Interpassive Phenomena in Times of Economic Subordination:
From Self-playing Games via Cryptocurrency Mining to Dressing Up in Subversion

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One must work, if not from inclination, at least from despair, since, as I have fully proved, to work is less wearisome than to amuse onesel' – Charles Baudelaire[1]

Once we have been introduced to the concept of *interpassivity*, once we have recognized it in our own actions with an amused smile – for instance, to use Robert Pfaller's wonderful example, in the pleasure we as academics derive from photocopying books, from the *delegation* of our *pleasure* of reading to the machine, from staging the illusion of reading, an illusion for which a *naïve observer* could fall[2] – we suddenly see the world through a new lens. Interpassive phenomena pop up all around us and with a childish pleasure we exclaim: interpassivity, again! Therefore, the theory of interpassivity must be highly credited not only for the introduction of a valuable concept and a theoretical tool, but also for being a source of pleasure

(consisting in recognizing previously obscured sources of pleasure and finally being able to name them).

We may identify interpassive phenomena across times and ages, religions and social classes – interpassivity is *universal*. Most easily, we may find it among those engaging in established and culturally sanctioned *interpassive rituals* – for instance those, to use Žižek's famous example, *spinning* the Tibetan prayer wheel, a wheel that *objectively* prays *on their behalf*, irrespective of the obscenities or niceties they may or may not be internally thinking.[3] Or we may find it in the idiosyncratic interpretations of rituals, such as in the case of the Indian Brahmin friend of my colleague, who, when visiting him in Paris in the 80s, insisted that the water tap must keep *running* continuously during his stay to ensure objective ritual purification. Or more conventionally, to use Robert Pfaller's example, 'we can find the same also within Christianity: A Christian believer may go to a church, burn a candle, stay for a few minutes and then leave the church while the candle remains in his place, burning for a few more hours. The formula "Ora pro nobis" – read in the sense of "Pray instead of us" – seems to be the key for understanding the interpassive dimension inherent in ritual action.'[4] The amount of comments under fitness videos on YouTube that read: 'who else is eating while watching this?' and follow the exact same interpassive logic, is certainly not insignificant. With time, rituals change even if their magical principles remain the same – only the 'civilized' are less likely to notice their own performance of these magic acts.

We could continue on and on, until we would fall back on another range of iconic examples – those of canned laughter, video recorders or artworks that observe themselves. At this point, we would still recognize that we are dealing with a universal phenomenon that in its abstract theoretical form binds us across times and cultures and that also speaks to a certain logic of ideology. But at the same time, we would also notice that there is a certain particularity to the diverse interpassive phenomena that sets them apart from each other. One that does not necessarily pertain to the nature of the phenomena, but rather to the context from which they derive their meaning and to which they respond or provide relief. For instance, the progressive assault waged by the puritan forces of Protestantism and Calvinism not only on collective ecstasy and joy[5] but also on the pleasures of (and similar self-forgetfulness in) interpassive rituals has led to their progressive erasure in certain cultural realms. And yet, they popped up elsewhere and in a different form.

Economic Subordination and Computers that Play Instead of Us

In this text, we shall consider a few interpassive phenomena under conditions of today's widespread *economic subordination* (that subsidizes the rich), i.e. a situation of total subordination to the principle of work[6], where 'our work is no longer about making a living but about avoiding social catastrophe'[7] and where our time at work is spent by a display of 'protracted submission'[8] – in brief, a world dominated by *work* where 'sovereign moments'[9] become extremely scarce if not totally illusionary, and yet also a world equally dominated by the injunction and duty to *enjoy*.[10] Moreover, these sovereign moments and the transgressive enjoyments and beliefs that accompany them, are increasingly *delegated* precisely in order to allow people to perform their protracted submission and subordination. Or else, where those 'who work themselves to death or sacrifice their lives at the altar of work represent the highest embodiment of the neoclassical model of human capital'[11] are at the same time repeatedly commanded to enjoy themselves, the 'Ora pro nobis' is replaced with 'Lude pro nobis', or else *play instead of us*.

