

Back to Work: Review of David Graeber's *Bullshit Jobs*

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Somewhere towards the middle of his 1000-page long *Natural Science*—a compendium of natural history composed during the philosopher's late career in the 1770s—Immanuel Kant recounts an anecdote told in the American South about the monkey species known as baboons. Under the header of “The Monkey Family”—sub-divided between “Those Without Tails,” “Those With Short Tails,” and “Long-Tailed Monkeys,” to which baboons belong—Kant informs readers that baboons “have a head like a dog and can walk very quickly on two legs,” while they tend to “steal from the fields and gardens” and usually “catch shells with their tails or place a stone inside the opened shell.”¹ Although “very well-behaved” and “candid,” they are also “very obstinate and very delicate,” so intensely, “that if transported to Europe, most of them die on the way, no matter how carefully they are wrapped individually in cotton.”² Then Kant notes: “Americans all believe that these monkeys could talk if they wanted to, but they do not do so in order not to be forced to work.”³

It is difficult to find a more evocative anecdote of modernity's two-pronged relationship to work than the story here offered by Kant. In his folk tale, labor is both the beginning of exploitation and the kick-off of history, the traumatic birth of human freedom. There are good reasons for this. As James Livingston notes, “modern subjectivity” rests on these two “deferred desires—work and language,” here transferred onto an “external” world of inanimate objects” which were “denominated as elements of nature and/or pieces of property.”⁴ Together with the medium of language, work is our prime instrument for humanization; through it humans not only humanize their environment but also *humanize themselves*. Early Marxists were well aware of this connection: as Friedrich Engels claimed in his 1876 book *The Part played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man*, only by labor and language had the human hand acquired “the high degree of perfection required to conjure into being the pictures of a Raphael, the statues of a Thorwaldsen, the music of a Paganini.”⁵

It also comes as no surprise that Kant's anecdote figures in the most popular recent book on the topic of work—David Graeber's *Bullshit Jobs* (2017). At the opening of its fifth chapter, Graeber inserts a short epigraph by the seventeenth-century philosopher Antoine Le Grand, who offers a similar anecdote to Kant's in one of his notebooks from 1657.⁶ “How vain the opinion is of some certain people of the East Indies,” Le Grand notes, “who think that apes and baboons, which are with them in great numbers, are imbued with understanding, and that they can speak but will not, for fear they should be employed and set to work.”⁷

The citation—sensitively different from Kant’s—is a fitting opener to Graeber’s pamphlet. *Bullshit Jobs* is bent on debunking the contemporary cult of work and kick over the idols of our work-craved society, a world in which man is nothing and work is everything. There is no sense denying the timeliness of his message. Hailed as “clever and charismatic” (*The New Yorker*), “brilliant” (Rebecca Solnit), and a masterful at “opening up thought and stimulating debate” (*Slate*), Graeber’s book has not missed its appointment with history, with outlets like *The Guardian*, the *Financial Times* and even *Bloomberg* proclaiming its “epic” topicality. All of this seems conspicuously well-timed. *Bullshit Jobs* appears in a time when the West’s work ethic is in a protracted crisis and automation panics are a cyclical occurrence. In December 2018, Jeff Bezos threatened to replace his entire workplace with robots, while Uber prophesied the advent of their automatic army of cars.⁸ In the United Kingdom, a new New Left has rallied under the banner of a “fully automated gay space communism” while the US now has a candidate campaigning on a universal basic income (Andrew Yang).⁹ Set against this scene, *Bullshit Jobs* can indeed be read as a transforming mirror—an attempt to hold up a portrait of a world in which everyone hates their jobs but has nothing but their jobs.

