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Surplus and Residual of the Network Society: From *Glamorama* to FIGHT CLUB

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Perhaps the cinema is able to capture the movement of madness, precisely because it is not analytical and regressive, but explores a global field of coexistence.¹

In order to create soap, the yardstick of civilization, you must first render fat. And the best fat for making soap, because the salt balance is just right, comes from human bodies.²

David Fincher's film FIGHT CLUB (1999) and Bret Easton Ellis' novel *Glamorama* (1999) both deal with life at the end of the second millenium in which capitalism and media culture are determinant. In both works the main characters end up quite mad. At the end of FIGHT CLUB, 'Jack' and Tyler (Edward Norton and Brad Pitt) appear to be one single person: Tyler is Jack's schizophrenic double.³ At the end of Brett Easton Ellis' *Glamorama*, the main character Victor Ward thinks he is victim of a conspiracy. He is constantly filmed, even in places he has not been and with people he does not know, until he becomes completely paranoid. One could see these denouements as rather forced narrative twists, especially in the case of FIGHT CLUB (in fact, many people were disappointed with this ending). However, as Deleuze and Guattari have argued in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, schizophrenia and paranoia are the two dynamic poles of 'madness' in capitalism.⁴ Inspired by FIGHT CLUB and *Glamorama*, I will explore the relevance of Deleuze and Guattari's views on capitalism and its madneses for contemporary culture and society. Because their views largely have been written and received in the spirit of May '68, it is necessary to confront *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* with some of the major changes that have taken place over the last three decades.⁵ It is necessary to determine which concepts from the Deleuzo-guattarian toolbox are useful and in what way they can function in a productive way. Therefore, I will relate some of the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari on capitalism (the notions of surplus and residual) and schizophre-

nia (as opposed to paranoia) to Manuel Castells' massive study on the information age and what he calls the 'network society'. According to Castells, one of the biggest alterations in the network society is the increased importance of media culture. Audiovisual culture seems to have gone way beyond its (secondary) representative status. In his article 'Capital/Cinema' Jonathan Beller even goes as far as to argue that cinema is to our period what capital was to Marx.⁶ So, the central issue that I will address on the following pages is the problem of the status of the audiovisual image in contemporary society in relation to capitalism.⁷

The network society in THE NET

Manuel Castells' *The Information Age* is widely recognized as one of the most extensive and valuable studies of society at the end of the second millennium.⁸ In the first volume of his study, Castells elaborates on the rise of the network society. Let me first briefly recall a few concepts that characterize this network society. First of all, Castells emphasizes the idea of networks as the new organizational logic of the informational economy and society at large. As he states, networks have become the fundamental stuff of which new organizations are and will be made. Information technology plays a major role in all these networks: 'The network enterprise makes material the culture of informational/global economy: it transforms signals into commodities by processing knowledge.'⁹ Keywords in these new organizational forms are global connectedness and local consistency. A further characteristic is that the logic of the network is more powerful than the powers in the network. Networks are fundamentally open structures that can grow in unpredictable ways.¹⁰

According to Castells, our highly technologically mediated network society has transformed our understanding of space and time. Instead of the traditional static conception of space as a 'space of place', we now experience space more as a process, a 'space of flows'.¹¹ While places are time-bounded, flows induce what Castells calls 'timeless time'. Timeless time is related to the selectivity of layers of time through informational networks and audiovisual media, which makes what we can live and relive instant and eternal presence instead of linear clock time. Furthermore, Castells relates this concept to time-space compression and the incredible speed of economical transactions ('the global casino'), to flextime work and to biological rhythms and life cycle changes through medical technology.¹² Spaces of flows and timeless time are characteristics of the informational networks that form

contemporary society. The fundamental open structure of the network can cause dramatic reorganizations of power relationships, Castells argues: the power of flows takes precedence over the flows of power. Power holders are also relocated. In informational networks 'switches connecting the networks are multiple, the interoperating codes and switches between networks (...) are the privileged instruments of power. Thus, the switchers are the power holders. Since networks are multiple, the interoperating codes and switches between networks become the fundamental source in shaping, guiding, and misguiding societies.'¹³

If we consider cinema in a traditional way as a representation of what happens in real life, a very clear and clarifying example of these aspects of the network society can be seen in the film *THE NET* (Irwin Winkler, 1995). In this film, Sandra Bullock plays Angela Bennett, a young woman who works from her Los Angeles home as a computer virus-searcher for an IT company in San Francisco. During a holiday in Mexico, her purse (with her passport, credit cards and other personal belongings) is stolen, and she barely survives an attack on her life. When she recovers and goes back to her hotel, the receptionist tells her that according to the computer she has just checked out: there is no Angela Bennett in the hotel anymore. At the airport she finds out her social security number now matches with the name Ruth Marx. When she returns home, her house is for sale, and all her furniture has been moved out. In the police files Ruth Marx appears to be wanted for prostitution and drugs. Having no means to prove her identity, Angela has no other option than to go on the run and try to find out how the net operates against her.

