



Of mice and man*

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review of

Raunig, G. (2013) *Factories of knowledge, industries of creativity*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Aim of the book

‘What can strike mean for the creative workers, and industrialists, whose punch clocks know no on and off, but only countless versions of on?’ (142). The essay *Factories of knowledge, industries of creativity* by Gerald Raunig deals with the Occupy movement and today’s forms of existence and production. According to Raunig, the Occupy movement is a temporary ‘reterritorialization’, as a form of resistance in a ‘deterritorialized society’ (13).

Factories of knowledge and industries of creativity are modes of a ‘radically dispersed production’ (17) which stand for the deterritorialization of society. These forms of deterritorialization can evoke new forms of resistance, as demonstrated by the micro-political practices carried out in the context of the Occupy movement, in order to reterritorialize space. However, for Raunig, deterritorialization and reterritorialization are not contradictory, but fluid concepts that go hand in hand. Labor unions and strikes in our traditional understanding are not suitable for the amalgam of life and work of creative and knowledge workers and their practices of resistance. With regard to this,

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resistance cannot be directed against existing forms of discipline, but needs to entail a changed mode of subjectivication. In the author's words:

If we want to understand today's modes of existence and forms of knowledge production not simply as emerging from the sequence of discipline and control we must assert a complex and modulating amalgam of social subjugation and machinic subservience but also draw up possibilities of new modes of subjectivication and forms of resistance especially taking into consideration the changing complexity of this amalgam. (50)

Raunig elaborates on modes of existence and new practices of resistance in our society. Significant actions of the Occupy movement are according to him: long horizontal discussions, ad hoc sessions, tents, self-organized lectures, common meals, permanent presence in public buildings and other micro-political actions. As perceived by representatives of the traditional and established media, these rather disjointed micro-political actions make no sense. This is why the movement received a lot of negative attention and misunderstanding in the media. Additionally, the occupiers seem to refuse to express any kind of political action or program. However, Raunig has set himself the challenging task to investigate new forms of resistance in our society and the logic behind Occupy. He therefore focuses on providing an understanding of our modes of existence and the forms of resistance against them (159).

Structure of the book

The book is comprised of two parts, discussing different areas of knowledge production and industrial creativity. The first part deals with 'factories of knowledge' while the second part focuses on 'industries of creativity'. Raunig intends to show that knowledge production and cultural work are sites of new forms of subjugation and self-government (Foucault, 1993: 203-204), that combine the modulating forces of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

Both parts of the book start with and refer to Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk, a tale by Kafka (1993). The tale serves to introduce the reader to the terms of deterritorialization and reterritorialization (13). The Mouse Folk is characterized by dispersion and constant movement, as aspects of deterritorialization. This deterritorialization characterizes our current society, the life of creative and knowledge workers, as well as their dispersed forms of production. Josephine's singing, her singularity, leads the mice to assemble, as a form of reterritorialization. According to Raunig, Josephine is one of many, a singularity that can only emerge in the 'multitude' (9) (see Hardt and Negri, 2000). Her singing produces the collective desire for reterritorialization (10). This reterritorialization is only a form of temporary occupation and thus cannot be

dismissed with disciplinary forms of condensation, as known from the factory of industrialization. Reterritorialization and deterritorialization characterize our current social order in the fields of universities as knowledge factories and industries of creativity, as well as related forms of resistance.

In the second chapter of the first part, Raunig introduces the university as the new site of knowledge fabrication. He reflects on similarities to the old factory, but points to a new 'authoritative regime', calling for a changed vocabulary to be perceived appropriately (22). The third chapter deals with examples of the 'modulating university'. Following Raunig, 'the mode of modulation is both a striating, standardizing, modularizing process and at the same time a permanent movement of remodelling, modulating, re-forming and de-forming the self' (29). Raunig provides a compelling list of issues of the current modulating academic/university system (31). In chapter four, he disapproves the discursive critique on this system (e.g. drawing by Gerhard Seyfried on the cover of a university-critical book, see Wagner, 1977). In his view, the critique resembles the old fordist production regime and is therefore not sufficient to understand the current problems of knowledge workers (41). Chapter five includes a digression to Michel Foucault and his work 'courage of truth' (Foucault, 2011) that deals with the Greek model 'parrhesia', the chance to speak freely. This model serves as an example to discuss the mode of knowledge production. Knowledge, from this perspective, is not embodied, stable and fixed but gets constructed in the movement of the inquirer to those who are guided by the inquirer. The task of both groups, the inquirer and those who are guided, is to engage in 'self-care' (59). This understanding of knowledge production supports Raunig's overall argument and provides an understanding of knowledge that is not to be conceived as static. In chapter six, he applies this understanding to articulate a fundamental critique against the authoritative 'truth tellers' and expert systems that have become prevalent in our time and culture (67). Chapter seven is the last chapter of part one and points to examples of resistance against existing authoritative regimes of knowledge factories and aims to reveal their underlying mechanisms (see e.g. the occupation of lecture halls as a form of student protest in Vienna October 2009) (70).