Bullshit Jobs moves around a quadruple axis. Each chapter (there are four of them) starts with a catch epigraph and then treats a separate question: what are bullshit jobs, how did they come about, why do we not revolt against them, and how might we go about revolting against them now. All of this is done in a casual and at times discomfitingly confessional style. *Bullshit Jobs* often reads like an elongated diary entry, a letter to friends (an “office portrait,” as Jason Smith put it¹⁰) or, perhaps less kindly, a transcribed TED-talk. Critiques of Graeber’s book are well-rehearsed by now. The anthropologist has been accused of sloppy handling of data, a parochial outlook on industrial relations, and a manufacturing of his evidence. Instead of doing sociological hard-science, Graeber prefers to capture a mood, incarnate a *Zeitgeist*. This has led to some messy results, double-binds even. Sociologists F. H. Pitts and Paul Thompson, for instance, have claimed that the statistics wielded by Graeber with sway self-confidence hardly speak in favor of his thesis that most people experience their work as “senseless.”¹¹ Rather than a sense of “bullshit jobs,” people suffer from an excess of “bullshit in jobs” and dislike the power won by employers after thirty years of sustained neoliberalism.

One question remains unanswered, however. Books can be wrong but still provide an exemplary incarnation of a certain historical phase. What explains the cultural magnetism of Graeber’s vision? Why the near-universal acclaim? His book has been featured in numerous journals, essays and has inspired numerous spin-offs (the Dutch junk intellectual Rutger Bregman, for instance, has built an entire media empire on derivations off Graeber’s themes¹²). Clearly more is at stake here.

Perhaps this attraction can only be understood by reading *Bullshit Jobs* as part of a wider career span, or the product of a specific “mood.” Graeber started studying in the 1970s and began graduate work under Marshall Sahlins in the late 1980s, undertaking his anthropological fieldwork in Madagascar.¹³ This was when the long boom was coming to an end and the world economy neared its creeping collapse. Sahlins had then already

achieved notoriety by his claim—compatible with the passivity encouraged by the new consumerism—that peasants had only worked a fraction of their lives and rarely expended any labor power.¹⁴ It was only with the general productive frenzy of the industrial nineteenth century, in turn, when work hours shot through the roof and European man undertook their biggest physiological effort in the history of humanity, when “work” become the Western hemisphere’s central value.

Countercultural anthropologists campaigned vigorously against this vision. Graeber himself speaks of his sojourns to Madagascar, where a social universe stubbornly resisting the imposition of a Western work discipline offered rich ethnological materials for writers interested in networks of gift-giving. Again, there was an intimate connection to the island’s anti-statism. Pierre Bourdieu once typified the 1970s as an “anti-institutional”¹⁵ decade, but much the same can be said of the years in which Graeber had his formation as an anthropologist. These were the years of Pierre Clastres, James C. Scott and Marshall Sahlins (“it seems to me,” Scott recently claimed in 2015, “that part of Hayek’s argument about the impossibility of coordination of millions of individual exchanges by a kind of central hierarchical command is well taken”¹⁶). All shared an unruly interest for pre-capitalist societies, who functioned as a contrast to the miserable capitalist present. They also shared a distinct skepticism towards state initiative. Pierre Clastres’ 1974 *Society Against the State*, for instance, the ascription of “labor” to man’s as a central activity coincided perfectly with the violent introduction of the state into primitive society.

“Two axioms,” Clastres claimed, “had guided western civilization from its very dawn.” The first postulated “that the real society takes place in the protecting shadow of the state.” The second stated “a categorical imperative: one must work.” Pre-state societies, by contrast, saw “no necessity to labor” and “worked on a pure subsistence basis.” Clastres thus regarded savage idleness as an antidote to the “production of desire” and “endless work...characteristic of the modern economy.”¹⁷ It was only when the state was founded, after all, that it became “possible to speak of labor.”¹⁸ As with Kant’s baboons, “exploitation” and “history” are simple synonyms.