It is easy to recognize in the plot of the film some aspects of Castells' network society. Although Angela Bennett still moves physically between different places, Mexico and the United States, which takes a certain amount of time, in the computer network, space and time have become flows and instants. She works in LA for a company in San Francisco that she has never actually visited, except through flows of information. Then she finds out she is not where she is supposed to be (she checked out of the hotel; her house has been sold). She is not even who she is supposed to be: her whole identity is erased or at least switched in no time. This is caused by a man who works for a criminal organization. He is a switcher, an example of Castells' power holder, who takes care of the informational misguidings that literally can delete one's whole identity. The organization this man works for produces an anti-virus program, *The Gatekeeper*. The organization deliberately messes up computer systems at airports and stock exchanges, in order to present themselves as the only safeguards of extremely valuable information and to force companies and organisations to buy their program. Be-

cause Angela has been sent information that can uncover The Gatekeeper's true intentions, economic reasons are behind Angela Bennett's erasure.

One could say of course that this is a Kafkaesque scenario that is not just related to the informational network society, but Castells' notions of timeless time and the power of flows (instead of slow bureaucratic flows of power) make this film an expression, in images and sounds, of the flipside of the network society. Another way of relating the space-time and power structures of the network society to this film is by looking at an important Deleuzian concept which I see at work here.

From discipline to control societies

In an interview with Antonio Negri in 1990, Deleuze speaks elaborately about the concept of *control societies*.¹⁴ Here many of Castells' sociological ideas find their correspondence in political and philosophical terms. First of all, Deleuze (like Castells) emphasizes the role of capitalism, and the only universal thing there is in capitalism, that is, the market, 'the extraordinary generator of both wealth and misery'.¹⁵ He then proposes an immanent analysis of capital in which he follows Marx: capitalism is an immanent system that constantly overcomes its own limits.

When he speaks of control societies, Deleuze draws on Foucault, who analysed disciplinary societies associated with the eighteenth, nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Disciplinary societies operate by organizing major sites of confinement: family, school, military barracks, factory, the hospital from time to time and sometimes prison. The guiding principle is to bring everything together and to give each thing its place and organize time. In short, the aim is to discipline society. According to Deleuze, disciplined societies have two poles: signatures standing for the individual and numbers or places in a register standing for their position in a mass. Money in a disciplinary society is related to moulded currencies containing gold as a numerical standard.

But societies and the way power is structured are changeable. And we have clearly moved into a new type of society which Deleuze labels as a control society, where the confined spaces of the disciplinary society break down (or open). School, for instance, becomes continuing education; experiments with controlled home arrest instead of prison detention are frequent, and factory spaces become network businesses where it is no longer the aim to reach the highest possible production at the lowest possible wages but where ludicrous challenges and competition gain importance in a much

less fixed way. Individuals become, what Deleuze calls, 'dividuals', no longer with a signature as individual marker, but linked to a digital code. And masses become samples, data or markets. Money is no longer related to a numerical standard, but to exchange rates, modulations depending on a calibration point that marks graduating values for various currencies. Deleuze compares discipline societies with moles. Control societies are more like snakes.

However, this does not mean that the disciplinary society has completely disappeared: prisons still exist and cheap labor in the third world that produces highly technological products for the global market. In Mexico, for instance, the working conditions resemble slavery; obligatory pregnancy tests for women, non-existent safety regulations and no labor unions demonstrate that cheap labor is still an important consideration as well. And in some sense institutions seem to reinforce themselves. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the highest rate of people in prison ever has been reached in the United States, and the call for the return of family values is indeed loud. According to Michael Hardt, these developments indicate, however, that the disciplinary institutions are both in crisis and at the same time intensifying and extending over society as a whole, doing so outside the confinements of the institutions and into the society of control. Moreover, Hardt notices, the control society has become a global control society, led by a New Empire, the United States (as opposed to the older European Empires), who has become the power switchers that decide.¹⁶

