cramped conditions of what was a monetised, racialised and gendered housing regime well before the advent of subprime loans." The disorganized power of the subprime class could conversely be described as effective: "The subprime class rolled over their debts

and lived beyond their means, generating surplus in the most unproductive of ways."[25]

In a longer essay on "The Wealth of Dividuals in the Age of the Derivative," Arjun Appadurai discusses, among other things, aspects of dividualization that relate to financial politics.[26] He locates both the "rise of the dividual" and the "erosion of the individual" in the early 1970s, when the term "dividual" also appeared in anthropological literature. Especially the effects of the spread of the derivative as a central tool of finance capitalism since the 1990s produced, according to Appadurai, a predative form of dividualism ("predative dividualism" in contrast to "progressive dividualism" or "truly socialized dividualism"), which in the multiplication of its more opaque and completely unreadable processes evades every check, every regulation, every social or democratic control. As Appadurai explains the complex course of the subprime crisis: "Even a simple housing mortgage is a mysterious thing. It is an instrument of home 'ownership' in which the so-called homeowner owns only the mortgage but not the house, except at the end point of a long horizon of amortization, which is itself a somewhat mysterious mechanism. Meanwhile the lending bank is the real owner [...]. Meanwhile the cost of this peculiar form of co-ownership is borne by the mortgage owner in the form of interest, which is substantially the profit of the bank. [...] The bizarre materiality of the mortgage-backed American house is that while its visible material form is relatively fixed, bounded and indivisible, its financial form, the mortgage, has now been structured to be endlessly divisible, recombinable, saleable and leverage-able for financial speculators, in a manner that is both mysterious and toxic."[27]

This highly abstract, dividual aspect of housing was abstracted to a further stage through the introduction of a new, central

mechanism: the derivative is a financial instrument that is "derived" from the price of other commodities, which by principle speculates with the possible, future value of a commodity. With the complication of the derivative as an endlessly continuing series of derivatives of derivatives, the instrument became a machinic tool of trading with risks, of betting on risks. In this way, housing mortgages were also drawn into a huge wave of derivatives, the values of which were completely disproportionate to the real values of the homes.

Most of all, the introduction of specific derivatives, which allowed many first-time homeowners to get mortgages, was the reason for this gigantic gulf between the value of a home and a derivative. The subprime crisis got its name from the fact that many banks gave mortgages to people whose credit rating was "subprime." In her text on "The Subprime Crisis and the Gender-Specific Debt Trap," Brigitte Young describes the very gendered and racialized conditions for subprime loans, which contradict the context of their genesis in the anti-discrimination laws of the 1970s. Access to cheaper real estate loans for all strata of society was fought for as a "civil right to property" over a period of decades, but these politics envisioned as egalitarian and emancipatory also cleared the way for the gendered and racialized mechanisms that led to the crisis and the "debt trap." "What is tragic is that at the very moment when women and minorities became integrated into the financial value appreciation of the real estate market through massive private debt, it then was increasingly the lower-income groups, following the motto 'last in, first out', who lost their highly mortgaged real estate to foreclosure sales."[28]

The granting mortgages to lower-income groups can therefore be explained on the one hand from a longer genealogy of struggles for equality in relation to a right to housing, and on the other from

the fact that after 1990 the finance industries assessed at increasingly high values the potential of the housing market in the brokering of new derivative instruments. Arjun Appadurai describes how mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities made it possible to bundle greater numbers of mortgages, how their assessment became increasingly complex and their masses were also used to "launder" subprime mortgages as they were mixed with other mortgages and thus hidden. At the same time, the instrument of collateralized default obligation "allowed these bundles of mortgages to be divided into tranches or levels which had different credit ratings. What is important, though technically a shade more obscure, is how the higher value tranches were used to bury, obscure or disguise the more toxic tranches."[29] The entire architecture of derivatives made it possible to enormously expand the overall credit volumes of the credit institutes through these practices of obfuscation.

Whereas single things can stay in their place or move, the traffic of derivatives goes in all directions. This is a hypercomplex process of bundling and dividing, which is steered by equally complex combinations of technical and social machines. In comparison with the process of industrial production, one could say that, here too, various specialized procedures produce new investment goods by assembling, mounting, composing parts.[30] Yet in the financial-economic logic of derivatives there is also the reverse process: along with the composition, the process of disassembling is just as important as the complete openness and unpredictability of the product.

