

On Communication by Romano Alquati (1993)

Prologue

Towards a "Counter-narrative"

I am not an expert in this cross-cutting field. So I want to situate it within the broader capitalist framework, starting from a specific context, because only in this way can we see what communication is in systemic terms, and not just in local terms, as is currently the fashion. And the 'meaning' of communication stems from the context.

We are at a crucial juncture: how do we make the transition, through communication? In line with the new trend?

The starting point is largely a reflection on the most recent defeat, which marks the beginning of this new phase; and on the fall of the Wall and of 'Real Socialism', which has its roots in Stalinism; rather than an analysis of the present and the future. Thus, we see a recurrence of the historical critique of the 'class composition' of the 1970s and of the 'mass worker's operaism' of that era. Or the critique of the 20th century as a whole, or even of the last two centuries in the world, and of the social-communism of the Labour Movement, though rather 'institutional'...; that is, already less as a workers' movement and even less as an actual movement of the working class, now a thing of the past.¹ And finally, a critique of Modernity, from which we have by no means emerged, which we have by no means 'transcended', and of the 'class' discovered as part of it. All this has much to do with the crucial issue of Communication in many respects; as indeed with that of Education, which I now consider the most important of all.

1. A Consideration

Even on this unusual occasion, anyone wishing to study the theories of the so-called 'class struggle' would note what has always been evident in the actual workings of the so-called European revolutionary left, at least throughout the 20th century: amongst other things, the enormous, overwhelming prevalence (despite

¹ By this I mean the working class as the 'mass vanguard' of the hyper-proletariat and, indeed, of the collective social-psychic worker.

its relative weakness or even — yesterday — relative strength) in these theories of the interest in and knowledge of Capital on the side that Marxists referred to (and still refer to) as ‘constant capital’—whether not strictly local, or even broadly comprehensive—and indeed of the collective Capitalist in relation to this, compared with the modest, stunted interest, study, knowledge and consideration for ‘variable capital’ itself. And all the more stunted, etc., in terms of those moments and dimensions in which ‘the class’ was no longer merely that; but showed itself to be moving into or towards dimensions of its own autonomy as a collective subject, or merely aspiring to do so; and in particular aspiring to emerge from its own condition as a class of variable capital, or, in other words, as a tendency towards human capital. Thus it came to pass that, at least in the theory and understanding of the aforementioned and presumed subjective forces that refer to the ‘class’, a great gap remained, a great void precisely with regard to the collective subject in whose name one spoke, and even now some highly jagged and fragmented fragments, as never before, continue to babble on. And this gaping hole for us, this vast chasm for us in terms of representation and knowledge—not of existence and actuality, nor of initiative and capitalist power (there do not seem to be many voids that the Big Boss, who today is quite adept at inducing desire by draining much of the meaning from present-day freedom, cannot fill in his own way: albeit with a highly significant ‘unresolved residue’ ...), does not appear to lie on the margins, on the periphery of our situation and that of these so-called ‘forces’, but rather right at the centre of their theory and often also of their more or less organised antagonism, and of our own theory and knowledge.

Moreover, there is no one today—visible, perceptible, known, or at least known to me—particularly in Europe, who is carrying out a ‘class-based’ analysis that takes the class itself into account, let alone its collective subjectivity today, and even less so any potential ‘counter-subjectivity’ of its own; and, for that matter, not even that of yesterday (although the latter is sometimes touched upon, skimmed over in more or less self-critical ex-post reconstructions). It seems there is no one willing to address this, even amongst those who still prattle on about ‘class composition’; or perhaps less than ever amongst the latter... On the other hand, the ‘Multitude’ that some are now talking about is not the working-class-actor, nor is the Hyperproletariat as a class-actor, nor are these either as intermediate collective co-agents, in whatever their current ‘composition’ may be; but if anything, they perhaps tend towards it potentially in part (in two senses) as a Class-part-subject that, first and foremost, no longer wishes to be precisely this, if it happens, but in

the meantime is precisely this. The Multitude itself, therefore, does not appear here today as the starting point, but rather as a goal that is neither easy nor particularly close: for any potential counter-forces. To put it in jargon.

Some clever clogs [be they constructivists – for whom any construction of novelty at a low level of systemic social reality will do – or, for the opposite reasons, neo-Bolsheviks – for whom subjectivity is (or is produced by) the party –] might even argue that this ignorance and, above all, this lack of interest – and hence this void at the heart of the theory, which has persisted for a very long time – is not even a bad thing: that there are reasons why it is better this way. And in some respects, I too might even agree at times. But in other respects and along certain lines, this attitude, orientation and situation explains both a fair share of the supposed recent ‘great defeat’ – if indeed there was one, for there are interesting doubts circulating about this too! – and, more significantly, the current great weakness of self-styled ‘subjective’ forces that are mysteriously ‘revolutionary’ and/or ‘crypto-revolutionary’. I am referring to people who aspire to represent, or organise, or even lead... ‘the class’. And incidentally, if we look at the production of systemic knowledge, we see that the collective Macropadrone, on various scales, for its own sake and for its needs of Command and Government (and Domination), continues to reproduce an up-to-date understanding of the class – and not merely as an ‘actor’ – and is the only one to do so, using its own categories and languages and from its own perspective. Research on (and with) Communicators, therefore; within their Context.