Again we can recognize here elements of the network society: Castells' spaces of flows and timeless time are elements of the network society that can be related to the openness and snake-like movements of control society. In terms of power we could say that disciplinary societies know flows of power (the panopticum being a clearcut example), whereas in control societies we have to deal with the powers of flows that are no longer controllable but are present in all kind of different surveillance measurements: cameras, data surveillance and wiretapping. As Deleuze emphasizes, this is not to say that one society is better or worse than the other, but to find the structures of power and the possible weapons to resist too much concentrated power and especially to liberate desire, to think new things and experience new affects.¹⁷ Coming back to *THE NET*, we could see this film as a representation or an example of the powers of flows in a control society (the new Empire) and the resistance of a single person in the net. And obviously it is necessary to know about the snake's coils in order to be able to resist its strangleholds. But, as I said at the beginning, cinema and other media are more than representations of the world. The omnipresence of cameras and computers is also an indication of the fact that the media are not only repre-

sentations nor even only control-instruments, but are also operating in another way in the network society.¹⁸

The culture of real virtuality: capital = cinema

As Castells reminds us, in the twentieth century, audiovisual culture took historical revenge on the hierarchy of literary traditions: 'First with film and radio, then with television, overwhelming the influence of written communication in the hearts and souls of most people. Indeed, this tension between noble, alphabetic communication and sensorial, nonreflective communication underlies the intellectuals' frustration against the influence of television that still dominates social critiques of the masses.'¹⁹ Castells has a somewhat more complex view on media culture. Most interesting in respect to audiovisual culture is his introduction of the idea of the 'culture of real virtuality'. Castells explains this idea as follows:

Perhaps the most important feature of multimedia is that they capture within their domain most cultural expressions, in all their diversity. Their advent is tantamount to ending the separation, and even the distinction, between audiovisual media and printed media, popular culture and learned culture, entertainment and information, education and persuasion. Every cultural expression, from the worst to the best, from the most elitist to the most popular, comes together in this digital universe that links up in a giant, a historical supertext, past, present, and future manifestations of the communicative mind. By doing so, they construct a new symbolic environment. They make virtuality our reality.²⁰

According to Castells, reality, as experienced, has always been virtual because it is always perceived through symbols that frame practice with some meaning that escapes their strict semantic definition. Therefore, the virtual is also a real experience. The culture of real virtuality is a system 'in which reality itself (that is, people's material/symbolic existence) is entirely captured, fully immersed in a virtual image setting, in the world of make believe, in which appearances are not just on the screen through which experience is communicated, but they become the experience.'²¹

Again we can observe here a fundamental parallel between Castells' contemporary sociological observations and Deleuze's philosophical concepts. Deleuze does not speak of the 'culture of real virtuality' as a (scientific) fact. As a philosopher Deleuze speaks on a conceptual level of the virtual. Inspired by Bergson, he proposes to replace the classical real/virtual (in the sense of unreal) opposition by the actual/virtual distinction. When he

makes this distinction between the actual and the virtual, however, Deleuze emphasizes, like Castells, that both the actual and the virtual are real. This does not mean that everything that is virtually contained in this world is or becomes actual. But to put it simply, the virtual (dreams, memories, imaginations, pure qualities of, for instance, light or color) is real insofar as it has an effect on us. In his two last texts, 'L'Immanence, une vie' and 'Le virtuel et l'actuel', Deleuze emphasizes that the virtual insists on the actual, and the actual influences the virtual.²² In any case, with 'the culture of real virtuality' and the actual/virtual pair, both Castells and Deleuze assign an important role to cultural expressions: no longer is the virtual a by-product of society (as for example in traditional Marxist analysis), but it is at the heart of society, the centre of the system that can reposition society from within.²³

We can see how Castells puts culture at the heart of society when he talks about 'the spirit of informationalism'.²⁴ This term is related to Max Weber's 'the spirit of capitalism' that he introduced in 1904. In the 'spirit of informationalism' capitalism is still operating as a dominant economic form, albeit in new, profoundly modified forms *vis-à-vis* the time of Weber's writing (changes that I just described in relation to the difference between disciplinary and control societies). As Castells states, in the spirit of informationalism the economic networks are glued together by a cultural dimension: culture is where many networks come together and depart again. Castells describes this culture as 'a culture of the ephemeral, strategic decision, patchworks of experiences and interests, rather than a charter of rights and obligations. It is a multi-faceted, virtual culture, as in the visual experiences created by computers in cyberspace by rearranging reality. The network enterprise learns to live within this virtual culture.'²⁵ It is not culture that is embedded in economy and capitalism, but it is economy (network enterprises) that is embedded in culture that has become capital itself.