In the second part, Raunig shows that industries are more than the sum of their factories. Concentrating on this assumption, this second part mirrors the structure of the first one where Raunig has provided an understanding of the knowledge factory in which the production process entails a new sociotechnical order. In the old industry, reterritorialization was enabled by a relation of time through a prior relation of space (discipline) (94). In contrast, the 'creative industries' consist of micro-enterprises formed by self-employed cultural entrepreneurs. The creative industries do not assemble and allocate the workers

at one place, nor do they engage in time allocation. However, due to their project-based work and market oriented character, they gather access to the total time of the worker (104). In chapter three, Raunig points to the entrepreneur as the role model of these industries and the problems this brings about (105). Chapter four deals with the industrial turn that reflects the evolution of the creative industries (121). In chapter five, Raunig presents the development of an artistic project in Northern Italy that turned from a site of the creative industries into a political art project (125). Chapter six is used by the author to reflect upon possible forms of resistance against the established regime of the creative industries. He insists that new and appropriate forms of interruption have to be found in a recurring process (147). Just like the first part of the book, this last chapter points to the Occupy movement as a mode of resistance calling for a fundamental transformation of society.

Raunig provides reasons why the Occupy movement cannot be understood by employing current approaches in political theories and methods. A new vocabulary and a qualitative understanding of the complex constellations and interactions in our society seem to be necessary in order to grasp the existing social and sociotechnical order and the forms of resistances it evokes.

Factories of knowledge: ‘The complex and modulating amalgam of social subjugation and machinic subservience’

According to Raunig, the university is the new factory (24). However, it is a factory of knowledge production that does not work like the old ‘industrial factory’ but has given way to a new sociotechnical order. It does not only produce knowledge, but a social relationship that comprises an authoritative regime and aspects of subservient self-government as well as resistive modes of subjectivation (26). Raunig is interested in the interactions of this new constellation or ‘assemblage’. To the author, the factory is not just neoliberal or authoritative, nor does the university as a knowledge factory inhabit the same mode of social subjugation and machinic subservience like the disciplinary regime of the old ‘industrial factory’ (see Foucault, 1994; Deleuze, 1990).

In order to support this argument, Raunig lists some problematic issues of the knowledge factory which he assumes to be prevalent in many universities and cultural contexts. Instances include: an increased assessment of nearly all aspects of research and teaching; a disciplinary regime that resembles the schooling system; a strange conflation of enforced bureaucratization and entrepreneurship; the fetish for excellence; the demand for external funding; the precarious life situation of researchers (especially non-professional teaching staff without

permanent position); the elimination of study programmes without market value; the power of private accreditation agencies; a state that does not withdraw but expects universities to act economically, etc. (see also Parker and Jary, 1995; Willmott, 1995). These aspects, in parts or in sum, are likely to be experienced by almost every student and employee in academia, and are used by Raunig to point to the dispersed mode of knowledge production in the university.