2. For example

So, for example—and this is merely an example, though perhaps it hints at (if not exactly ‘sheds light on’) the least worst case: in certain small Italian circles today, it is certainly interesting to speak precisely of the ‘Multitudo’ in the Negri/Spinoza sense, understanding it as an abstract concept detached from history and entirely ‘generic’ (rather than metaphysical). And whose referent is the same in the early Sumerian peasant-towns or in the Greece of the Polis, or the Roman Plebs or the serfs or the people perhaps in the ‘borghi’ of the 16th century, or perhaps, who knows, the Proletariat or Working Class of our times. That is to say, without any interest in understanding any significant differences between these historical collective agents; without the slightest idea or curiosity as to how such and such a supposed Multitude here in the world is qualitatively constituted internally at a

given historical moment. And to understand whether there is a difference today. And whether the Proletariat, or some part of it as it already stands, can become such a Multitude, which also encompasses the Big Boss, and thus already contains within it antagonism, struggle, negation. And whether the working class designates this for some. And so how, etc., and what it wants and what it does not want, and what it does and what it absolutely does not want to do; and all the more so a Neomultitude and Neo-tele-co-multitude. And all the more so a contemporary class as its possible contemporary historical determination and, by extension, a capitalist one. It seems like yet another pretext to return to the contemplation of ‘Neo-tele-constant capital’, as an orthodox Marxist would say, or Neo-tele-means-capital, as I prefer to put it. So, just as an example. At least let us start from Living-Human-Action, and no longer just from ‘Living-Labour’ (as Co-activity or as Co-agent?)!

The point here, for me, is the danger of directly transposing discourse from the heavens and eternity into our present-day, historical, capitalist world via illusory shortcuts, without properly transforming it; in which case it becomes pure ideology, highly misleading and often opportunistic. Should we allow ourselves to be carried away by the apparent—or perhaps simulated, virtual—Multitude, floating as we lie upon it? Not least because, as someone already understood and said yesterday, ‘perhaps’ our world was historically established in direct opposition to that celestial vision and precisely against it!

So, to take another example, I am already hearing people in our part of the world echoing (without even having read the relevant recent book) Toni Negri’s fine, important and timely discourse on ‘Constituent Power’. However, in these interesting local echoes, this constituent power oscillates between designating three different things, and perhaps presenting them as one and the same: the abstract synthesis of the three: first, a highly mysterious contemporary collective subject that produces constituent power and perhaps presents itself as the determination of the aforementioned and, indeed, no less mysterious, neo-modern “Multitude” itself. The New Humanity? Second, the collective action that produces it, (also) detached from the historical peculiarity of its mysterious Agent, the latter considered irrelevant and taken for granted. Third, the product of the action itself, and perhaps detached from the first two referents, perhaps as an event, and all the more so already appropriated by others, and thus having become Capital-means, in turn and for a change... (that is, as that which Negri posits

precisely against Constituent Power itself: the already constituted as Capital-means; and also outside its relationship with law and its legal and political-scientific aspect). What is usually missing, because it is not there, is an interest in understanding what this collective entity is—at least in potential terms—and what it is like today, what it wants and what it does not want, and what it mobilises itself for or could be mobilised for in its movement, and what, if anything, makes it exist as a subject, and above all its collective subjectivity, even in its peculiar interaction and interrelation with a certain subjectivity of individuals, but specifically Counter-subjectivity.² On this, pitch black! Let it be clear that I do not put myself forward, in my solitude, to fill this colossal void against the Macropadrone’s initiative to fill it, and to bring light: the counter-lights?

3. Moving forward, whilst still criticising the past

The surviving “opposition to the system” now wants to get off on the right foot, thinking it will get to the root of the matter as never before. But often its self-criticism is already misguided, mistaking the roots for something else. What those roots actually are is the problem! Just as it is already a problem to define what the working class is, what the struggle is, or what the political is, and what the “working-class worldview” is, and whether there ever was, or is, a working-class culture, and what that might be, etc. There is far less talk of the Proletariat...: ‘the class’ is, if anything, understood as the working class, and this in turn is not understood as the ‘mass vanguard’ of the Hyper-proletariat; but as the class of individual workers. Wrong! And yet there is still little talk of the latter either. And yet across a spectrum of positions, attitudes and statements that are very different, more so than yesterday. Because the few left who still think in left-wing terms in relation to the spectre of the class are fragmented, scattered across a vast spectrum of different and often opposing positions, as I was saying, as never before; in which there is, however, very little that is new, so that they give the impression of a multifaceted return, and repetition, and a cyclical compulsion to repeat. I am not a proponent of the new... But others who declare themselves in favour of the new as such, always and above all, repeat old refrains! Why is that? Is there something that returns or remains, and something else that changes? And what is the relationship between these two possible facts? The spiral...

² On the class-part as part of the Multitude, in the ‘infra-struggle’.

4. The capitalistic absorption of the new and the old, and the ‘unresolved residue’

We are certainly not beyond Modernity today; nevertheless, we seek, in the path already trodden by others, the intrinsic limits of Modernity on the one hand, and of ‘workership’ itself as a facet of it on the other, and of social communism at the intersection of the two. Very well. Thus, for example, we rediscover what the Bolsheviks knew all too well: that everything the workers do as producers inevitably becomes capital and is used by the collective capitalist to accumulate his system and dominance in the long run, unless something is established that is truly beyond capitalism, globally. Even at the level of so-called counter-cultures. And it is proclaimed that the workers’ movement has for the most part expressed the same culture and philosophy as the bourgeoisie. For the most part? We are also witnessing a certain fierce anti-workerism. But in what sense?

And yet, the younger generations are realising, for example, that transgressive products and the various countercultures are becoming mere fragmented sub-styles and sub-models, just another genre among many and yet another set of mannerisms, within the cumulative structure of uniform sociability found in fragmented subcultures based on the ‘fashion system’. We know this. Not least because it was the same yesterday and the day before, and indeed in Fordism (let us not confuse Fordism with the ‘Fordist factory’); in my view, an unfinished story... Young people – it is said unanimously – have no memory; they also need testimony.... And as I am not young, I can certainly bear witness to something.