As a philosopher, Deleuze has theorized the importance of cultural expressions as 'domains of thinking' in their own rights. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari state that art thinks in percepts and affects, while philosophy thinks in concepts.²⁶ And in their own philosophical work, they often refer to writers (Kafka, Woolf), painters (Bacon) and filmmakers. Audiovisual culture seems to be even more important since Deleuze wrote two books on cinema.²⁷ In his article 'Capital/Cinema' Jonathan Beller elaborates on Deleuze's relationship to cinema. He argues that we might consider *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* of equal importance for the twentieth century as Karl Marx's *Capital* was for the nineteenth century in that Deleuze's books develop concepts of capital as it colonizes the visual through and as cinema. Beller explains:

... the experiences of events in the cinema are, from the standpoint of capital, experiments about what can be done with the body by machines and by the circulation of capital. (...) If capital realizes itself as cinema, that is, if industrial capital gives way to the society of the spectacle, one might well imagine cinema, with respect to the body, geography, labor, raw material, and time, to have become the most radically deterritorializing force of capital itself. As production itself moves into the visual, the visceral, the sensual, the cultural, cinema emerges as a higher form of capital —.²⁸

Beller makes an important claim here by establishing such an inextricable relation between capital and cinema that capital becomes an image: everything can be translated into (audio)visual terms: money is media.

It is true that in his cinema books, Deleuze has restricted himself to looking at the masterpieces of cinema, films by auteurs which he considers as machines that produce singular forms out of the flow of audiovisual material. In this respect, some elitist modernist thinking could be indeed attributed to Deleuze. If we now want to elaborate the role of cinema in political economy, it will be necessary to include also the non-masterpieces and other forms of media, like radio, television and tele- and cybercommunication. Very rightly, Beller proposes that we think of all human attention and consciousness as producers of value (and not just the masterpieces). In this way media culture can be analyzed for the multiple ways in which they have begun 'a global process of repaving the human sensorium, opening it up to the flow of ever-newer and more abstract commodities.'²⁹ Beller demonstrates that vision has become a form of work, and that technologies such as cinema and television are machines that replace the assembly line out of the space of the factory and put it into the home and the theater and the brain itself. In other words, he has demonstrated that not only, as Deleuze stated, 'the brain is the screen' but also the screen has become the brain.³⁰ Moreover, we can now see in which ways global organization has become so well organized as cinema/capital, whereby cinema must be considered in all its different media forms and is an immanent system, just like capital.

Glamorama: surplus and paranoia

One of the characteristics of cinematic/capitalist informational economy is that productivity comes with a residual. Manuel Castells talks about residuals such as energy supply, government regulation, education of the labour force and the whole category of services.³¹ The residual is that which is left over, a remainder at the end of the usefulness of something. The word

sounds rather negative and indeed that is the way it is used mostly. The word that Deleuze and Guattari employ to indicate 'that which is left over, a remainder' in capitalist culture is 'surplus'. This word has, however, a more positive connotation: excess over what is required, something extra, more value. In order to investigate these 'remainders' of contemporary culture, I would first want to look at some specific forms of surplus and residual that come from our audiovisual capitalist networks. Let me start with a simple thesis that I will then try to elaborate: stardom and glamour are the surplus values of audiovisually mediated capitalist culture. Both the media and the money are increasingly expanding, and so is its surplus value, glamour.