André Gorz is a second point of inspiration for Graeber. As Gorz claimed it in the 1990s, the “crisis of measurability”¹⁹ inherent to late Fordist regime meant that labor itself had become impossible to standardize and all activities could now conceivably count as “work.” Workers outside of stable contracts spend their entire lives perfecting CVs and reskilling capacities, or reframing every inch of human activity as enhanced human capital. They thereby rendered the very notion of “socially necessary labor time” a pitiful anachronism. Since it was no longer possible to satisfyingly measure labor performance, a permanent grant would provide the only natural response to a measurability crisis, completing the neoliberal dissolution of the waged worker. This was three years after Gorz proclaimed that “as a system, socialism was dead,” together with its “philosophy of work and history.”²⁰ If the left still “stood for the emancipation of the workers,” he claimed, this would turn them into the spokespersons for “those 15 percent who still define themselves chiefly by their work.”²¹

Like Gorz, Graeber is a self-proclaimed spokesman for the 85%. He tries to translate the majority's hidden horror of work into an act of public acclamation. A double rejection of both state and labor also lies at the root of Graeber's book: since the birth of the state and labor are coterminous, attacking labor implies attacking the state and attacking the state implies attacking labor. *Bullshit Jobs* is littered with numerous anecdotes and testimonies Graeber received after launching his initial essay. These range from people at work in the FIRE sectors to the denizens of the new precariat, who all testify to the increasing meaninglessness of the contemporary workplace. The anecdotes are harrowing indeed, from people moving chairs around all day to absurd injunctions not to produce work that might imperil a firm's bureaucratic homeostasis. What shines through is the ugly pointlessness of so much work, an activity so superfluous to reproduction that its very existence seems torturous. Work is nothing but a ritual performed to capital, a rain dance to the global Mammon.

There is a pervasive sense throughout the book, however, that Graeber has no real explanation as to *why* his 'bullshit jobs' exist in the first place. Nor does he really tell us why they persist. How did they survive the aggressive automation of the 1950s and 1960s? If Sahlinites talked about the "beach under the cobblestones" in 1968, why haven't we got there yet? At its most emphatic, *Bullshit Jobs* simply paints a conspiracy imposed from above, a corporate plot—an attempt to halt the inevitable elimination of labor occurring in the cybernetic age by recreating a "cult of work" that tied a stigma to worklessness.

There is no need to deny the existence of this stigma. "Workerism" has been a talking point on the Right for years now, after the left gave up on the producer somewhere between 1968 and the fall of the Berlin Wall. As with so much ideology-critique, however, the question remains exactly whose *interests* are served by this stigma. The reason "work" persists is not simply a product of cultural deformation, or our addiction to the work ethic. Graeber neatly shoves aside that *anno* 2019, humanity inhabits an almost fully proletarianized planet. Nearly 60% of the world is currently employed in the wage relations with a large portion of the remaining 40% in partial or complete market-dependency. Given the freeing up of capital mobility in the 1980s and 1990s, the persistence of the work ethic is less a grandiose conspiracy than it is the cultural mirror image of a dispossessed humanity, desperately trying to find buyers for its last product—labor power.

There is a cruel irony to this total proletarianization. As Julien Coupat and his Invisible Committee already noted in 2011, in an epoch when capitalism has eliminated all other social markers except for work (or flattened them into an "identity" readily slotted into the spreadsheet of a marketing department), opportunities for work itself are increasingly become scarcer.²² People have little left to define themselves except work. But work itself is disappearing, rapidly so, with an informal surplus humanity stranded in our planet's megacities. The fact of dependence on a small reservoir of jobs—both quantitative and qualitative—can only be experienced as traumatic.

But traumas require interpretation, not exorcism. There is always a moment of rationality in the attachment people have to the most wayward of practices. People's dependence on work is not simply a sign of false consciousness, or the result of elite manipulation. As with so many things in capitalism, it is rather the indication of a real contradiction that requires working through, not public refusals. Graeber's understanding of the workerist problem is ham-fisted. On one side, he misrecognizes the element of "necessity" in labor today and how the persistence of the "work ethic" is not solely a symptom of cultural lag. Secondly, he also misrecognizes the reality of *freedom* within labor, obscuring the reason as to why so many people have clung to it as a means for social identification. This means he turns the capitalist question on its head, seeing problems arising out of necessity as nothing but failures of will, and seeing the possibilities arising out of freedom as nothing but a desperate illusion.