The phenomena of self-playing games, that is games that play themselves with minimal contribution of the player, while the player remains either idle or, more often than not, *productive*, working, while delegating his enjoyment, appear as a perfect and increasingly popular answer to both injunctions under the conditions of economic subordination. It is not a coincidence that the latest hit among self-playing interpassive games, Dreeps[12], was developed in Japan, where deaths attributed to overwork, *karoshi*[13], have been soaring. The principle of this RPG game intended for those who have no time to play is simple – set up an alarm in the app, and when you wake up, your alter-ego robot boy wakes up as well, and while you keep working, he will enjoy his adventurous journey through fields, valleys or peninsulas, slaying monsters and so on. As the trailer proudly announces, 'the adventure progresses automatically as you spend your day,'[14] and hence the interpassive player can thus delegate his enjoyment to the robot, who enjoys the adventurous and exciting life on his behalf while he keeps working. But there is also a second delegation at play – the illusion that this robot 'did the "job" (i.e. enjoying) in place of the interpassive subject is delegated to an – in most cases – unknown, invisible observer.'[15] As one player notes on the Kongregate discussion forum notes in response to why he plays idle games, 'personally, it's the fact that they are psychologically rewarding and can be "played"

in the background. I mean I can feel like I'm playing a game while I'm actually working, which is nice. It does get repetitive I guess, but humans are kind of wired to enjoy repetition for the most part.'[16] Žižek was right here when he observed that 'in contrast to the commonplace according to which the new media turn us into passive consumers who just stare blindly at the screen, one should claim that the so-called threat of the new media resides in the fact that they deprive us of our passivity, of our authentic passive experience, and thus prepare us for mindless frenetic activity.'[17] Indeed, this is precisely what Dreeps is designed for – to enable the 'perplexing willingness to live to work'[18] embodied in the last Tweet of the Indonesian copyeditor Mita Diran, '30 hours of working and still going strooong,'[19] few hours before her death of overwork. But if there is one self-playing game that epitomizes the interpassive phenomena under the condition of economic subordination, it is the Cookie Clicker – a game not so different as we shall see from cryptocurrency mining.

Cookie Clicker and Delegation of Enjoyment in Play

Cookie Clicker, the first and most iconic game of what has become the genre of *idle games*, was developed in 2013 by Julien 'Orteil' Thiennot. Strictly speaking, 'Cookie Clicker isn't a game for a human, but one for a computer to play while a human watches (or doesn't).'[20] The logic of the game is simple – initially, the reluctant player clicks several times on a big cookie on the screen, earning a single cookie with a single click. But after a short while, the cookies produced by clicking can be spent on purchasing cursors, grandmas, farms, mines, factories, banks, temples, wizard towers, shipments and so on, which all automatically produce cookies at increasingly high speeds, eventually reaching such proportions as nonillions of cookies per second (CPS). The game is at its most effective when left practically to itself, running in the background in the open tab eating up your computer's CPU. The less you do and the more you delegate the enjoyment of playing the game to the machine, the higher the reward; only occasionally you are meant to press a button to multiply your 'achievement'. There is no end to this game. One can never fail, only increase one's cookie fortunes. The most basic pleasure is derived here from *passive observation of the growth* of one's empire – all idle games are predicated upon this premise. From Idle Civilization, WarClicks, Idle Mosquito, AdVenture Capitalist, to Bitcoin Billionaire, all idle games tap into the addictive pleasure derived from observing growth, expansion, proliferation, and achievement – or else disproportionate rewards for the few clicks one has to invest for the game to play