In the museum shop of the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, I recently found an interesting medicine cabinet. It contained nicely wrapped miracle drugs, produced by an art company called 'Jesus had a Sister Productions'. Besides pills to change your sexual preferences or skin color instantly, you could also buy 'Instant Fame Pills'. Success is guaranteed! Of course I bought the package, justifying it by the fact that I thought it was a nice metaphor for fame, glamour and stardom in our contemporary society: you can buy it, and it is as easy as swallowing a little pill. Money and media seem to be the only two conditions for stardom. Media-events such as *Big Brother* have provided the final proof of the influence of the camera on fame: if there are simply enough images of you around, fame will follow automatically.³² Nominated for leaving the Dutch *Big Brother* house, resident Sabine became a true media-personality, a star who appeared regularly in many different media and signed autographs for her fans; and money will follow fame: all *Big Brother* residents found themselves being offered lucrative deals. And if you do not (yet) have access to the camera, you can always buy stardom; and fame will follow money. L'Oréal uses a whole series of stars (like Heather Locklear from *Melrose Place*, and Andy MacDowell from *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL*) to invite women to buy their products. The slogan 'Because I'm worth it. Aren't you?' implies that with the right commodities the surplus value of glamour will automatically endow us with radiance. In the same spirit gossip magazines present the recipe of makeup artist Sarah Monzani who unveils the secrets of Madonna's success with the help of Max Factor: the Madonna Factor, now available for all.

In the first half of this century, glamorous stardom was only available in and around the spotlights of Hollywood. Stars and glamour were far removed from daily life, Hollywood an unreachable 'dream factory'. Nevertheless, stars were influential in the daily life of many men and especially women. In her book *Star Gazing* Jackie Stacey reports the results of an elaborate empirical research on the influence of Hollywood stars on the life of or-

dinary British women in the Forties and Fifties.³³ Stars like Betty Grable, Rita Hayworth, Joan Crawford and many others were mainly fascinating because of the beautiful clothes they wore and the fantastic settings in which they moved. During and right after the war these dream images served an escapist function.

Nevertheless, many also identified with the stars. Fans changed their identity and looks according to the example of their favorite star. With the increasing wealth in the Fifties, it became easier to actually take on the looks and lifestyle of a star: 'I favoured Lauren Bacall,' says one of the fans. 'My colouring was the same as hers, I wore my hair in a similar style and wore the same type of tailored clothes... matching shoes, gloves and handbag were a "must". (...) they were my "trademark" for years.'³⁴ In the Fifties, because of the growth of capitalist commodity culture, ordinary people could lead a more 'glamorous' life. But for a few decades Hollywood remained nevertheless covered with a distant utopian glow.

Everything changes with the arrival of MTV in the Eighties. Of course Hollywood is still attractive, as was clear from the hype around Leonardo di Caprio when he starred in *TITANIC*. But in the meantime many other types of stars have emerged. In her videoclip 'Vogue', Madonna pays a 1990s homage to the early Hollywood stars. At the same time she makes clear that in the age of MTV new stars have risen: models, pop musicians and actually everybody who would like to be star, provided that you wear the right clothes, strike the right pose (vogue) and let yourself be captured by a camera.

In his novel *Glamorama*, Bret Easton Ellis emphasizes the central role of MTV. Strikingly often he refers to this television station, the style programs, the videoclips and the clothes worn by the VJs and artists. The main character in the book is a model, Victor Ward. His average day consists of a photoshoot, a training session in the hippest sportschool of New York, a fashion show, an interview for MTV's House of Style, repetitions with his band and organizing a DJ for the opening night of a new club which he is setting up with a partner. In the meantime he calls on his Motorola cell phone about the guestlist for the club (in this way all 'real life' stars are mentioned in the book), cheats on his girlfriend (supermodel Chloe Byrnes) with the fiancée of his business partner, and courts a girl in Tower Records, who wears the perfect clothes and listens to the right music. In a humiliating way, Easton Ellis paints a portrait of modern society through the eyes of Victor Ward, in which Calvin Klein, Armani, Gap, DKNY and Dolce & Gabbana decide the looks; in which silicone breasts, sunglasses and cell phones are a 'must'; in which sushi and salads form dinner and Evian, diet Coke and (occasionally) champagne are the main beverages. Victor himself is very self-

conscious about the poses he has to take in order for his beautiful abdomen to be just visible from beneath his *Comme des Garçons* t-shirt. The empty and cold relationships between all these glamorous people are portrayed with cutting satire. Sometimes there is a feeling that breaks through the shiny superstructure. For instance, there is the moment when Victor's girlfriend panics when she watches a tv-programme on the dangers of breast implants. The characters do not gain any sympathy by this, although it does make them vulnerable. Except for Victor, who lightly, luxuriously and lusciously continues his glamorous life.