The university, as a knowledge factory, still supports disciplining practices, but these are regularly linked to practices of self-government that also produce 'late-modern subjectivities' (26). Raunig implicitly draws on the work of Michel Foucault (1993) who linked 'techniques of domination' and 'techniques of the self' in the concept of governmentality. Considering these techniques of government, Raunig insists that it would be short-sighted to perceive the university only as an authoritative regime that aims to dominate students and teachers. It is therefore important to recognize that it is not only the university that 'drills' the students. The students are also supporters of the modulating system of the university (Foucault, 1993). This insight is a crucial aspect for Raunig. As he writes: 'The world modulates us and we modulate the world around us' (105). These processes, by which the self is constructed or modified by itself (Foucault, 1993: 203-204), lead to a certain way of thinking about the university and related forms of resistance. From this point of view, resistance cannot only criticize authoritative and dominating systems but needs to focus on new forms of self-government. For Raunig, a possibility to resist the regime of the modulating university would be not to behave only reactively to an existing authoritative regime, but also to become productive in terms of new practices and self-relations so that new forms of knowledge production can emerge.

Resistance and new modes of subjectivation in the knowledge factory

Micro-politics and disobedient forms of knowledge production, within and outside of the university, are part of a new form of resistance that Raunig calls desertion (27). Resistance, as desertion, is an instituent practice which aims to form a new sociotechnical order by establishing micro-political actions that reterritorialize space (27). According to Raunig, the Occupy movement is such a new form of resistance. It is an act of reterritorialization that took place in many European universities (e.g. in 2009/2010 in Vienna). The slogan 'Demand nothing, Occupy everything' is illustrative for a non-normative movement that avoids presenting new political programs including proposals for major reforms. Occupy also avoids forms of classical leadership and membership and thus the representation of groups by single actors.

Because of this unassertive behaviour, traditional media have described and subsequently criticised the occupiers as not having any plan or goals. By this, traditional media demonstrated a lack of understanding for these forms of resistance. Occupy consciously undermined the mass media logic, e.g. by rotating press speakers and the de-personalization of statements. People were only speaking *from* the movement, but not *for* the movement. They were speaking as one of the many (73). The enacting of 'non-representational practices' was a mode of reterritorialization (70), of gently striating or streaking space (14), in order to reclaim public space. In contrast to traditional media, social media helped to create independence by acting as a communication channel and dispersing information which expanded the movement beyond the territory of the university. Interesting questions arise from the Occupy movement and the usage of new media. Instead of asking 'who speaks?', the focus is on the permanent movement of discussions. Not asking for the speaker is crucial for practices emerging from new media. The Occupy movement is only a temporary assemblage around a singing Josephine, a reterritorialization that should not be dismissed as a movement back to traditional forms of disciplinary organization. The Occupy movement may rather be understood as a movement that wants to invent new ways of living, eventually leading to a new social order in the long run.

Industries of creativity: The modularized society

Both the knowledge factory and industries of creativity entail a new sociotechnical order that often lacks an understanding of the underlying relationships. According to Raunig, the factory of knowledge is not only an assembly of machines and the industry of creativity is also not only an assembly of factories. Both form an assemblage that includes a complex and modulating combination of social subjugation and machinic subservience and certain forms of resistance against this 'modulating amalgam'.

There is no orderly arrangement, no linearity, no fixed time regime or lasting territory that denotes the creative industries (91). That is the reason why Raunig proposes that instead of thinking in terms of entities, scale and quantities, we might be far better off considering factories and industries in terms of socialities, social relations and the complex exchange between bodies and things.

The cultural industries of the early 20th century, unlike the creative industries today, followed the paradigm of serialization and standardization (96). In contrast, our current post-fordist working environment has resulted in creative industries that are marked by outsourcing creative workers, contracting creative

work and thus creating insecurity and precariousness for this group of workers. Only the core management functions of large corporations provide stable working arrangements, while all others are increasingly becoming part-time and limited contract workers.

Whereas the fordist factory focused on producing reliable and efficient working subjects, the creative industries highlight the figure of the self-employed ‘cultural entrepreneur’ (94). The context of the entrepreneur is often set in micro-enterprises as well as temporary and ephemeral work, contrary to the work within huge and long-term corporations. The entrepreneurial life-world is denoted by a drivenness and subservient deterritorialization that provides access to the total time of individuals, combined with an endless valorisation of the creative work force. From these developments, a precarious ‘creative class’ (Florida, 2004) emerges, that seems to support and desire a post-fordist lifestyle. As Raunig states, ‘we are cogs in an increasingly modularized society, and at the same time we modulate ourselves and the world’ (105). Raunig mentions certain characteristics of the new creative class such as their independence, low incomes and the precariousness of their work. Creatives tend to lose state support, and instead of adequate insurance policies, politicians invest money in the ‘construction’ of creative industries. Another tendency is the rising power of consultants who actively model and propagate the creative world they can ‘capitalize on’.