itself. We can immediately understand the appeal of idle games in a scenario, where people on one hand work frenetically, following the 'suicidal work ethic'[21] – not necessarily because they would buy into the narrative of self-realization through work and so on, but because they are always potentially replaceable and thus vulnerable, always a small step away from socio-economic destitution – and on the other hand are forced to constantly display how much fun they have under the demand to maximize their enjoyment.[22] Through delegation, they do not only provide a *relief*, but also – as all interpassive phenomena directed at an invisible observer that judges by *appearances* – they create the illusion that objectively one has been playing like crazy (to which the meticulous statistics of days and hours spent 'playing,' achievements unlocked and cookies produced testifies) and thus had great fun and performed one's duty to enjoy. As one 'player' confessed online: 'the main reason I like them is that I get a nice sense of accomplishment by being able to progress in a game while also doing something productive.'[23] But of course, most players are painfully aware that the game is total mindless rubbish. And yet, they cannot stop letting the computer play it on their behalf. Here the psychoanalytical formula of disavowal – 'I know well, but all the same...' – prevalent not only in fetishism or perversion, but also in everyday phenomena, identified by Octave Mannoni[24] and analysed brilliantly by Pfaller,[25] comes to the fore. Or as a player of the idle game Bitcoin Billionaire put it: 'such a stupid game. Damn, I can't stop playing it!'[26] This is the first level of disavowal in respect to this game, where knowledge becomes precisely 'the condition for devotion to the illusion'[27] and where the interpassive structure of ideology becomes manifest at the very moment when the *alleged distance* towards the ideological fantasy (stupid game) *subjects* the player to it (can't stop playing).[28]

Some would argue that such games provide a distraction from our sense of alienation[29] that goes hand in hand with our bullshit jobs[30] and create an illusion that the job is meaningful, as opposed to the meaningless distraction. But it is to be doubted whether our work appears more meaningful in the light of the game, maybe it rather appears as an active version of the same only with the potential of failure, threat of downgrading and persistent sense of one's vulnerability in the face of the precarious contracts and markets, from which one can end up being all to quickly 'expelled'.[31] Instead, we could perceive these idle games as *dromena*, things that are 'left running'[32] and when they do so, protect. As Robert Pfaller argued in his *On the Pleasure Principle in Culture*, 'everything that runs is a means of protection; every

dromenon is an *apotropaion*, because it holds something up to ward off something else. What is being used for the purpose is irrelevant.'[33] Letting the idle game run in the background, delegating enjoyment to it, and taking a certain pleasure in this delegation itself, also fulfils a certain protective function, rather than providing a distraction – after all, at least something goes always upwards. 'The running *dromena* occupy a place that otherwise might have been assumed by something threatening.'[34] The question is, whether enjoyment, leisure for its own sake, or else sovereign moments, or that which could be considered the proper transgression of the realm of total work, is precisely not that which is threatening here and that which the *dromena* replace. Or that is, any form of leisure that is not directed at recuperation in order to work more. Is it not possibly so that certain interpassive phenomena under the condition of economic subordination serve an ideological function – namely, that of keeping us away from *leisure for its own sake*, the very threat (on one hand possibly to our own economic survival, but more importantly to the system itself), and instead forcing us to embrace *leisure as a means to an end*, the permissible leisure that serves 'recharging our batteries' in order to work more, harder and better, and thus to improve our own servility. Coterminous to this are also the multiple new ways of *gamifying* work environments.[35]

Or as Pfaller writes, 'processes that appear to be completely mindless, in which one thing or another is kept running, ultimately create an illusion. They perform "life" for someone. And maintaining this illusion by running of things affords those who let them run a certain amount of pleasure. This pleasure is thus due to self-forgetfulness.'[36] This state of self-forgetfulness and self-abandon is no less ideological than its opposite; idle games are just a new form of an ideological apparatus.[37] Unlike in sport or even in televised sports, its classic predecessor that has been contributing to the 'reproduction of the conditions of production'[38], the added benefit of the idle games is that one does not even have to set time apart to engage in these games and thus one does not need to draw the line of demarcation between work and life. Thus, the temptation (undesirable from the position of the system) to think that one works in order to live rather than the other way round, is curbed. The beauty of it is that one can keep working, while objectively playing at the same time – this is the very ideological embodiment of the late-capitalist intentional conflation of work and life,[39] where *living to work* is the ideal and where only certain forms of enjoyment are permissible. Interpassive *dromena* that keep running in the background allow us not only to delegate enjoyment and thus relieve us from

enjoying (even if we may find a certain pleasure in this delegation itself), but also enable us to commit ourselves even more to the principle of total work while staging the illusion of having fun for the invisible observer. They can even make one think one is being subversive, objectively playing games at work, thus giving it to the boss, while in practice submitting oneself even more deeply to the logic of work.