This glamorous life lasts until the moment when he is offered a lot of money to find an old friend in Europe. Victor leaves for England and France and all of a sudden finds himself among a group of terrorists. Or is it just a movie in which Victor is playing? In the first half of the book, the glamorous surplus value of materialism has been uncovered as empty and cold but nevertheless also hip and cool. But in the second half of the book, the story changes into a nightmare in which it is no longer possible, neither for Victor nor for the reader, to distinguish between the real and the virtual. Everywhere there are cameras, directors and paparazzi. This was also the case in the first half of the book, but gradually the distinction between Victor's real experiences become blurred with film scripts. He is constantly confronted with compromising photographs and videotapes. In the first half of the book he just denies, again and again, that he is the person in the image. He then just seemed to be a terrible superficial and irresponsibly narcissistic person who does not remember and does not care with whom he has spent time and where he has been. He just remembers what he was wearing.

But in the second half it all becomes much scarier: videotapes are now really manipulated, and denial is futile. The manipulable image culture has blurred the borders between fact and fiction. Glamorous existence in the culture of real virtuality has turned into a violent movie. Glycerine tears have become panic attacks and violent bombs. And paranoia has become the unhealthy condition of life. At the end of the book, Victor finds himself in a sort of resthouse in Italy. He still feels like he is being filmed all the time. The only remaining stars are the ones in the sky. *Glamorama* witnesses the implication of the media in our 'culture of real virtuality' and the embeddedness of the network enterprises when the surplus value – glamour through commodities and cameras – turns into a paranoid nightmare of manipulation and fascist violence through the camera's never ending surveillance.

Glycerine: FIGHT CLUB's residual and schizophrenia

With this violent and paranoid turn of *Glamorama*, Bret Easton Ellis seems to have emphasized what is hidden underneath the superficial beauty of sparkling stars and glamorous poses that come to us through the media. One of the 'real life' celebrities that Easton Ellis mentions is David Fincher. Fincher started out his career on MTV, where he directed among other things Madonna's clip 'Vogue'. With his latest film *FIGHT CLUB*, Fincher, too, seems to take a position against the superficiality of what is termed in this film, the 'IKEA-nesting instinct', Calvin Klein and other glamorous brands. Aesthetically, he demonstrates this beautifully at the beginning of the film, where main character Jack (Edward Norton) looks into an IKEA-catalogue, the computer designs his wishes and at the end of the scene, these furnish his actual apartment. This blend from catalogue to computer to actual home decoration again makes clear how close the virtual and the actual are related. However, Jack's apartment is rather empty and soulless.

The fact that Jack is not happy with his carefully composed and purchased life is made clear through his attacks of insomnia. He finds temporary relief by finding support as an illegal (because not actually sick) visitor to all kinds of self-help groups, which focus on everything from testicular and blood vessel cancer to the formation of brain parasites. But he finds his 'true self' (or his other self, as we will learn) when he meets Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt). Together they start a fight club that soon has branches in all major cities in the United States. Of course, the violence of the fights is a literal attack on beauty. Tyler and Jack look with contempt at Calvin Klein underwear ads and cherish their (self)mutilations as an act against glamour.³⁵ The most powerful symbol in the film, however, is fat, particularly body fat. At the beginning of the film, body fat was introduced when Jack, still in his job as damage reporter, has to investigate a burned-out car to see if it is worthwhile for the insurance company to recall the car, for later we learn that the cars are deliberately badly manufactured so money can be made from their repair. The seat in the car is covered in body fat, burned from the victim's body. In the spectator's mind, immediately a picture of a wealthy, fat man driving his expensive car pops up and is destroyed.

Later on, Tyler teaches Jack how to make soap and bombs. In order to do so they take the ultimate residual element of glamour-culture as the basic material for their products: they go to a liposuction clinic and steal liposuction fat. From that body fat they skim the glycerine from which they make both glycerine soap and nitroglycerine bombs. The soaps they sell to big department stores ('It was beautiful, we sold rich ladies their own fat asses').

The explosives are used to blow up creditcard company buildings and other symbols of capitalist network enterprises. In a very powerful way the residual (fat) is turned into surplus again (glycerine soap, glamour) and into the ultimate destructive weapon against surplus and the whole network society, nitroglycerine bombs.

At the end of the film Jack is Tyler, or Tyler is Jack.³⁶ This schizophrenic twist of the movie is no more than a simple consequence of the logic of the network society. Arguing from Castells' concept of the culture of real virtuality, it is just very logical that, as in Victor Ward's case, the virtual become just as real as the actual. The difference between Victor and Jack/Tyler is the difference between paranoia and schizophrenia. To understand this it is necessary to return to the work of Deleuze and Guattari and their immanent analysis of capitalism and the material and mental states it produces.