Graeber gets painfully close to this realization at some points in the book. In chapter 4, for instance, he wonders whether "the ability to perform acts of make-believe, which under ordinary circumstances might be considered the highest and most distinctly human form of action" is perhaps "turned against itself through work."²³ One page later, he offers a discussion of work of German psychologist Karl Groos, whose 1910 research on infant emotions led to the exploration of one of the most elementary dimensions of human freedom, the "pleasure at being the cause."²⁴ As Graeber notes, "infants express[ed] extraordinary happiness when they first figure[d] out they can cause predictable effects in the world, pretty much regardless of what that effect is or whether it could be construed as having any benefit to them."²⁵ For Graeber, the secret of human freedom lies enclosed in this anecdote.

After touching on this cornerstone, however, Graeber immediately rules out "labor" from its register. The desire for causality, the promise of the fetish, can only find its rightful place in free time—the time of the walk in the park and the Sunday mass. The passage is reminiscent of American anthropologists interviewing South-African youngsters in the country's slum towns on their desired job prospects. When asked whether they would prefer the monthly handout of a basic income or a stable job, a majority went for the latter. Anthropologists were perplexed at this answer. This mainly since this nostalgia for Fordism is inexplicable from a cultural perspective. Black South Africans might have lived in one of the most industrialized countries on their continent, but black workers rarely experienced the decasualization of the labor market that their white counterpart underwent in the 1960s. They thus seem to suffer from a "post-Fordist affect,"²⁶ crippled with a nostalgia for a past that never existed. The post-war order with its male wage earners and compliant housewives continues to haunt our subconscious.

But perhaps the paradox is not much of a paradox at all. And perhaps the social scientists—like Clastres, Scott and Graeber himself—suffer from their own form of anomie. The interviewees realized far more clearly that labor is much more than a simple source of social identity; in fact, it is our addiction to an identitarian register that makes it *impossible* to see what really attracts so many people in it. Instead, it is the promise of agency, the lure of control, the "pleasure at being the cause" that even the basest bullshit

job offers, however formalistic its inscription into the wage relation. As with Kant's tale, the start of labor contains both a moment of unfreedom (they will have to work for a boss) *and* freedom (they will be able to participate in production, contribute to general human efforts, organize, unionize, maybe even strike and thereby disrupt global commodity chains). In short, labor offers a vista at taking part in history, however much of a nightmare that history is. Clearly, the relationship between freedom and necessity in labor is more complex. To put it differently: what is desired is "complex freedom," as Polanyi called it, not bullshit freedom.²⁷

But it is precisely the nightmare of history from which Graeber is trying to wake us up. It is no surprise that *Bullshit Jobs* ends his book with a double call: a recourse to Foucault's notion of micropolitics and a plea for a universal basic income. Together these would inform practices of local resistance à la Temporary Autonomous Zones. Foucault's distinction between 'power' and 'domination', Graeber claims, allows for a form of social interaction that is not based on the vertical, top-down forms of coercion we see in administrative hierarchies.

Even here, however, some pressing questions remain. Suppose, for instance, that Graeber's society has completely freed itself from the market motive. Humans no longer have to sell their labor-power to survive. Still in that situation, one might wonder whether it is possible, let alone *desirable*, to imagine that all activity can be carried out with pure spontaneity, with machines doing all the dirty work. The disgust with which academic post-workerists look at the automation of their own profession, for instance—exemplified in the rise of "online courses" and YouTube tutorials—doesn't simply betray a technophobic nostalgia. It also gets at the fact that there are jobs which we prefer not to be carried out by machines because they *require* a degree of character formation and personality which machines simply don't possess—however spectacularly they might perform on their Turing Tests. Even in this world beyond the market economy, key tasks will still be subject to societal demands. Many of those tasks will have to be decreed. And whether the radical anthropologist likes it or not, even this post-capitalist society would have to find a mechanism to impose orders on the population to carry out "socially necessary" labor (childrearing, education, sanitation). In doing so, it would inject an inevitable degree of heteronomy into our social labor.