For the entire multi-stage process of deriving, dismembering and recomposing, Appadurai uses the metaphor of a house with beautiful view from the top floor, but with a leaky basement. What is interesting about his depiction is the fact that this leak is

produced by an instrument that disassembles many houses, rearranges their parts, and disguises all the leaky basements with the beautifying depiction of a few top floors. That is exactly the logic of dividuality as traversing dividual parts (in multiple aggregate states, here liquid and firm), instead of connecting individual wholes. The underwater mortgages became a disaster for many mortgage owners in 2006 and 2007, and as if this were not enough, the derivative as a financial instrument affected not only the domain of housing, but also nutrition, health, education, the environment and much more. The collapse of the entire US financial system could only be prevented in the first weeks of the Obama administration by huge sums of public money, which led to the debt crisis of European states, especially Greece.

In the standard interpretation of the financial crisis, the derivative is simply one technical aspect of the financial business among many, controlled by the machineoid efficiency of the market and the rational information processing of mathematical programs: only the flight of the derivative from this, its rightful place, so it is said in the standard interpretation, turned it into the instrument of a few greedy persons, into a self-replicating magical broom which the sorcerer's apprentices, the regulators, had left unattended for a moment, allowing it to lose control. But similarly to how it would be wrong to consider finance as separate from the "real world" or the "real economy," to which one would have to return in order to reestablish the moral integrity of the economy, the idea of a machine of derivatives taking on a life of its own is a sub-complex representation.

Today the finance economy is on a par with the production of goods and services and permeates all economic procedures. The automobile industry, for instance, today depends less on the technical optimization of production processes than it does, on the

one hand, on relationships to users based on activation and affects, and on the corporations' own in-house financing businesses, on the other.[31] Of course derivatives cannot be eaten or lived in, but the roundly longed-for return to real economy, re-industrialization, re-materialization is certainly not an escape route that is open as a solution to the multiple crises of the present. Disentangling real economy and finance economy has become just as impossible as the Marxist separation between industrial and ficititious profits or that between a productive and an immaterial sector. Marazzi's thesis focuses instead on financialization as one side of the more general modulation described here as machinic capitalism: "Financialization is not an unproductive and/or parasitic detour to growing shares in added value and collective reserves, but rather the form of the accumulation of capital that corresponds to the new processes of production and value creation."[32]

Arjun Appadurai interprets the success story of the derivatives as the invention of not only a new instrument of finance, but also a new form of mediation. The derivative mediates the distance between commodity and asset, which consists in the not-yet-realized potential of the commodity for future profit. "Mediated in the capitalist market, the house becomes the mortgage; further mediated, the mortgage becomes an asset, itself subject to trading as an uncertainly priced future commodity. Mediated yet again, this asset becomes part of an asset-backed security, a new derivative form, which can be further exchanged in its incarnation as a debt-obligation."[33] Appadurai's interpretation is in many respects extremely insightful, but on some aspects I think it would be good to push it beyond itself. The terminology of "predatory dividualism" is too strongly marked by the phantasy of a linear development from a pre- and extra-capitalist, non-western dividuality to a tamed capitalism of the welfare state, further to a

post-industrial predatory capitalism and finally to its vaguely suggested transformation into a "progressive dividualism." Most of all, however, Appadurai emphasizes various forms of quantification, especially in the form of monetization, as the central mode of operation in "predatory dividualism."

It is certainly the case that contemporary finance makes use of dividual forms that are produced through quantification. And yet this emphasis on quantification is not without a certain nostalgia for the person as a whole and an implicit sympathy for the sovereign individual of capitalistic modernism that only now, in the dividual crisis, is in danger of becoming just a number. But the focus on quantification considers only one side of a more general process of modulation: the modularization of all processes as counting, measuring, striating. What eludes this perspective is the other side of modulation, the constant modulating that is not only to be understood as an ancillary operation for obscuring quantification, but which results in an independent, though complementary effect: it smoothes all possible reterritorialization attempts, also those of the self-determined streaking of time and space.