Immanence and micro-politics: capitalism and schizophrenia

As I said earlier, Deleuze and Guattari propose an immanent analysis of capitalist society, which carries in itself all the dangers and possibilities the system can possibly produce. The notion of surplus is precisely such a concept that is at work in an immanent analysis of capitalism. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari describe surplus value as follows:

Instead of simply representing the relations of commodities, it enters now, so to say, into relations with itself. It differentiates itself as original value from itself as surplus value.³⁷

Furthermore, they state that surplus value (glycerine) is always absorbed, but also constantly injects anti-production (nitroglycerine) which they call schizophrenization. Capitalism calls for its dominant cultural and organizational forms at the same time as it produces its breakdown, which is a fundamentally schizophrenic process. It is this moment of coding, decoding and recoding that is so wonderfully made conscious in Jack and Tyler's actions throughout the film, animated as it is through schizo-flows. As Deleuze and Guattari put it:

Our society produces schizos in the same way it produces Prell shampoo or Ford cars, the only difference being that the schizos are not saleable. (...) Yet it would be a serious error to consider the capitalist flows and the schizophrenic flows as identical, under the general theme of a decoding of the flows of desire. Their affinity is great, to be sure: everywhere capitalism sets in motion schizo-flows that animate 'our' arts and

'our' sciences, just as they congeal into the production of 'our own' sick, the schizophrenics.³⁸

It may now seem that Deleuze and Guattari romanticise the clinical schizophrenic. In fact, they have indeed been regularly accused of that. However, they do not invite all of us to become pathological cases. Just as the term 'rhizome' is stolen from biology, 'schizophrenia' is taken from psychiatry, in fact from Lacan. But they differentiate schizophrenia as a process from schizophrenia as an entity or as a mental illness. Schizophrenia as a process operates in a broad sociohistorical field, rather than on a narrow psychological scale.³⁹ As Eugene Holland argues in his *Introduction to Schizoanalysis*, at worst (when capitalism is unable to sanction the process of schizophrenia that it has itself produced) the result is clinical schizophrenia. At best, schizophrenia takes the form of a viable social practice and the joys of the unbridled, free-form of human interaction.⁴⁰ As such, schizophrenia is only one pole of the economic, cultural and libidinal dynamics of capital. The other pole is designated by the term paranoia: 'if we understand schizophrenia to designate unlimited semiosis, a radically fluid and extemporaneous form of meaning, paranoia by contrast would designate an absolute system of belief where all meaning was permanently fixed and exhaustively defined by a supreme authority, figure-head, or god.'⁴¹

In their political philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari make a distinction between molar movements (large segments in society, where the 'binary-machine' divides the world into oppositions: private-public, man-woman, young-old, healthy-sick) and molecular movements (invisible micro-movements that affect, empower or disempower us, private thoughts and feelings, breaks with the system).⁴² The difference between the molar and the molecular explains the difference between paranoia and schizophrenia. As Deleuze and Guattari put it:

Paranoia and schizophrenia can be presented as the two extreme oscillations of a pendulum oscillating around the position of a socius as a full body and, at the limit, the body without organs, one of whose sides is occupied by the molar aggregates, and the other populated by molecular elements.⁴³

In this respect it is significant that at the beginning of *FIGHT CLUB*, as we travel through Jack's brain, molecular processes are being visualized. There are other contemporary films that deal specifically with schizophrenia, such as David Lynch's *LOST HIGHWAY* (1997) and Spike Jonze's *BEING JOHN MALKOVICH* (1999); these also play with normally invisible mental movements.⁴⁴ By contrast, in *Glamorama* we always remain outsiders, looking at the molar surfaces. The emphasis on the revolutionary potential of molecular schizophrenia is what Deleuze calls 'micropolitics'.