As we were saying in the late 1950s, capitalism and the institutional labour movement itself—which is, to a greater or lesser extent, its dialectical counterpart—‘absorb’ any discourse, even that directed against them, that proves effective during their moments of crisis... thus raising for us the question of the mythical ‘unabsorbability’ of the demands themselves; so much so that some revived the strategy of refusal, which, however, in practice did not work very well in the 1970s... Those, the Big Bosses, absorb everything, and thus they feed themselves, carry on, grow, accumulate. And yet the critical intentions, the aspirations of dissent, opposition and autonomy that lie at their root, in their initial rhizomatic elaboration and first coming to light, manifesting themselves as differences and novelties, in particular, are not to be discarded, must not be discarded; and despite everything, today they are, if anything, all too scarce!

As everyone knows—though they generally choose to forget—Marx himself said: the greatest productive force of Capital (and the productive forces are always all of them) is the revolutionary working class, in its struggle. And yet one cannot help but struggle, cannot help but always start from there. So too from new ruptures and transgressions...; from moments of transient otherness and novelty. Hope? Hope is not the passive expectation of inevitable social evolution. Transgression, negation, effective and manifest opposition, explicit dissent and the irruption of the new, the different and the diverse are not the same thing. Yet they are all still equally important to us. But combined with a certain memory, above all a collective one.

The fact is that up there, at the top, in Capitalism, nothing changes; nothing ever changes; everything has remained exactly the same for centuries now! Yet down here, where we live our daily lives, everything changes drastically, constantly, radically; and we are required to be ever more adaptable to change – a skill demanded by an increasingly competitive and selective systemic society that makes it ever more difficult to keep up with its ways and pace in order to survive. But then, in the middle, there really is a spiral: there we perceive cyclical returns of things that are, on the one hand, déjà vu, and yet are also always different; they recur but are always altered. We must aim for the middle of the pyramid here! And to do so, we must equip ourselves with Resources: for example, to achieve synthesis beyond the immediate, to learn to use and critically enhance determined abstraction, to generalise appropriately, to apply theories and theoretical hypotheses to experience: to combine deduction with induction... To see hidden functions and interpret even hidden meaning. To think critically. To imagine the different and the new, always. To live with problems open to the ‘Third Level’ (or the medium range). The struggle for and against changes major things within the system: from there, one can aim for an exit beyond the critical thresholds of compatibility, strategically.

The question of the unassimilable as a question of Autonomy and of the dynamic openness to be constantly pursued, of the imposed dynamic Ambivalence, is therefore not so much a matter of content at the limits (which are, in any case, transitory and fleeting), despite the significance of their choice and selection, but of method (and not so much of techniques! The General-intellect possesses, invents and innovates techniques, by definition!) and of attitude: method and

attitude in the mobile ‘point of view’ of the class undergoing new recomposition: in the anticipatory awareness of this transience (awareness also of how the Fashion System operates within Capitalism! Which is a central matter!). Not in buffering conservation and in waiting. Not to narcissistically love everything new that we, as the “Neoco-tele-general-intellect”, invent for the Macro-Master; but to value our capacity to disrupt the balance and the newly innovated status quo by constantly re-inventing the new, at least the different, and even more so the diverse, through imagination. Even within the underlying collective antagonistic movement. As a capacity to disrupt and transform, which remains open to the future; and which can rise high!

5. Speaking of struggle

Some say: after every defeat and major upheaval, the struggle has always returned, with an ever-more-powerful offensive wave. This has largely been true up until yesterday, but it is not a given; it is not a guaranteed mechanism or a matter of fate. It happened because yesterday someone had the capacity and the subjective strength to bring it about on the new terrain; or, above all, because there were militants who set it in motion and brought it to a certain point, and then continued to exert influence. And today there will be no class recomposition unless the subjective forces are able to re-realise it on the new terrain and with new power, drawing critically on collective memory and experience. We cannot just stand by and wait for the new wave to arrive, or for it to emerge from beneath the surface (there are those who speak, with Gramsci, of a ‘passive revolution’ ...).

So be wary, then, of those who claim that the working class—conceived (wrongly and misleadingly) as pure and total subjectivity—arises entirely from struggle! In reality, the struggle is itself problematic; often the problem lies precisely in establishing what the struggle is and understanding the new forms of struggle: realising that struggles and movements exist today that did not exist yesterday, or that no longer exist, and so on; but the struggle itself is not an automatic by-product of Innovation (which the previous struggle imposed on the collective Capitalist). Even as an immediate and spontaneous response to the unliveability of life, which passes through the subjective. It takes someone, a subjective counter-force that beneath the surface rethinks and re-evaluates it, reconstitutes and reorganises it, creating singular/collective counter-subjectivity (and thus not merely Subjectivity) from another counter-subjectivity that is still open and alive;

someone and a Counter-subjectivity which then, in the struggle, transforms by encountering others, into increased Power but also into the Richness preserved there! This is the true Virus...