This need not necessarily pose a problem for Marxists. Although socialism might insist that some work has to be done (a process we witness each and every day in capitalism, often in brutal fashion), it would have to do this through accountable procedures, open to participation and responsive to needs. Some form of coercion would be required for this task. As Karl Polanyi already noted in 1922, the belief that administrative apparatuses might "wither" away in socialism obscured the fact that "power...and coercion are inevitable in any complex society," while no society was manageable "in which power and compulsion are absent, nor a world in which force has no function."²⁸ *Bullshit Jobs* practices a particular kind of problematic regress which, in the end, implies an inevitable end to pure, unmediated activity.

Marxists should be earnest about this. What is sought is a coercion that is highly abstract—not based in the personal power of a boss or a king—but also not *arbitrary*, with workers' organizations predicated on the fact that they exist through processes of deliberation. As noted by William Clare Roberts, since there cannot be “noncoercive common decisions that avoid both markets and the impossible demand of consensus,” decision-making will always demand “some recourse to either markets or coercive force”²⁹—something Marx himself duly acknowledged. This also holds for work. As Polanyi notes, it is not degrading “to work under orders,” since “any collective work requires it coordination through orders.”³⁰ What *is* degrading is the “fact that under the given conditions the power to command, to which the workers are subjected, is an alien power.”³¹ If we reject Graeber's false-consciousness view of work, we would have to think seriously about what human need work arises in response to.

Without doubt, this hints at one of the weakest spots in Graeber's post-work vision. Thoroughly conditioned by the age of neoliberal atomism (a “capsular civilization,”³² as the Belgian philosopher Lieven De Cauter once called it) he has come to accept a hyper-individualist notion of needs. This is in many ways compatible with the “consumer sovereignty” trumpeted by neoliberals, who see the consumer as the prime mover of the economy. There is a policy legacy to this as well. As the left-wing writer Alan Barry noted in 1992, Thatcherism was correct in its dichotomy between “freedom and coercion” and rightly recognised the “intrinsically coercive character of the welfare state” and its “form of social control.”³³ Since previous forms of welfare always implied telling the poor what to consume and what to produce, post-workists prefer to shed such prescriptive thinking altogether. This anti-normative impulse explains Graeber's penchant for one of the most contested social measures of our age—the so-called “basic income” (BI). Again, this is an older reflex on the New Left. As early as 1979, Michel Foucault could characterize Milton Friedman's proposal for a Negative Income Tax (a cousin of the UBI) as a “less disciplinary and authoritarian”³⁴ form of welfare. As Foucault noted, with such a guarantee it would be “up to people to work if they want or not work if they don't,” including “the possibility of not forcing them to work if there is no interest in doing so.”³⁵ This could assist the Left in moving welfare from a “disciplinarian” to a “libertarian” model, following Friedman's lead.

Graeber is a disciple of Foucault. Both like the UBI because it makes possible a mode of organization that is non-bureaucratic and requiring of little coercion, while not doing away with the agonism of the human character. Instead of an intricate web of entitlements and social rights (more so in Europe than in the United States, where neoliberalism had less of a welfare state to destroy), this permanent grant could allow people an exit option and give them the chance, as Graeber puts it, “to say ‘orange’ to their boss.” These acts of resistance would then heighten into an exodus strategy seemingly borrowed from the likes of Hardt and Negri and other insurrectionist writers. Instead of staying stuck in the heteronomous spheres of production and consumption, people could flee into a “third” sphere of gift-giving and “multi-activity”: playing guitar by the river and taking their kids to the park, or, psychotropic adventuring. That there are

hardly any rivers left or that the park is more of a mall is conveniently suppressed. The third sphere might be squeezed out and nearly non-existent, but one must imagine it to be real.