Both the molar and the molecular lines have their dangers: over-codification for the molar line (surveillance, fascism, Victor's paranoia) and microfascism and self-destruction for the molecular line (schizophrenia that becomes so destructive that it desires its own repression). The fact that all these lines can be operative correlates with the predicament that in a network society nothing is ever fixed. Everything moves in dynamic relations: cameras for fame can turn into surveillance and manipulative cameras, becoming sources of paranoia. *Glamorama* shows how the surplus value of capitalist media culture can become a source for paranoia, surveillance cameras being the ultimate meaning-imposing 'god'. Schizo-strategies can offer resistance to capitalism and release enormous personal and critical freedom⁴⁵, but it can also turn into fascism; and Richard Barbrook has demonstrated how the 'holy foolishness' of Deleuze and Guattari themselves can be subjected to this danger.⁴⁶

It is precisely this ambiguity between freedom and fascism that is also clear in *FIGHT CLUB*. Tyler/Jack's schizo-strategies are clearly directed at releasing pressures from capitalist culture. When Tyler says things like 'the things you own end up owning you' and 'you are not your car or your credit card' he clearly aims at setting free new ways of living and making meaning. Also, the fights themselves are deterritorializing strategies of capitalist surplus value. Freedom, according to Deleuze also has a physical sense: "'to detonate" an explosive, to use it for more powerful movements'.⁴⁷ This revolutionary potential is literally made visible in the images and sounds. But Fincher has also been accused of having made a fascist film. And indeed there are many elements in the film that relate to both molar and molecular forms of fascism: the black shirts of the men of Project Mayhem, the giving up of their names, except in death when they ritually start singing 'His name was Robert Paulsen'. It is at these moments where the problem of freedom turns into a problem of unfreedom that is also addressed in *Anti-Oedipus*: 'How could the masses be made to desire their own repression?' and to which Deleuze returns at many instants.⁴⁸

In an article on freedom in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Aden Events and Mani Haghighi (et al.) see this problem of unfreedom as the negative effect of the abundance of freedom, the impossibility to affirm and sustain freedom.⁴⁹ Moreover, they relate freedom to the deterritorializing of thought (thinking the unthought), the affirmation of pure chance (*amor fati*) and the power to decide, which is however not a power that we own:

We are not the authors of our destiny. Even 'the gods themselves are subject to the ... sky-chance.' This is why theft is primary to thought: because 'another always thinks in me, another must also be thought.' The power of decision is realized in the thought

of these others. This is not a power that we own; it is not a power that can be owned. It is only available by theft. We must steal our freedom.⁵⁰

This idea of 'another always thinking in me' might be another explanation of the schizophrenic resolution in *FIGHT CLUB*. Not only does the whole film present a process of schizophrenization, but also, in order to be free, Jack needed his other, Tyler, to think in him.⁵¹ Still, the problem of freedom remains related to the problem of unfreedom and will always return as such.⁵²

I have tried to argue that it is precisely this dangerous ambiguity of political lines and movements between freedom and unfreedom that we are confronting in the network society. Surplus and residuals are related to paranoia (at the level of society at large, the large segments) and schizophrenia (at the level of one's own body and mind, the micromovements). They can be both healthy (*THE NET*, the initial fight clubs) and unhealthy (*Glamorama*, the fascist elements in *FIGHT CLUB*). In any case these are elements of the network society that Castells as a sociologist of contemporary society does not talk about. An immanent and philosophical analysis of 'cinema and capital' as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari seems to be very appropriate for the evaluation of the media culture of real virtuality. Thinking itself seems to have become an 'art of the virtual', fundamentally related to cinema (and by extension all other media): 'cinema of thinking or the virtual as never seen before' as André Parente puts it.⁵³ Because of its richness of content and expression, cinema seems to be able to capture the broad socio-historical fields ('the global fields of co-existence') that constitute our contemporary madness. Cinema seems to be at the heart of the society of control, at the same time producing information, communication and control as well as an intelligence of the virtual that insist and subsist, and that can produce resistance.

To conclude, we may say that glycerine soap, glycerine tears and nitroglycerine bombs are the slippery, snake-like and highly explosive surplus values and residual matter that we seem to take as our luggage into the new millennium in which audiovisual cultural products can still reflect and represent the network society (*THE NET*). But more importantly they are an integral part of it (*Glamorama*) and offer at the same time immanent possibilities of deterritorializing resistance and reterritorializing recordings (*FIGHT CLUB*). Culture, seen as a culture of real virtuality, has become 'a new regime for the production and circulation of economic value at a new level of economic practice as well as economic conceptualization'.⁵⁴ Cinema and other forms of media have become like capital, the principal form of thought and consciousness, the center of society that can shift in levels between virtual and actual and in which the virtual seems to gain ever growing importance.

They constitute the various levels we move through in order to help reposition ourselves and society from within.⁵⁵