So, for example, I would say that it is not true that it was southern immigrants (despite everything) who were the driving force behind the period of struggles—including those of an offensive nature—waged by the ‘mass worker’ in the 1970s, which began in the late 1950s with what I have termed the ‘young forces’ in metropolitan areas: twenty years later, these same areas were again the scene – for example – of movements of the ‘metropolitan youth proletariat’; nor is it true that there was a decisive opposition between the Factory and Society. But then again, today the Factory is Society; and this misunderstanding is no longer possible! Just as there is little difference between work and non-work, so it is human action in its entirety and its capacity that must be liberated and enriched. Today, the development of a co-neo-counter-subjectivity within this potential, seeking counter-enrichment as both a counter-resource and a counter-end, will not come about automatically! Perhaps even the beginnings of a renewed wave of conflict already require the contribution of new activists – who may well include some of the old guard, and even a few veterans from the 1950s, who have transcended their former selves, having come to terms with ... In a counter-cooperative, counter-elaborative process that engages with new subjectivities, including foreign and non-EU immigrants (for whom, as for the immigrants of the late 1950s, it is not so much the rural culture of origin that fuels antagonism, but rather its partial intolerability at a certain point, and the anger and desire for something else that drives them: not what they leave behind, but what they seek and wish to find, perhaps deluding themselves considerably, in the face of what they actually encounter! And nostalgia, if anything, surfaces afterwards, if the impact and disappointment find no other outlet! ...): reproducing counter-subjectivities.

Diverse and distinct forms of counter-subjectivity, including through the aforementioned transgressions and temporary ruptures, whilst maintaining—even as we navigate them from within—this method and this attitude, which has deep historical roots. And yet counter-subjectivity too always has something that comes from afar; but not so much from previous cultures as such; rather from certain dissensions and uprisings and rebellions within those cultures, and oppositions and struggles even in the most general sense, ... if anything. And by recombining the

past's gains in autonomy and antagonism with the new that the ever-more-powerful class's productive forces produce—and thus know how to produce—especially insofar as they are collective, as the production of capital! And this is the crux of Counter-communication! But beware!: there are no new mass subjectivities that are already fully autonomous, not even in large segments! Yesterday's Variable Capital is still there, even in spectacle, in the psychedelic, in the simulated and in the virtual! And, just as yesterday and even more so than yesterday, precisely as a tendency towards Human Capital. Within us, in our inner selves, even there; there is no autonomous inner 'elsewhere' from which to start, for us megalopolitans, of the old recycled metropolis or of the farming village! But if anything, the 'Unresolved Residue' is there too, just as it is within the collective Neo-social-body! And it is only from this residue that class-recomposition can grow within hyper-proletarian ambiguity, in the struggle! But it is not 'objectively' unresolved in the sense that it is a necessary by-product of the system, a more or less central, guaranteed lump of marginality. It is not another automatic facet of the 'necessary' and 'inevitable' contradictions of and within the Capital-System, within the capitalist social system! Of the Web-of-relations and of what circulates within it, swirling and burning, at ever-increasing speed: and becomes waste, capitalist refuse, entering the growing mass of waste—the intangible, cultural, cognitive, affective... psychic and mental—among the scraps of obsolete Invisible Capital! Surpassed by Fashion!

And although I have been insisting for years on the importance of Toyotism and Total Quality, I have my doubts as to whether it really goes beyond meta-Taylorism, and as to whether, despite virtual reality or artificial intelligence, we can truly speak of a 'new mechanisation'; at least at the Third Level, the Middle Level of reality. Because I insist on the actual existence within our social system of hierarchically superimposed levels of reality. And you would be very, very wrong to ignore them!

Even if the struggle appears to be primarily 'for' something, it is always, at the same time, also 'against' something; it is antagonism, and thus also negation. However (as with, for example, Transgression, and also 'subjectivised' De-commodification), the struggle too, if subjectivised, must then be viewed decidedly 'from within', particularly in its other dimensions: we must highlight behaviours that concretely embody an 'intentionality to go beyond Capital, to go elsewhere'.

Thus, struggle too must be viewed in its constitutive dimension, as actual or imagined acts of liberation or opposition. We must define these acts of struggle. We must look within them, particularly as manifestations of counter-subjectivity and its development.

We can still see today how social processes are often reversible in their own way. How, despite everything, there is a certain reversibility: whether negative, such as that which the Macro-Master has, in many situations, implemented against us on an ad hoc basis, unexpectedly bringing us back, just when things were looking up, to certain old negative points from which we must start afresh; or whether, on the other hand, it is precisely in order to continue along the Counter-path. So reversibility in terms of regression; and in terms of progress towards certain great goals or radically preferable conditions, even those achieved for the first time. One can therefore still operate within and upon established reality in this sense, and change it, always: moving forward in truth. From the perspective of a counter-subjectivity, much can thus be overturned, or rather radically transformed, into ‘something else’. And indeed we see that people still possess a certain subjective autonomy, on the basis of which, amidst Ambiguity and Ambivalence, they review their strategies—even with abrupt shifts—modifying them, modifying themselves, and effecting changes in the context.

So is there really any point in ‘measuring value, and surplus value, quantitatively? And in purely economic terms? Is that all? For example, I say that Communication is a Commodity and of Commodities. And in the Mercy and Mercantility of Relationships, Exchanges, Interactions and in what passes through them, what moves within them, in the contents and messages, and in the human Capacity and Action in which it is dispensed and expended, etc. etc., it is a Commodity. But Commodity is not a predominantly ‘economic’ phenomenon; rather, it is something expressly conceived for the ends of others, and here of the Macro-Master, and therefore for Macro-Domination. Thus, on the one hand, Commodity is political, but on the other, it highlights different ends and different desires with respect to these. Different perspectives and desires regarding life and the quality of survival and life. So, among other things, being against Commodity and above all against the commodification of our separate Capacity and Strength, and thus of our time of survival, and against the ends opposed to our own for which they exist within the system, etc., must be expressed through concrete

behaviours and movements of de-commodification. These must open up concrete spaces of de-commodification, building concrete counter-paths that aim for and lead elsewhere, outside the mainstream of capitalist accumulation. The verification of theoretical hypotheses must, in fact, lie in the actual journey along these concrete counter-paths.