Cryptocurrency Mining as an Interpassive Mirror of Bullshit Jobs

At this point, we should remark on the fascinating similitude between idle games and cryptocurrency mining. Indeed, a naïve observer could easily mistake the one for the other. Cryptocurrency mining is an interpassive phenomenon and a *dromenon* par excellence. Like the initial investment of a few clicks in the Cookie Clicker, here it is sufficient to invest in the right hardware, download a mining program, run the miner, let the computer run and solve complex mathematical problems to validate transactions (intentionally utterly useless work that serves as a proof of work), keep a check on the temperatures, waste lots of energy and time, and observe the profitability increase (or not). Or at least, this is how mining seemed some years ago, when individual mining was still a bit profitable. Indeed, unlike in the case of the forever rising numbers in Cookie Clicker, here future profitability is very questionable as the difficulty of mining bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies increases as more miners join in, and hardware has to be constantly upscaled. A lonely hobby miner, even if he joins a pool, most often runs a loss in the long run or earns at best a few cents or a dollar a day while his energy costs run wild and his garage where he stores his interpassive *dromenon* overheats. This obvious similarity did not remain unnoticed by the players themselves, as one remarked on an internet forum: 'the bitcoins you would have mined would not have covered the electricity costs, kind of like cookie clicker, except cookie clicker is more fun.'[40] But with the increase in difficulty of cryptocurrency mining and the rising costs of the hardware, companies offering to mine on your behalf have popped up, such as Genesis Mining.[41] Now it is enough to pay the initial investment or subscription for a certain period, decide on cryptocurrency and hash speed and you have a 'cryptocurrency farm' somewhere in Iceland mining (and running) in the background on your behalf (possibly until the point of time when the speculative bubble bursts). Or as the company urges the prospective miner: 'Don't wrestle with rig assembly and hot, noisy miners at home. We have the fastest bitcoin mining hardware running for you already!' Or else, we perform 'life' for you already, just subscribe, self-forgetfulness is at your fingertips!

Cryptocurrency mining is an interesting phenomenon – not only because it is a financial speculation relying on interpassivity for verification of transactions, but also because of its utter wastefulness – from the excessive amounts of energy spent, to the computer power wasted on solving irrelevant mathematical puzzles in order to produce a 'proof of work' that does not translate into a product per se. It is an interpassive mirror of the proliferating bullshit jobs[42] that waste our energy, our intellects, our creativity, to achieve exactly nothing beyond useless destruction of resources, only leading to an endless frustration. But there is also certain pleasure to wasting energy on solving useless mathematical puzzles in the name of financial speculation. And it resides there, where wasted energy meets phony notions of subversion.

Pleasures of Disavowal, Fake Subversions and Interpassivity

While Genesis Mining exploits Iceland's renewable geothermal and hydroelectric power to fuel this new gold rush, in most cases the cryptocurrency mining is fuelled by hundreds of megawatts from fossil fuel energy sources that pollute air and water, and emit greenhouse gases causing global warming[43] – only to produce something of no real existence and no real use to people outside of dubious financial speculation. Even China has in the meantime cracked down on mining farms as they waste energy,[44] contribute to global warming and have been proven to be a perfect opportunity for scammers, cybercriminals and organized crime syndicates.[45] Despite all this, some have touted cryptocurrencies and cryptogovernance as the new revolutionary thing in town that would rid us of the middle man – from the banks to the state – restoring public trust in the financial system. Guillaume Chapron has thus for instance argued that:

> Bitcoin's strength lies in how it approaches trust. Instead of checking the trustworthiness of each party, the system assumes that everyone behaves selfishly. No matter how greedily traders act, the blockchain retains integrity and can be trusted even if the parties cannot. Bitcoin demonstrates that banks and governments are unnecessary to ensure a financial system's reliability, security and auditability. (...) the central authority of the state is transferred to a decentralized consensus of computers. (...) For sustainability, blockchain technology could be a game-

changer. It can generate trust where there is none, empower citizens and bypass central authorities. It could also make existing institutions obsolete, including governments, and raise fierce opposition. Laws could be replaced with 'smart contracts' written in computer code.[46]

Rather than as some kind of subversive possibility, this reads as 'the founding fantasy for those who idealize the so-called self-regulated free market: a non-peopled machine'[47] and indeed a closer reading of the strategic papers reveals the blockchain technology to be a Hayekian wet dream of decentralization, cryptographic generation of trust and abolition of the state, government and central banks.[48] While some like to sell this vision as some kind of revolutionary crypto-anarchism, it is really just right wing extremism.[49]

Hence, while some would like to convince us that Cookie Clicker[50] or cryptocurrencies are somehow subversive, like Chapron's cryptogovernance utopia built on a disavowal of (not only) the environmental costs, a closer look tells us otherwise. If we consider another layer of disavowal within the idle game itself – and here we should take the overlaps between the virtual games and the new forms of financial speculations seriously – we arrive at an even more widespread phenomenon pertaining to gaining a perverse pleasure from disavowal inherent to late capitalism. Let us return to the Cookie Clicker as our paradigmatic example. We have seen that there is the first pleasure derived from delegating enjoyment to the computer that plays on our behalf. Then there is also the pleasure of observing or knowing about the eternal growth, of the numbers rising in the background. This pleasure is not unlike the clicktivist's pleasure derived from signing an online petition – most clicktivists enjoy in exactly the same way the fact that the number jumps up as they add their signature, while gaining an added good conscience (and yet, rarely do they care for the cause itself, or for whatever happened to it after they signed) and thus also an easy *moral license* which may give them a feeling that in the next moment they can more easily, or legitimately, behave unethically or badly.[51] But there is an even more sinister form of pleasure to be derived from the Cookie Clicker – from its ever-running news feed that one can but does not have to read. As the cookie empire grows, so does the exploitation of human and natural resources, and the usual troubles with capitalism occur; the news feed informs of 'cookie farms suspected of employing undeclared elderly workforce, 669 miners trapped in collapsed chocolate mine, cookie factories linked to global warming, robotic minions

employed to replace workforce'[52] and one can even buy such lovely upgrades that speed up production as 'child labour' making factories twice as efficient, or a 'sweatshop'. Due to this feature of the game, it has been labelled as subversive, as 'a parable of how capitalism will destroy itself'[53] and so on. However, this misses the point – first, people already *know* this and secondly, they do not stop playing the game once these nasty little messages start popping up, to the contrary, they keep it running precisely because of these messages. While we know well that this is just a game and no real miners are trapped anywhere, we cannot deny that it is precisely this idea that provides the player with a certain perverse satisfaction. There is an enjoyment to the fantasy of growth at the expense of destruction and exploitation, and in the illusion of oneself being the boss of a reckless empire, even if this is an illusion nobody believes in, staged for an invisible observer.[54] Rather than being subversive, the game provides a certain training in and a casual mirror to the ordinary ways in which we handle capitalist horrors through *cynical distanciation* in everyday life (and at the same time derive pleasure from doing so). Not only can one take pleasure in these horrors at the same time as one can label them a mere play and delegate them to the computer (it is the computer who believes in the logic of accumulation at all cost), and hence delegate the guilt elsewhere, but also cast oneself as aware and critical because deep down one knows well how awful capitalism is and reflects on the message of the game (and after all, the internet tells him that this is really a subversive game). This is also not so far away from reality as we may think. Elsewhere, I have shown for instance how the pleasure from consumption of opulent heavily embroidered luxury fashion all too often derives precisely from the amounts of work that went into an object, from the power over labour power that the object embodies and from the endless exploitation of the workers – at the same time as this familiar exploitation that everyone knows about is wrapped up in the rhetoric of empowerment of the female workers or revival of national heritage or any other noble cause.[55] A Cookie Clicker scenario in a real life.