What Appadurai calls mediation is not a procedure of introducing a mediating third between the differences, not the insertion and fusion of something in the middle as in *Timaios*, but rather a procedure of adjusting, aligning, unifying difference, a procedure of modulation. The mode of modulation is both: a striating, standardizing, modularizing procedure, but at the same time also permanently reforming, modulating right through the forms and striations, a constant movement of re-formation and de-formation. Modularization is striating reterritorialization and social subjugation, a clean separation and disciplining of times and spaces, the production of ever more detailed modules, the implementation

of standard measures. Modulating, on the other hand, is servile deterritorialization and machinic subservience, an inseparable, endless, unbounded modulating, an invocation to varying and smoothing the self.

Even if modularizing and modulating seem to be described as completely opposite procedures, they interlock as double modulation. Striating time and space in all directions in ever more detail, measuring smaller and smaller parts, endlessly reducing the scales, conforms with breaching measure all the way to the immeasurable valorization and smoothing of time and space. Stratifying, striating and counting all relationships, bringing every single module into form, at the same time gliding from one key into another, translating into as yet unknown languages, interlocking all possible levels.

And this is also the crossroad where the tipping point of similarity becomes relevant again as a crucial precondition for measurability. Modulating, qualitative adaptation is a possibility condition of quantifying, measuring, modularizing. Introducing measure is only possible through similarity processes of assimilation and comparison, processes of *Eineln* [unifying][34]. Similarity as approximation and assimilation is the modulating process that is necessary to establish new modes of counting, striating and modularizing in the first place. Qualitative assimilation as precondition for quantitative gradation.

At the same time, modulating assimilation does not function through the similarity of individuals. It is thus not a one-sided matter of what cultural pessimists often call leveling. There are levels that are simultaneously larger and smaller, more and less than the individual, the abstract lines traversing single things, machinically scanning them and rearranging the parts according to

their similarities: dividual lines, dividual machines. When similarity tips, modulates into the measurable, then from a possible nexus of social intercourse it can also become a principle of order. And if it has become that, then it is recognized – as Foucault writes with view to Descartes and Deleuze – by *bon sens*, because this is "the world's most effective agent" of partition: it "recognizes the similar, the exactly similar and the least similar, the greatest and the smallest, the brightest and the darkest,"[35] and its recognition is identification, conversion of similarity into identity, transformation of the potentially different into the potentially same. A new "age of comparison" dawns, but completely different from Nietzsche's depiction of it as people's "outward restlessness, their mingling together with one another, the polyphony of their endeavors" (*All Too Human*, I.1.23): much more it is an age that presses polyphony into a comparable tonality, seeking to turn the consonance of the similar into unison harmony.

The derivative is here more than a contract about the exchange of a certain amount of commodities at a certain future point in time and at a certain price. It is the instrument that, counter to the notion of a separation between financial markets and real economy, establishes the connection of all disparate economic sectors and types of capital, makes them commensurable with one another and subjects them to a common measure. As Randy Martin writes: "Yet if commodities appeared as a unit of wealth that could abstract parts into a whole, derivatives are a still more complex process by which parts are no longer unitary, but are continuously disassembled and reassembled as various attributes are bundled and their notional value exceeds the whole economy to which they may once have been summed. Shifts in scale from concrete to abstract or local to global are no longer external yardsticks of equivalence. They are internal to the circulation of the bundled attributes that

derivative transactions multiply and set in motion."[36] Dividualization of economy in every magnitude. Commensurability and comparability must be established in order to valorize the dividual exchange.

Queer Debts. Spread, Usury, Excess

> "[...] a new habit [...] is gradually implanting itself in us on the same soil and will in thousands of years' time perhaps be strong enough to bestow on mankind the power of bringing forth the wise, guiltless (conscious of innocence) man as regularly as it now brings forth – *not his antithesis but necessary preliminary* – the unwise, unjust, guilt-conscious man." (Nietzsche, *All Too Human*, 1.2.107)

Whereas the individual component recedes into the background in machinic capitalism, the patriarchal logic of partition is by no means suspended under dividual conditions. As was clearly recognizable in the subprime crisis, racialized, gendered, national and geopolitically conditioned forms of separation have become increasingly effective means for achieving hierarchical differentiation, social cleavages and radical marginalization. An extreme one-sidedness is evident in the conditions with respect to both lending practices and the foreclosures and waves of evictions since 2007 from homes whose mortgages could not be repaid. For Christian Marazzi, the potential participation of entire populations, including those who can provide no securities, is a necessary precondition to the derivative system comparable with "a sort of Ponzi scheme or an air-plane game in which those who came in last allow those who came in first to be remunerated."[37] The better asset values of the wealthy were supported by the growing

debts of the impoverished, so that mathematical risk models ultimately determined who had a roof over their head.