So – to take another example – for years there have been those who wish to reduce everything to Command, and believe that only this is ‘Political’; but ‘the Political’ (distinct from Politics) is a dimension of the social whole, and as a dimension of the social and its intrinsic political nature ‘at all levels of systemic social reality’, it is not merely what lies at the heart of command, extending downwards. Command is extremely important, of course, but it is not everything! In fact, the Accumulation of Dominion and Megadominion as a Megafine that overshadows everything – and I too hypothesise this – is not fuelled by Command but by what the Macropatron commands within Society! That is to say, it feeds on the Accumulation of Capital and thus on human action enhanced within the fabric of relationships in constant transformation and innovation, embedded there within as a meta-functionality to that and through that to Mega-domination. Yet it is also relatively distinct and capable of being separated from that which stands above it if taken elsewhere, radically transforming it, and thus defeating the Mega-dominant and its underlying Command. And so, then, ‘political subjectivity’ itself, though central, must be viewed within the form of society as a whole and in its context, including that of capital valorisation, today. Yet it feeds on our underlying daily movements, which still have the potential to escape Command and, moreover, even to break free from the mainstream. This is the working hypothesis of daily research, experimentation and exploration.

Thus, key issues such as communication and education must be tackled head-on through concrete action, such as the fight against commodification.

Towards a Collaborative Inquiry into Communication

Let us now consider how a specific preliminary exploratory study might be launched on this complex yet central issue. “We’re always at the prolegomena...,” Montaldi despaired. The ideal time never comes. What is postponed until the hour of reckoning? The practice of dissent? Of opposition? Of antagonism? The actual

search for genuine otherness? “If not now, when?” said Primo Levi, and it is not true that he was referring to anything other than this.

1. Co-research

First, we need to expand and redefine Research. To paraphrase what someone said a few years ago (drawing on an experience from the 1950s and 1960s): “The search for the point at which behaviors become, above all, critique, mobilization, struggle, antagonistic subjectivity, Counter-experience, and counter-organization.” Secondly, this should indeed be a Co-research: in the sense that different (and diverse) components and fragments of the same hyper-proletarian collective Co-agent converge there, cooperating, exchanging, and communicating in a unique way. Co-research in which the Agents themselves and their actions and their Co-experience are the privileged source for others: essentially for “barefoot neo-researchers,” who on the one hand are already more empowered in a certain kind of research, and on the other hand convey to others (especially militants) and into the movement of others what they discover or rediscover with them. But one in which all participants engage in research together. Although perhaps using different yet converging techniques (including unconventional sources, life stories, participant observation, in-depth interviews, focused group interviews, etc., etc.), and in which everything is discussed collectively, at various levels, etc., etc.; but within a common and unified method and, above all, attitude? We shall see. And assisted and guided by some professional researcher, in certain respects, not only technically; but critically, and experimentally. And we know very well how much communication already counts in this, and the educational implications of all this. I don’t believe there are any sensational new discoveries to be made in co-research techniques; nor in “talking-with-research.” The techniques aren’t the problem. The invention of the new doesn’t lie so much in this. To begin with.

2. Research on/with communicators in their objective context

This collaborative research by fledgling researchers – exploratory, preliminary, hypothetical and experimental – should focus primarily on Communicators, and therefore be directed immediately and first and foremost at them. And it should begin with them.

There are three distinct and differently significant aspects of systemic communication to explore, and therefore three types of Communicators to begin with:

1. The billions of widespread human communicators—that is, ordinary human co-agents (hyper-proletarians)—who, by acting, communicate; and they act within a widespread act of communication (and these are two sub-cases). Regarding this type, we have here specifically both the Teacher and the Student as “central” examples of such neo-democratic human agents, or in society more generally the neo-social/psychic worker as a diffuse neo-communicator: within their respective four “Major Domains.”
2. Professional communicators, concentrated within organizations, companies, and specialized communications firms. And here, with particular interest in the temporary or permanent absorption into these entities of professional intellectuals...: the exchange between professional intellectuals acting as communicators and communicators acting as mass intellectuals—that is, as an intellectual hyper-proletariat. But also as theft and redistribution.
3. Artisanal counter-communicators – whether real or, above all, presumed, and whether intentional – operating within micro-counter-communication organisations. And the question of their systemic absorption and of any peculiar ‘unresolved residue’ they may leave behind.

These three moments must be viewed in relation to one another and in context.

3. Three sub-nodes of Communication in Co-research

I define the social system precisely as a ‘web of relationships and exchanges between (more or less functional) activities distributed across roles assigned to human co-agents, whom I therefore regard first and foremost as the perpetual initiators, reconstructors and innovators of this web. And they find themselves engaged in systemic communication already at a level above themselves, and in relation to this they are themselves conceived as living functional mechanisms.

Because of its universal pervasiveness within our (and indeed any other) social system, communication possesses an unprecedented, unimaginable complexity. The initial exploration, which risks becoming too fragmented, can begin to coalesce here around three classic nodes that cut across the three types of

communicators just examined, and which we insist on placing, contrary to mere systemic logic, above actual communicative action (not that idealised by Habermas) and above Society itself as a Fabric, precisely in a certain antagonism, because this choice is already intentionally so: a) Communicators in Production (which is not, however, mere Artifact-making!). b) Communicators and Subjectivity. c) Communicators and antagonism. Each of these can be broken down according to the three aforementioned types (and so we would have nine sub-cases ...).

But these criteria for deciding where to start must be balanced against other, more 'subjective' factors.

The University should therefore not be viewed merely as a venue for the Seminar on Collaborative Research in Communication, but as a vital hub for all three of the aforementioned forms of communication (as well as for research and education)!