Most of the aspects of Raunig’s analysis of creative workers are not new. Several authors have already pointed to the origin and the characteristics of the creative industries and discussed the creative as a role model for the contemporary flexible and self-responsible worker (e.g. Boltanski and Chiapello, 2006; Loacker, 2010; Richter, 2014). However, the strength of Raunig’s approach lies in connecting these diagnoses with forms of resistance. He is interested in the relationship between current social changes and their related forms of resistance.

Resistance and ‘industriousness’ in the creative industry

In chapter four Raunig begins by asking what is new about the creative industries: ‘What can it mean when the apparently different and contrary terms of creativity and industry conjoin?’ (111). He provides three complementary explanations that shed light on the term of creative industry.

The first explanation for the increased conjoining of creativity and industry is the establishment of the realm of the creative industries by political programmes across Europe. Since the 1990s, public funding is directed more and more

towards economic aspects. For example, Tony Blair's politics was intended to promote creativity as affirmative of and not critical towards the economy and state apparatus (113). Second, a more sociological explanation is provided by Raunig, pointing to the 'democratization of culture' which dates back to the 1970s. This movement resulted into an obligation for everyone to be creative in our time and culture. Third, Raunig mentions the modes of subjectivation in the fields of cultural and creative industries. He points to a conflation of 'self-active subservience and externally determined subjugation through a totalizing system' (118) that marks the cultural and creative industries. The 'creative imperative' is thus not only the effect of servility, but also of a desire of the creative.

However, Raunig also indicates another meaning of the term *industrious* that does not follow the economization of time (121). The English word 'industrious' points to another kind of industry 'as an inventive reappropriation of time, as a wild and no longer servile industriousness allowing smooth and striated times to newly emerge in the flows of reterritorialization and deterritorialization' (122). Raunig underlines the aspects of *busyness* and wild *industriousness* that are just emerging and that are opposed to a servile form of industrialization.

He illustrates these observations by retracing the history of the factories in Northern Italy (Isola). He points to Isola as an example of an artistic project that originally started as a site of the creative industries, but turned into an *industrious* project, in a non-servile form of *industriousness*. Until the middle of the 20th century, Isola was a meso-industrial area at the edge of Milan with large factories (123). One of those, Stecca, was built in 1908 and later sold to Siemens. Around 1970, a de-industrialization of the former industrial complexes took place and, in the sequel, provided space for alternative modes of organizing and living. Space was reappropriated by so called counter-cultural initiatives (124). These initiatives preferred the spatial possibilities of old industrial houses for enacting and presenting their artistic work. A soft gentrification took place, as more and more artists joined the old industrial monuments, establishing new working and living practices (130). Pushed by political and economic interests, Isola soon turned into a site of the creative industries, followed by bourgeois art lovers, who raised the rent index and caused a retreat of former working class and migrant families. Around 2005, the idea of turning Stecca into an 'incubator of creativity' was born by politicians and economic actors. One of the factory's most important qualities was the limitation to temporary use, which led to only short-term involvements by artists (133). Due to these short-term engagements, no critical attitude evolved that could have interfered with political or economic interests. However, around 2001, some artists started their own project called 'Isola Art Project' (134). This project was focused more on everyday problems of

the residents and not merely on the monumental site of the old industrial places. Instead, artists started initiating a dialogue with residents. Through this act, an art centre supported by the residents was established. Stecca became a symbol for the invention of a different industry of creativity: an industrious project (135). The emphasis was on the diverse interests of craftspeople, residents and artists (134). For Raunig, this project entails a new meaning of the word industry. This 'industriousness' involves micro-political actions that are depicted by the author as a possibility of reappropriating time in the flows of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

Raunig explores several examples of artistic and creative resistance similar to these developments in Northern Italy. For him, forms of resistance must carry out both movements: the movement of deterritorialization and the movement of reterritorialization. Applying old forms of resistance as reterritorializing responses, like national unions or class strikes, are not perceived as adequate reactions and may also easily be counteracted. New, more appropriate forms of interventions must be found, again and again, in order to destabilize the given 'time regimes'. As aforementioned, the modulating amalgam of the creative industries promotes access to the total time of individuals. This time regime cannot be resisted by only acting against an existing order. By inventing micro-political activities instead, individuals engage in establishing new practices and self-relations.