The derivative system and the financial and debt crises largely resulting from it have reinforced and accelerated the unequal distribution of wealth and made the world of machinic capitalism an even more insecure place for many. Driving the primacy of stock prices and dividends to the extreme, the hyperproductivist logic of financialization impels the colonization of the present. Derivatives engender a condition of exacerbated risk, of debt, of dependencies through and beyond different times and spaces. To subsistential division have been added the dividual effects of financialization, bets on risks, derivative machinations in machinic capitalism.

All of this calls for a reappropriation of the present that carries us to the other side of dividual economy. How, then, can economy be envisioned as not based on individual property, on the dis/possession of each and every individual, but as using the abstract-dividual line to compose new forms of sociality? An economy that implies forms of distribution other than dividends as claims of shareholders: a dividend beyond the realm of measures and metrics, of modularizing and modulating, of number and code, where that which is to be distributed is not well ordered by "common sense," as the "best distribution," but rather as an ever broader and wilder distribution, spread, dispersion, logisticality, proliferation of social wealth? What if Deleuze and Foucault were wrong, if similarity could be tipped again, if it were not eternally marked as betrayer of the measureless difference and as transition to measurability, but rather as the potential of a resistive form of dividuality?

In 1933, the year the National Socialists took power in Germany, Walter Benjamin wrote a short essay of not much more than five pages entitled "Doctrine of the Similar." While the title might

suggest a more extensive treatise, in its intensity and conceptual richness the text is by no means disappointing. Benjamin does not mention the political time to which the text refers, but does point to a "powerful compulsion to become similar and also to behave mimetically." In terms of developmental psychology this applies to the child that increasingly conforms to its territorial surroundings, in terms of cultural history to the compulsion to adapt in delimited communities, in terms of contemporary history to the fascist aesthetics of an instrumental and leveling similarity, which serves as transition to uniformity and totalizing enclosure. Yet despite this evidence of similarity compelling conformism, Benjamin does not reject the term, and instead contrasts the compulsion to adaptation, assimilation, compliance, which are supposed to be produced by means of similarity, with a concept of non-pliable similarity. He calls this similarity a "non-sensuous similarity" and attributes to it the ability to create "tensions" [*Verspannungen*].

In order to invent the other side of the dividual economy, this tipping of similarity from the compulsion to comply into something non-pliable is tremendously significant. There are different responses and first conceptual proposals for developing struggles over this form of similarity, over a similarity that does not serve to hand over the non-measurable to the quantitative order of equivalence. What all these proposals have in common is that they venture into a vague terrain and cannot and will not anticipate the practices of a dividual economy.

In *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, Christian Marazzi points out the productive contradictions between the rights of social property and the rights of private property. The formula 2+28 that is conventional in lending contracts, for instance, means that the mortgage interest in the first two years mirrors the use value, only to be dominated for the next twenty-eight years by the exchange

value. The practice of the first two years is an indicator of the right to housing, which is all the more brutally negated in the years that follow. "In such a way, the financial logic produces a common (goods) that it then divides and privatizes through the expulsion of the 'inhabitants of the common' by means of the artificial creation of scarcity of all kinds – scarcity of financial means, liquidity, rights, desire, and power."[38] New forms of resistance and instituent practices have crystallized against these violent consequences, such as Strike Debt in the US or the protests against evictions and occupations of buildings by the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH) in Spain.[39] Especially the right to housing and the debts of those who claim this right have resulted not only in collective resistance and aid against evictions, but also in molecular everyday practices that reverse the concept of debt. This reversal takes on various conceptual forms, in Marazzi's approach the form of "social rent": "In other words, if up until today, the access to a common good had taken the form of *private debt*, from now on it is legitimate to conceive (and reclaim it) the same right in the form of *social rent*. In financial capitalism, social rent assumes the form of redistribution, the way in which society gives everyone the right to live with dignity. As such, social rent is articulable on many terrains, particularly on that of education and access to knowledge in the form of the right to a *guaranteed education income*."[40]