3.1 The subjectivity of the communicator

This should also provide an opportunity to launch a somewhat more focused and less sporadic or superficial reflection on 'Subjectivity' and, in particular, on 'Counter-subjectivity', starting with that of the Communicator, and more generally on the importance for the latter of some of the countless dimensions of the highly complex act of communication; within its context, which is also 'objective'. This is the most challenging and delicate sub-issue. I am particularly interested in its implications for training.

4. A study on class recomposition, in terms of its subjectivity

Thus, some insist that it is: Co-research on (and therefore within) class re-composition. The sacred icons ... But take note: not so much on the static articulation of work and communicative working time, nor on the systemic dynamics of this; but rather on the significance of this within the dynamics of action in general—which is to be enhanced and enriched—and within specialised communication, which is subjective in nature. But rather as an underwater process, in Informality and above all in Latency, of the dynamic Re-composition of antagonistic movements involving re-subjection starting from reproduced or

newly constructed Ambivalence and Ambiguity. The former is more ‘objective’, the latter more ‘subjective’.

This remains crucial even if Conricerca’s plan for a reorganisation were to fail from the outset. And even if Toyotism were not to develop and the Neo-Master were to lose the battle with himself (with his largely backward-looking faction) to launch Toyotism as a revival of ‘constituent power’ – which, by definition, lies in his hands within Capitalism... —at the heart of Factory-Society as the fuel for its accumulative engine, even within the official sphere (where Taylorism had eroded and reduced it, permitting it only in the folds of the informal, finding it again in latency and in struggle, yesterday largely due to a formative and subjective autonomy that today has ‘almost’ disappeared). And is this revival being limited out of fear of its unresolved political residue being amplified, out of fear of the new, amplified Ambivalence, all the more so since this revival requires hyper-proletarian struggle? Or is it even being prevented by an excess of passivity? For a passive revolution (anti-Toyotist)? The latter does not seem very likely. And yet even this is not mere inertia and immobility, it is not inert waiting: it would still be a counter-active passivity, in the ‘within and against’: in the sense that, in the meantime, you are inevitably inside the cage, and you cannot wait to find yourself already outside in order to act-against; but you must be against it within the conditions you have here inside, at any time and place, and Activity, exchange, rapport, relationship or situation: method/attitude.

But if this revival does indeed take place, and pushes the boundaries of its scope, we must not simply let ourselves be carried along: rather, we must liberate by subverting and fostering counter-resources—or at the very least the ambivalence of resources, particularly ‘human’ ones—to be replayed in the struggle; this is a permanent aim, for any place and time. We can assume as much! It is therefore always a time for Formation and Counter-formation, and for Communication and Counter-communication, especially in relation to the latter, which I see as the former... To form/liberate: liberation and not merely emancipation (as feminists repeated twenty years ago, hypothesising ‘liberation from existing roles’, including private and intimate ones); Exploratory co-research here.

Systemic communication is there, immensely powerful, universally pervasive. Until recently, its ‘antagonistic use’ has always been less difficult than that of other media. For those who ‘wish’ to do so, and perhaps know what for... But

what for? Well, it seems to me that the hypothesis keeps cropping up that, whilst in some respects it presents itself as an end in itself, it nevertheless almost always appears to be a function, something that ultimately serves some other purpose. Even as counter-communication? Even in the construction of new, intentionally autonomous communication? It seems so to me. At least as long as it is a medium, of course. And if, on the other hand, it is understood as a human capacity and a capacity for action, and as an action in itself, then it always depends very much on education; which is also a cross-cutting medium, but with a different relationship to us! For me, this is a fundamental hypothesis to be explored further in practice. And so only then, among other things and looking back, is it still just as counter-usable today? Or ‘at least’ in autonomy? One immediately senses that, for there to be autonomous use, autonomy must already be present within the human agent beforehand; and (almost) only in this way does communication produce autonomy. This is why I insist on the unresolved residue: including the freedom to liberate, to produce further freedom. As with Capacity: it is a Spiral. I hypothesise that the act of liberating, and of Forming, is a counter-spiral. In short, it seems to me that antagonistic use, more or less according to a plan, depends greatly on the Subjectivity of the human Agent, both singular and collective.

4.1 Subjectivity

But subjectivity, which is so central today, is another mysterious concept. What on earth is it? Over the last few centuries, various significant concepts of subjectivity have been developed; even within the social-communist sphere, and at that time in the direction of a counter-subjectivity (Luxemburg, for example ...). They can be critically re-examined, in terms of what they have in common and their differences, by historicising them; and moving beyond them. Certainly.

However, for now, I would simply begin by tentatively stating: what I mean here today by ‘Subjectivity’ for the singular human Co-agent and for the human Co-communicator—both singular and collective (it is important that this applies to both)—the combination of beliefs, desires, representations, visions, knowledge and understanding in certain respects and aspects, conceptions, etc., and also the Imaginary; and therefore also passions, and also wills, choices, etc.; and thus something that has much to do with Co-experience and also intersects with Culture and, above all, Capacity. And it has its own ‘sociality’ and also historicity, even

though it captures the potential for freedom of the Co-agent, their more or less conditioned freedom also as a potential for further liberation. Now, all this, by virtue of its turning towards antagonism, I hypothesise, becomes a condition for the becoming and the acting of the Subject; and thus produces Counter-subjectivity, not only as potentiality, but in actual acting and counter-acting. Singular and collective. I emphasise that speaking of Subjectivity does not necessarily imply ‘subjectivism’, let alone ‘Promethean’ subjectivism. I start from this crux of hypotheses. Subjectivity in its context!