This tactic does not confront the market head-on. It displaces the struggle over production to the construction of a parallel social sphere in which desire can be uncoupled from the profit motive. What we get in Graeber, however, is a premature post-capitalism, in which the aggressive automation of the post-war period is seen as a cue for humanity's jump from the sphere of necessity to that of freedom. Cybernetics, computers and dreams of full automation all figure prominently in this story, as they do in most of post-war visions. Little politics is involved. Some campaigns for a raised consciousness, with a healthy degree of PR. Maybe we can do a YouTube video.

"Full automation" has been a hotbed for the reactionary mind for centuries. In the 1790s, the French philosopher Emmanuel Sieyès imagined the creation of a class of docile laborers through the interbreeding of African detainees and jungle apes. This would culminate in a "new race of anthropomorphic monkeys" that could "dispose of blacks as auxiliary instruments of production."³⁶ The idea here was to halt Kant's transfer from primate to talking animal by creating a fusion that would not wage the jump into history. "However extraordinary, however immoral," Sieyès thought, the idea of a hybrid slave-race was the only way "to reconcile the directors of works with the simple instruments of labor."³⁷ Since the laboring classes were incapable of agency (mainly due to their servile status) and could only be democrats when integrated into the *Herrenvolk*, one simply had to transfer their activity to a caste of sub-biological hirelings. Underlying this was the idea of the essential incompatibility of work and self-government, or freedom *tout court*. Behind the hatred for labor stood a hatred of collective agency, a contempt for a democracy reconciled with complexity.

Graeber suffers from a similar affliction. Instead of seeing automation panics as cyclical acts of class discipline—"we can replace you at any moment!"—*Bullshit Jobs* trades in easy technological determinism and depoliticizes matters of machine ownership. An incapacity to deal with the full ramifications of the work ethic is visible in his rejection of full employment schemes. Even *if* full employment is impossible—which can reasonably be doubted—it is nonetheless the *right* demand, mainly since capitalism would not be able provide it. This would be a highly productive contradiction, revealing capitalism's absurdist nature. UBI, however, can be provided; just not in the left's favored modality. Rather, the completely horizontal labor market created by the basic income would augment the impersonal pressures experienced by the dispossessed and make it even more impossible to experience "the pleasure at being the cause."

That is because *Bullshit Jobs* is one long exercise in evasion—an attempt to go "beyond" capitalism without actually going through it. Graeber prefers the muteness and aphasia of the animal over the interdependence of the speaking subject. Yet as Marx, Engels and contemporaries already recognized, Kant's ape *has* to begin to speak and assume his role as a member of coercive communities if history is to ever start. This makes possible

commands, orders, compulsion. It contains the view, as Adorno once put it, of a “history running from the slingshot to the atom bomb”³⁸ —the most perverse piece of abstract labor ever to see the face of the earth. It could also remind us of Stanley Kubrick’s man in an ape-suit smashing a dried-out carcass with a bone in the opening sequences of *A Space Odyssey* (1967), the repressed birth-scene of civilization. But it also makes possible dynamism, complexity, coordination, opens up the freedoms enclosed in history. Faced with a mountain of bullshit, Graeber’s response is to turn around and run away. History, however, decrees us to go through.