Behind these demands for social rent and a reversal of debt there is also an idea of subsistential division, in which a specific form of mutual indebtedness becomes ineluctable. Debt is certainly the first means for harnessing people into the machines, for the plying of compliant characters, the earlier, the more effectively. At the same time, however, debt is also a terrain of molecular revolution.[41] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten understand debt in this sense as a

component of mutuality and sociality, counter to the asocial loan, which is the means of privatization: “It is not credit we seek nor even debt but bad debt which is to say real debt, the debt that cannot be repaid, the debt at a distance, the debt without creditor, the black debt, the queer debt, the criminal debt. Excessive debt, incalculable debt, debt for no reason, debt broken from credit, debt as its own principle.”[42] Although it may seem difficult to arrive at a paradoxically positive concept of “bad” or “queer” debt, it goes beyond the concept of social rent, which still remains – however pertinent – a demand made to the state, a demand for redistribution mediated by the state. The concept of queer debt is based on mutual indebtedness (without making use of the moral concept of debt as guilt), and at the same time it means an offensive practice of making debts, of debt excess without consideration of profits.

“Unpaid debt, very simply put, holds out the possibility of ‘living beyond one’s means’ when the means of re-/production are no longer in one’s easy reach,”[43] writes Angela Mitropoulos about the spread of debt as a potential crisis of capitalist futurity. She analyzes the surprising reappearance of the term usury in the moral discourses of the crisis since 2007 as an index of debts that are denounced as being immoderate, exorbitant and illegitimate, because their repayment is not guaranteed. Whereas potentially redeemable debt attempts to make the future a calculable version of the present, the return of the medieval sin of usury implies an incalculable, unknowable and possibly inflationary risk.[44] In her study Mitropoulos links this usury of risk with practices and narratives of contagion in the world of finance. Whereas the connectedness of financial institutions used to be considered a mutual insurance against liquidity shocks, after the financial crises of 1997 in parts of Asia and the multiple crises since 2007, it is

now conversely regarded as an epidemic danger of toxic assets and subjective risks. In narratives of "counter-" or "unnatural generation," the "absence of productivity," and the "magical accumulation of money," there is a resonance of the disruptive danger of immorality breaking into economy. Dangerous epidemics of queer debts shine even through the nervous, exaggerated and partly anti-Semitic return of the moral discourse on usury. Indeed, talk of usury is also concerned with viral sociality and contagious spreading, in short the proliferation of a "usury from below": "Usury lives in the pores of production because that is where many live, or attempt to."[45]

Mitropoulous, too, emphasizes the significance of debts being subsistential : "[...] it is for the most part the debt that might be understood in terms of the irreducible, incalculable inter-dependence of sharing a world."[46] This potentiality of mutual indebtedness, contagion and dispersion in space and time is what Randy Martin seeks not only in the transformation of debts into social rent, queer debts or usury, but also at the very center of financialization, directly as a social potential of derivatives. If derivatives bundle parts that subsist broadly dispersed from one another, then this first raises the question of why and how this specific feature of derivatives can be transferred to fields other than economics, why and to what end the incalculable, the derivative, can be conceptualized as the basis for social wealth. Martin formulates his answer in three parts: first, for conceptualizing the fragmented, dispersed, isolated as mutually connected without appearing as a unified whole – this is the burning question of the concatenation of singularities in dispersed production, with Marx's traditional image of small-holding peasants as potatoes: of a political recomposition of dispersed potatoes that now do not even end up next to one another in a sack of potatoes; second, to

articulate the value of our labor in the midst of transience, instability and volatility – at this point Martin condenses the technical composition of production as being radically in motion; third, to recognize the agency of arbitrage, the small interventions in developing, in writing the derivatives, interventions that are small but nevertheless make a significant difference, entering into a "generative risk" against the backdrop of a "generalized failure."[47]