The assumption that the game is somehow subversive rests for the most part on the fact that it *reveals* the nasty proportions of capitalist expansion and exploitation – a rebellion of the enslaved grandmas at an advance point in the game merely temporarily slows down the production, but the show goes on without an end in the sight. The game may even mock itself about the senseless bonuses and rewards, and other incentives to accumulate, but nonetheless, people let the computer play it precisely to get these senseless rewards. And the argument that it is

a middle finger to the capitalist structure of time, since it only consists of unproductively wasting it, falls apart in practice, when we realize that irrespective of the hours logged into the game, it is the CPU of the computer that is wasted while most people actually spent these hours doing something else – most often working. Overall, it is the 'awareness' that the game awakes, while being fun that is meant to make it subversive – a critique served on a plate of enjoyment. This may remind us of diverse consumer activists and awareness raising groups who all attempt to de-fetishize commodities through truthful revelations of the histories behind their production. Their goal, too, is to 'reveal the hidden, light the darkness, in order to make the social ills, usually invisible to the middle and upper classes, visible,'[56] but they miss the point: most people already know all this. Their belief that the only thing needed is to remove the ignorance, which they posit as the true problem, and magically the world will be a better place, is at best naïve. The fact that the activists fail time and again at changing the actual behaviour of consumers whom they repeatedly enlighten should already tell us that ignorance is not the actual problem here. After all, is there really anyone who does not know that for instance fast fashion is produced in exploitative conditions of sweat shops? Lack of knowledge is typically not the true problem,[57] to the contrary, people tend to consume and enjoy products that are a result of exploitation etc., precisely against their better knowledge.[58] Not to mention that this 'revolutionary knowledge' becomes itself easily commodified (think *Adbusters*) and sold to those consumers who wish to display their enlightenment and moral superiority, becoming just another status symbol with a built-in moral license.[59] Or take for instance the Allriot t-shirts, selling prints with the heroes of your choice, from Marx via Chomsky to Gagarin, or something like, 'smash the cis-tem.' Or as they themselves proudly pronounce:

> ALLRIOT is a liberal political t-shirt brand that has become synonymous with sartorial dissent. We don't mind causing a stir with our punchy prints, but we don't do it just for kicks. ALLRIOT t-shirts are a CALL TO ACTION. They offer activists and revolutionaries across the globe a cool way to express their individual liberty of thought and action. It becomes painfully apparent with each passing day that the world has divided itself into two camps. The first and largest group is that of complete surrender to ignorance. You may not know them by name, but by their confident detachment from anything outside of their immediate realities. These are the collective of Zero F*cks Given, and their numbers swell by the day.

> Then, there's the second camp: ours. We Give a F*ck and we can't help it.
> We dare to demand a world where humanity, and all it represents, is
> superior to a synthetic, empty technocracy.[60]