Notes

1. Immanuel Kant, *Natural Science*, ed. Eric Watkins, trans. Lewis White Beck, Jeffrey B. Edwards, Olaf Reinhardt, Martin Schönfeld, and Eric Watkins (London: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 593.[↑]

2. Ibid.[↑]

3. Ibid.[↑]

4. James Livingston, *Pragmatism, Feminism, and Democracy: Rethinking the Politics of American History* (London: Routledge, 2013): 88.[↑]

6. David Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2019), 193.[↑]

7. Ibid.[↑]

10. Jason Smith, “Jobs, Bullshit, and the Bureaucratization of the World,” *Brooklyn Rail* (July-August 2018), available online at <https://brooklynrail.org/2018/07/field-notes/Jobs-Bullshit-and-the-Bureaucratization-of-the-World>.[↑]

11. Frederick Harry Pitts and Paul Thompson, “Bullshit About Jobs,” *Work in Progress* (July 31, 2018). Available online at <http://www.wipsociology.org/2018/07/31/bullshit-about-jobs/>.[↑]

12. See Rutger Bregman, *Utopia for Realists: How We Can Build the Ideal* (New York: Little & Brown, 2017); Annie Lowrey, *Give People Money* (New York: Crown, 2018).[↑]

13. Recounted in David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).[↑]

14. Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: de Gruyter, 1972).[↑]

15. Cited in Michael Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Agent Provocateur* (London: A&C Black, 2004), 171.[↑]

16. See Nils Gilman and Nicolas Guilhot, “Transforming the Nature of the Struggle: An Interview with James C. Scott,” in *Humanity* 5 (Spring 2013): 115.[↑]

17. Samuel Moyn, “Of Savagery and Civil Society: Pierre Clastres and the Transformation of French Political Thought,” in *Modern Intellectual History* 1 (2004): 66.[↑]

18. Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 193.[↑]

19. See André Gorz, *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology* (London: Verso Books, 1994), vii.[↑]

20. Ibid., vii-viii.[↑]

21. Ibid.[↑]

22. The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection* (New York: Semiotexte, 2019). “Therein lies the present paradox: work has triumphed over all the other ways of existing, at the same time as workers have become superfluous. The gains made in productivity, relocation, mechanization, automation, and the digitization of production

have gone so far that they have reduced the amount of living labor necessary for the creation of each commodity to almost nothing. We're living out the paradox of a society full of workers with no work, where distractions, consumption, and leisure are only ever just a further indictment of the insufficiency" (ibid., 15).[↑]

^{23.} Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs*, 83.[↑]

^{24.} Ibid.[↑]

^{25.} Ibid.[↑]

^{26.} Andrea Muehlebach and Nitzan Shoshan, "Post-Fordist Affect," *Anthropological Quarterly* 85 (2012): 317.[↑]

^{27.} John Holmwood, "Three Pillars of Welfare State Theory: T.H. Marshall, Karl Polanyi and Alva Myrdal in Defence of the National Welfare State," *European Journal of Social Theory* 3 (February 2000): 29.[↑]

^{28.} Cited in Gareth Dale and Maria Markantonatou, "The State," *Exploring the Thought of Karl Polanyi* (New York: Agenda, 2019), 53-54.[↑]

^{31.} Ibid.[↑]

^{34.} Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*, ed. Michel Snellart, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave, 2008), 115.; Michael C. Behrent, "Accidents Happen: François Ewald, the 'Antirevolutionary' Foucault, and the Intellectual Politics of the French Welfare State," in *The Journal of Modern History* 82 (September 2010): 587; Michael Behrent, "Can the Critique of Capitalism be Anti-Humanist?," in *History and Theory* 54 (October 2015): 399.[↑]

^{36.} Cited in Domenico Losurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History* (London: Verso Books, 2014), 114. It should come as no surprise that the author most renowned for reviving Sieyès' idea was Frederick Taylor, whose principles of economic management were rightly described by Gramsci as meant for a "trained gorilla." "Not only does the worker think," Gramsci notes, "but the fact that he gets no immediate satisfaction from his work and realises that they are trying to reduce him to a trained gorilla, can lead him into a train of thought that is far from conformist." See Antonio Gramsci, "Taylorism and the Mechanization of the Worker," in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smit (London: Elecbook, 1999), 139.[↑]

^{37.} Losurdo, *Liberalism*, 114.[↑]

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