The interior of the traditional field of economics, according to Martin, was never to be understood as the terrain of the spread and dominance of derivatives. On the contrary, Martin attempts to describe derivatives as exterior to economy, which led to the crisis of economy and economics, to a recession of their empire, with derivatives even as their gravediggers. If derivatives execute the dispossession of the self and of property, then good old possessive individualism is also put in its grave. With the crises of the last decade, the economy is increasingly coming undone, and derivatives are both the catalyst and object of this disintegration: "Derivatives issue from that breach, rendering the political inseparable from wealth creation, and disintegrating the givenness of national populations while opening other prospects for mutual association."[48] Rather than as in the traditional view, which sees derivatives as a phantasmal break of linear time and colonization of the future, these are instead lateral movements and new concatenations of spaces. The derivative sociality appears as transnational in the strong sense – beyond nationality, as a prospect of a completely different form of concatenation at the planetary level. "While derivatives are devised in a language of futures and forwards, of anticipating what is to come in the present [...], the act of bundling attributes together speaks of a lateral orientation, which is an effect of intercommensurability."[49] The abstract line of the derivative is drawn toward all sides, as a deterritorialization

of the border, as a machinic-dividual concatenation of parts that do not seem to belong together. The temporality of the social logic of the derivative is less the anticipation of the future in *futures* than it is an expanded present that spreads out in multilateral and mutual exchange in the here and now.

It is not necessary to fully embrace Randy Martin's hopeful interpretations in order to understand derivatives perhaps less as a promise of salvation than as symptoms of a change that engenders new openings – without any assurance as to whether these openings might flow into wholly new forms of dominating partition and participation, or into modes of existence in which Martin rightly recognizes the social logic of the derivatives as "an excess that is released but never fully absorbed, noise that need not be stilled, a debt registered yet impossible to repay."[50] If the many steal away from the pressures of credit, draw lines of flight in and out of the field of immanence of machinic capitalism, if queer and bad debts proliferate – why shouldn't the very dividuality of derivatives demonstrate that even in the mode of modulation, forms of subjectivation emerge that elude assimilation, conformism and compliance?

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[1] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," in: *Negotiations*, Columbia University 1997, pp.177-182, here: 180. For a current adaptation of these sequences, cf. also Tiziana Terranova, "Red stack attack! Algorithms, Capital and the Automation of the Common," EuroNomade 2014, http://www.euronomade.info/?p=2268.

[2] I share the concept of machinic capitalism and its genealogical lines (Marx's machine fragment, its post/operaist development, and especially Félix Guattari's theory of the machinic) with Matteo Pasquinelli (cf. for instance, "Machinic Capitalism and Network Surplus Value: Notes on the Political Economy of the Turing Machine": http://matteopasquinelli.com/docs/Pasquinelli_Machinic_Capitalism.pdf), but I do not want to place the concept in the context of the theoretical current of accelerationism. Mistaking the resistive affirmation of specific, indeterminate lines of flight in the field of immanence of contemporary forms of capitalism on the one hand with the naïve optimism of a generalized acceleration and overcoming of capitalism on the other is based not only on a misunderstanding in reference to the aforementioned theoretical foundations of the machinic, but also on simplifying notions of the linearity of history and the absolute deterritorialization of time. See also the critique by Franco "Bifo" Berardi: "L'accelerazionismo in questione dal punto di vista del corpo," in: Matteo Pasquinelli (Ed.), *Gli algoritmi del capitale. Accelerazionismo, macchine della conoscenza e autonomia del commune*, Verona: ombre corte 2014, 39-43.

[3] Harney/Moten, *Undercommons*, 88.

[4] Original Facebook slogan, which is still present in the German translation: http://facebook.com (http://de-de.facebook.com/).

[5] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, translated from the French by Robert Hurley, New York: Pantheon Books 1978, 60.

[6] Ibid., 44.

[7] Ibid., 45.

[8] Ibid., 60.

[9] Felix Stalder, "Autonomy and Control in the Era of Post-Privacy": http://felix.openflows.com/node/143.

[10] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, 62.

[11] Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1987, 341.

[12] Ibid., 342.

[13] Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 180 ["Les individus sont devenus des ‚dividuels', et les masses, des échantillons, des données, des marchés ou des '*banques*'."].

[14] Ibid., 182.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Stefano Harney, „Istituzioni algoritmiche e capitalismo logistico," in Matteo Pasquinelli (Ed.), *Gli algoritmi del capitale. Accelerazionismo, macchine della conoscenza e autonomia del comune*, Verona: ombre corte 2014, 116-129.