4.2 Training is more important than the Communication itself

And here I immediately note and highlight the hypothesis I have already mentioned, namely that Subjectivity is closely interrelated with Formation, as I have defined and understood it. This also means that it depends heavily on Formation itself; and Counter-subjectivity on Counter-formation. Formation not only to dynamically reproduce and preserve Subjectivity in Richness, and enhanced, but also to produce new Subjectivity in new Richness, and likewise enhanced. And I see hypothetically, in the exploration, Communication and Counter-communication above all (whether existing or in invention—we are not a Force of invention...—in the new residue) within this and for this reason. And in the aforementioned Counter-spiral. Therefore, I hypothetically posit Formation as more important, central and prioritised than Communication itself. And at any time and place: in any actual condition: always. All the more so in the Class Re-composition to be explored, as I have dynamically characterised it hypothetically.

4.3 A Revolution?

Even today, some young people speak of nothing less than a ‘revolution’; unfortunately, for the most part, they still do so in an outdated and misguided way. A social science that acknowledges the intrinsic political nature of the social sphere—without reducing it to a ‘sociological’ concept in a divisive and reductive sense—can also explore the contemporary relevance of this issue: revolution.

On the one hand, to almost everyone today, nothing seems more ridiculous and/or pitiful than talking about ‘Revolution’, than invoking this myth that is as far removed from reality as it is out of touch. But on the other hand, if we ask ourselves what this more or less mythologising word actually signifies in its strictest sense, we realise that it is precisely something improper, something wrong, that has been mythologised – something of which, on numerous occasions and often even in the 1970s, a false and caricatured idea was held. And to some, it seems that this very idea should not be making a comeback right now: but unfortunately, it is largely this very idea that is circulating, and recirculating, even amongst young people, in a few minds!

And yet it is conceivable that, precisely because of the other aspects I consider more characteristic of it, the social revolution is highly topical. Let us examine them briefly, at a first, cursory and all the more unconventional glance. In fact, the ‘Revolution’, the ‘old mole’ which I hypothesise is still working methodically underground, precisely that method... , must not, first and foremost, be confused with insurrection (and has nothing to do with terrorism). Nor is it an automatic consequence of the even more automatic growth of ‘objective contradictions’. It is the acceleration, massification and radicalisation of something that today presents itself very much as the aforementioned liberation of the hyper-proletarian class—which now encompasses the vast majority of the human species—from itself and thus from Capitalism. It is not some instantaneous, more or less salvific event that suddenly resolves everything miraculously and to which everything must be deferred. And I also surmise that its accelerating spiral requires organisation and direction, to a greater or lesser extent, and involves moments of more acute and intense radicalism that must be built up perpetually and permanently, as well as (to a greater or lesser extent) a sense of purpose. However, this does accelerate, by liberating something that already exists, and it also accelerates a liberation, a singular/plural and individual/collective process (here I say ‘individual’ because I hypothesise that it involves a true individualisation of human co-agents): that which already exists and is already there. And I tentatively hypothesise that even today it is already present in a more or less strong and rich movement, and in the usual residue: the fulcrum of the transformation of processes into spirals. And it does not even correspond to the gradualist idea of definitively liberated local spaces. Not this. Between Scylla and Charybdis, then.

So it is something one does not wait for, but which must be done at every moment and in every circumstance, or it will never happen; and no one else does it but each of us... And if we conceive of it as a 'class' endeavour, to free ourselves from the class we belong to (not to reduce ourselves entirely to individual monads, but on the contrary to resocialise ourselves into a Neocommunity necessarily beyond this neo-modern society), without waiting for ideal conditions, let alone the class-based and revolutionary party that does not exist (among other things because it is only through the development of the counter-spiral that a new one can be invented).

A social and therefore political revolution (such as social democracy) is conceivable and relevant today. Indeed, in some respects, it is arguably more relevant today than it was yesterday. The Stalinist misconception has all but disappeared, even within the political parties and institutions of the West. So it is by no means a question of going to throw stones in some new Corso Traiano, not even with symbolic intent: why symbolise precisely our greatest misery and weakness, when we have moments of great strength? Once, in the early 1960s, and so already late, we said, only slightly provocatively, 'Communism as a minimum programme'; Communism, and not the real Socialism within Capital! Directing Research and Co-research beyond these two class-parties and beyond Modernity and Capitalism. And so it is all the more appropriate today, as we re-explore, to say, hypothesising: with such a dire situation, if you who speak of it do not 'make' the Revolution, if you do not aim to grow it and do not invent how to set it in motion – Force-invention, precisely... – what do you do? Do you simply activate and innovate systemic Roles as an Actor, accumulating Capital against yourself and that is all? Exploring the hypothesis that the revolution is relevant today, experimenting with it, is not a matter of optimism. Quite the contrary! I am pessimistic by nature, pessimistic even about humans. But according to a more accurate conception of revolution, this hypothesis of its relevance becomes a matter of reason. Despite my profound pessimism. And if you do not make it happen, you had better stop talking about it.

4.4 In Conclusion

To conclude this prologue, halfway between heaven and earth, and halfway up the pyramid too, I would reiterate this crux of strategic hypotheses. To liberate

subjectivity through education and to liberate education itself; and to use, innovate and transform communication first and foremost for this purpose; and then, by liberating it, to transform that web of relationships between Activity (and communication) that is this Society, effectively subsumed and constantly reconstructed by us on behalf of the Macro-Master within the great, lofty invariants of the capitalist System, whilst restoring to the forefront the singular and collective Human Agent as the actual Subject who uses Means aimed at something other than the accumulation of Capital and thus the accumulation of capitalist Domination; this is a matter of human reason. It is not even a 'utopia'. It is necessary so as not to regress further...