Raunig provides further examples of this kind of resistance. He mentions demonstrations in the context of the Arab Spring, social forums and the Occupy movement in Greece, Spain and Israel as parts of the new activism of the 21st century. Such a form of resistance is characterized by three attributes: (a) the search for new forms of living and, (b) new organizational forms, and (c) the insistence on re-appropriating time. Following Raunig, activists who practice such forms of resistance adhere to the goal of giving life a new form, thereby calling for fundamental transformations towards non-subservient and non-conformist modes of living. They also call for organizational forms that are non-representationist, non-hierarchical and radically inclusive by non-overstating power and avoiding individual or collective privileges. These modes of organizing are not homogeneous but form an industrious re-appropriation of time and attempt to reclaim public spaces as common spaces. Even if these movements only last for a short time period, they intend to disrupt the existing social order through changed modes of interaction, living and self-relating.

Following Raunig, examples of these micro-political actions include so-called long horizontal discussions, ad hoc interaction sessions in public spaces and buildings, or the sleeping in tents. These activities point to the possibility of

changing our modes of living, or in Raunig's words, 'to breach the time of subserviant deterritorialization' (50). Activists seemingly aim to resist the given time regime which promotes access to the total time of the individual. However, it is worth asking what effect these ephemeral and temporary events can have in changing the 'modulating amalgam of social subjugation and machinic subservience' (50).

According to Raunig, with the Occupy movement has emerged a force to be reckoned with. This force will ensure that its time will not be stolen. However, how can these forms of resistance change our society and fundamental aspects of it, e.g. the tendency of universities to become knowledge factories or the strange conflation of industry and creativity? Have these movements already changed our way of thinking about resistance and the solution of social problems? What impact will they have in the long run? What are the alternatives if we still have not understood how this 'modulating amalgam of subjugation and subservience' works? Deleuze (1990) pointed to this problem.

Deleuze underlined our task to find out which function and purpose we, as creative workers, are meant to serve within a given sociotechnical order. The focus is on practicing and trying, rather than on forging out plans. In fact, after reading Raunig, it is clear he does not believe the solution for resistance lies in formulating purposes and political agendas. Instead, Raunig points to a new and yet to be developed understanding of factories of knowledge, industries of creativity and related forms of resistance. His work is an invitation to think and discuss these new forms. In our opinion this is the most interesting aspect of his book, although there is no answer in regards to the long-term effects of Occupy.

Critical discussion and evaluation

The reader who wonders about the exact purpose and central message of the Occupy movement, might not be happy after having read *Factories of knowledge, industries of creativity* by Raunig. The reader who expects clear answers, terms, theoretical models, linear descriptions or even quotations will probably be even less happy. Raunig's intention is not to give answers to given questions and established structures of thought and action. His work raises questions, which is a strength of his piecemeal style. For example, he asks questions about the university system, the term creative industries and possible forms of resistance. He thereby provides a detailed analysis of contemporary sociotechnical arrangements.

Although it is not easy to capture every detail, reading the text feels like following Raunig into new and uncharted territory, despite the fact others have tried to research, measure, statistically explore and quantify the problem of political resistance in our society. However, Raunig does not seem to be interested in contributing to these explorations. His argument makes clear that we might have to change our way of thinking, our methods and methodology in order to understand current societal changes and forms of resistance they trigger and enable.

We are used to ask: What is the purpose of this? What is the main question? What is the problem? We forget that expressing a problem is an act of making things graspable, often in order to treat them like things we already know. This is not what Raunig proposes. He suggests observing and acting on processes that are still in the making, not known and that will probably never be known. These processes would be misunderstood by giving prompt answers and formulating problems and clear explanations. Reading the book is a worthwhile undertaking because it gives us an impression of what this kind of 'thinking in processes' could look like. It is Raunig's specific way to guide us to understand situations 'in flow' our everyday life entails that makes this book very insightful and illuminating.

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