[17] Ibid., 121.

[18] Christian Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, translated from Italian by Kristina Lebedeva and Jason Francis Mc Gimsey, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2011, 56f.

[19] Harney, „Istituzioni algoritmiche e capitalismo logistico," 125f.

[20] Randy Martin, *Knowledge LTD: Toward a Social Logic of the Derivative*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press 2015, 61.

[21] Harney/Moten, *Undercommons*, 87-99.

[22] Cf. Nassim Nicolas Tayeb's concept of "white" and "black swans" (the former stands for the exact occurrence of perfect prediction, the latter for the ideal condition of the improbable) in ibid., *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, New York: Random House 2007.

[23] Cf. Elie Ayache, *The Blank Swan. The End of Probability*, Hoboken: Wiley 2010.

[24] Harney/Moten, *Undercommons*, 92f.

[25] Angela Mitropoulos, *Contact and Contagion. From Biopolitics to Oikonomia*, Wivenhoe/New York/Port Watson: Minor Compositions 2012, 216.

[26] Arjun Appadurai, "The Wealth of Dividuals in the Age of the Derivative," unpublished manuscript distributed in the context of a larger collective project on *The Wealth of Societies*. Thanks to Arjun Appadurai and Randy Martin for making the manuscript available.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Brigitte Young, "Die Subprime-Krise und die geschechtsspezifische Schuldenfalle," in: *Antworten aus der feministischen Ökonomie auf die globale Wirtschafts-und Finanzkrise*, Berlin: Ebert Stiftung 2009, 15-25, here 25.

[29] Appadurai, "The Wealth of Dividuals in the Age of the Derivative."

[30] Cf. Martha Poon (quoted in Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, 36), who describes the actors in the "course of production" of derivatives as "brokers of real estate loans, directly in contact with consumers, the intermediaries who buy wholesale and bring together credit aggregates in accordance with the specifications of financial institutions and hedge funds that, at the end of the line, provide capital, and, finally rating agencies that determine whether the composition of these asset portfolios satisfies their criteria of quality."

[31] Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, 27f. and 56.

[32] Ibid., 49.

[33] Appadurai, "The Wealth of Dividuals in the Age of the Derivative."

[34] Translator's note: the rare German word *eineln* (to unify, to make one) is related to the word *ähneln* (to be similar to), indicating the relation between unifying on the one hand and *similis*, similar and assimilation on the other.

[35] Michel Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum," translation, by Donald F. Brouchard and Sherry Simon, first published in: *Critique* 282(1970), pp. 885-908: http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpfoucault5.htm

[36] Martin, *Knowledge LTD*, 60.

[37] Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, 40.

[38] Ibid. 41f.

[39] Cf. Ada Colau / Adrià Alemany, *Mortgaged Lives (From the Housing Bubble to the Right to Housing)*, Los Angeles/Leipzig/London: Journal of Aesthetics & Protest Press 2014.

[40] Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, 95. On this see also Tiziana Terranova, "Red Stack Attack!," who proposes the term Red Stack as a program for the "invention of constituent social algorithms" and socio-technical innovation at the three levels of virtual money, social networks and bio-hypermedia.

[41] On the multiple meaning of debt, cf. Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 181: "A man is no longer a man confined, but a man in debt."; the study, building on Marx, Nietzsche, and Deleuze/Guattari, by Maurizio Lazzarato, *The Making of Indebted Man, translated from French by Joshua David Jordan,* Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2012, and Randy Martin, "Mobilizing Dance. Toward a Social Logic of the Derivative," in: Gerald Siegmund/Stefan Hölscher (Eds.), *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity*, Zurich/Berlin: diaphanes 2013, 211: "[...] the social entailments of indebtedness are the basis of political engagement."

[42] Harney/Moten, *Undercommons*, 61.

[43] Mitropoulos, *Contract and Contagion*, 228.

[44] Ibid., 209.

[45] Ibid., 216.

[46] Ibid., 229.

[47] Cf. (also for the following), Martin, *Knowledge LTD*, 52.

[48] Ibid., 78.

[49] Ibid., 76.

[50] Ibid., 75.