Let me repeat. Does the 'Toyotist' challenge, as a major innovation, for example, aim to revitalise the 'constituent power' that has long been stagnating at the heart of the enterprise, of corporate society? And does this focus on the key issues of innovative and forward-looking communication and training in creativity? Are these research hypotheses plausible? On the other hand, I do not believe for a moment that the dialectic of Capital today is merely a charade: they still need the struggle to drive innovation! Hyper-proletarian creativity must be revived even within the official capitalist organisation. Given that we are right there within it, I also hypothesise that we can strive instead to use, for example, these neo-capitalist innovative processes for our Autonomy, starting precisely from our residual Autonomy, helping to liberate and free ourselves and enrich ourselves with capabilities for our own sake, and to free ourselves collectively from being this class of human commodities subordinate to Capital-means, in whatever composition.

With this, descending from the heavens into our world, the paradoxical hypothesis, the dilemma of some open dialectic, in the crisis (a movement that neither accepts nor denies, yet opposes and goes against), which denies yet does not seek mediation or even certain syntheses, and is nonetheless constitutive, presents itself once more: there are no shortcuts!

4.5 Clarification regarding the means

Before getting to the heart of the matter, I should make one point clear. As we shall see, in my hypothetical and exploratory model I speak of 'hostile means'

insofar as they are means of capital. But precisely: insofar as they actually are! I am not speaking here of generic Means, but of specific Means, that is, strictly capitalist ones. I wish to make it clear that in this hypothesis and heuristic principle there is absolutely no ‘technological determinism’ on my part. If anything, one assumes that in actual reality, in motion outside the model intended to represent it, a capitalist determinism is at work, as an actual ‘unfinished’ (and still ‘unfinishable’ – hypothesis –) historical process of Subsumption, Reconstruction and perpetual Construction. If anything. Hence the capitalist tendency to reconstruct the Means as Means-of-Capital, now more or less realised; at times very little so. And their hostility more or less achieved as a result of this. And what this ‘more or less’ depends on, even within an official trajectory, needs to be understood much better through further research.

The Means are presented here heuristically and exploratively as ‘hostile’, but not exactly ‘from the outset’: from the outset, this hostility on the part of those who possess them is merely intentional, deliberate ... ; and it is a starting point that is continually renewed and repeated in the discovery, invention and innovation carried out by the hyper-proletarian General-intellect, due to their use by the collective Capitalist. Not because of their ‘nature’. So, no neo-Luddism on my part.

However, commodity-means are produced and even conceived to meet the needs of the capitalist buyer, at least insofar as they are means of labour and accumulation (though there are still some underlying differences when it comes to those intended for consumption). This influences them greatly and transforms them. Embryonic means, those on the verge of emerging or even newborn ones, are often highly flexible and rich in potential, and may even already have different and varied uses. But generally, their specific systemic use develops them only selectively: developing certain potentials at the expense of others. And so sometimes they are even designed that way from the outset. But the potentials for otherness remain in them, at least latent, and can be released under certain conditions by liberating them and liberating the active human Combination and ourselves. There is also a large unresolved residue in the Means, and Ambivalence. But it is not the Means alone that can bring about this ‘liberation’ today: they require a strong collective movement of the Coumani (hyperprol.) to transform their use and design itself, and the very conception and concept, in accordance with other Purposes and Macro-purposes.

This is tantamount to saying that the use-value/utility of the means of production contains, to a greater or lesser extent, other enormous potentialities that remain locked away, stunted and atrophied under capitalist utilisation. To a greater or lesser extent. What does this depend on? One consequence, however, is that there is still, at the lower levels of reality, a great deal of variability, depending on the different use-values. And that value/capital does not always condition all use-values/utilities in the same way, particularly those of the co-means in which it is represented and incorporated.

Even today, we see ‘local’ uses of autonomous and even alternative Means, under certain specific conditions, which are nevertheless of enormous interest to us. And (transitory) Counter-Means. And there are also quite a few ‘subjective’ conditions. So this does not depend solely on the individual Means and techniques in their mutual and respective differences. It also depends greatly on the quality of the hyper-proletarian User and Sub-user who is always strongly and comprehensively ‘combined’ with them. Who, in turn, is essentially Human Capital! The key point, then, is precisely this. The point is that the hyper-proletarian (meta-accumulative) User generally utilises them whilst remaining largely within the framework of capitalist utilisation itself, and shows little ability to break out of it. Thus, these Means, in their use, prove ‘hostile’, and so I, within the Official Path, place them there. And even when he transgresses, the hyper-proletarian user does not contribute much; due to his subjective limitations, he neither knows how nor is able to contribute much to taking the techniques and neotechnologies outside the Meta-technology of saving Human Activity as a source of Surplus Capital, which, by subsuming them specifically and instituting them, marks the very techniques of impoverishing humans and of ‘hostility’ in the historical reversal (see below).

However, just as transgression and the breaking of the stranglehold must be re-evaluated in moments of autonomy, so too must any current, different and all the more autonomous (even if only potentially so) use of the Means (as well as of human Capacities themselves) be re-evaluated, any inventive and creative moment of alternative use which, amongst other things, reveals and demonstrates the very wealth of means blocked and contained by Capitalism in order to subsume and construct them as representatives of itself; and to understand and develop the conditions for this. This implies, however, that the liberation of the active-whole-entire Combination and the enrichment of humans is also a condition

for the enrichment of the Means. And sometimes, and even now, the reverse is also true. And this requires a great deal of counter-formation of humans, but also counter-formation of the Means themselves! The point of re-counter-departure, then, as I was saying, is not so much the ‘capitalist use’—often reductive and always ‘political’ from that point of view—but rather misuse and hyper-proletarian usability. But to emerge from the hyper-proletarian condition collectively, and thus use that is equally ‘political’, intrinsically...: from this counter-point of view. Let us therefore explore this here. It is worth re-reading this ‘prologue’ after finishing the following text.