These t-shirts also conveniently function as interpassive phenomena, they believe instead of us, on our behalf. For an invisible naïve observer, we may look like true revolutionaries (especially if we pair the Marx t-shirt with Lenin sneakers[61]), while in reality, we just consume a different brand, craft our individual self the way we are supposed to, investing in image management directed at the intended market niche in which we may want to succeed, while the revolution is eternally postponed in favour of the trendy status symbol – we are conveniently doing our critical anti-consumerist duty by consuming. Even the creators of idle games know well how this works, and that there is little difference when it comes to *what* is consumed, the point being that it *is* consumed – the rest is just a matter of taste. The same company that developed the idle game AdVenture Capitalist, created a popular sequel AdVenture Communist,[62] this time for the more critical audience (though the reviewers tend to agree that the capitalist is more fun). Since things can also interpassively believe on our behalf – they can be moral, conscious, aware, revolutionary, ethical[63] and so on, on our behalf too. They can even perform nationhood on our behalf, as I have argued elsewhere.[64] Stuff can also be bad, nasty, and criminal on our behalf, as in the case of the hobby Harley riders who like to dress up on the weekends as their idea of a filthy outlaw biker, letting the attire and the Harley be bad on their behalf.[65]

The trouble for any traditional critique of ideology here is the fact that we all somehow *know this too*, we all know that we are buying good conscience packaged in 'ethical products', or a pathetic semblance of rebellion in Che Guevara tote bag – we are merely cynical about it.[66] But 'it is precisely our "subversive", "cynical" distance towards a certain ideology which subjects us to' *another* 'ideology and allows it to exert its social efficiency.'[67] In this quote, *this* has been intentionally replaced with *another* – cynical distance has to be thought instead as a relationship between two ideologies. While most of the time people would like to believe that they really believe in some revolutionary change or shaking up the capitalist system, from their position of everyday subordination they typically conclude that such a belief is naïve and thus instead of abandoning it fully, they find it sufficient to delegate it onto an object that will appear as the true believer in their stead. *Interpassivity is here the solution for remaining a cynical capitalist subject – by delegating the less cynical (Marxist or*

other) beliefs on to some vicarious media. Here an important addition has to be made to the theory of 'cynical distance': The cynical distance does not concern just *one* ideology. It does not – as Žižek suggests – subject us even more to the very ideology that we interpassively delegate or disavow. Instead, cynical distance establishes a specific relationship between *two* ideologies: it does not subject us to the ideology which we interpassively disavow, but to the ideology that plays the role of the 'I know quite well' in this disavowal.

Under the condition of economic subordination, the scope for resistance is simply very limited – as the hero of George Orwell's *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*,[68] Gordon Comstock, nicely illustrates in his futile battle against the money-god, and so does his aristocratic friend Ravelston editing a left-wing magazine, who could be imagined in Lenin sneakers had he lived today.

Coda

While there is undeniably a certain pleasure to be gained from the cynical 'knowing' attitude and some relief to be gained from all these delegations, we should pause and think if we have not been over-delegating (especially all the good stuff), while being left in the process with little actual resources to resist our economic subordination and our frantic work activity. Or even allowed to use delegation to act as a vehicle for our even deeper subordination, self-exploiting ourselves while delegating all the fun to some interpassive medium or the other, happy with the little relief it offers. The more we lose capacity to actually engage in passivity, and the more we delegate it, the more incapable we may become to actually mobilize in political resistance. After all, passivity, or else leisure in its proper sense, is the basis of culture,[69] not frantic activity. The more we delegate our pleasures and leisure and the very beliefs we would truly like to hold if only we were not so cynical, the less we may be capable of engaging in *collective* pleasures – i.e. pleasures in which too we may forget ourselves, but in which we also collectively transcend our individual predicaments and in which we regain some of our sovereignty.

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[1] Charles Baudelaire, *Intimate Journals* (New York: Random, 1930), 67.

[2] Robert Pfaller, *Interpassivity: The Aesthetics of Delegated Enjoyment* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2017).

[3] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989).

[4] Pfaller, *Interpassivity: The Aesthetics of Delegated Enjoyment*, 61.

[5] Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy* (London: Granta Books, 2008).

[6] Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 1998).

[7] Peter Fleming, *The Mythology of Work: How Capitalism Persists Despite Itself* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), 15.

[8] Ibid., 8.

[9] George Bataille, *The Accursed Share: Volumes Ii and Iii* (New York: Zone Books 1993).

[10] Todd McGowan, *The End of Dissatisfaction? Jacques Lacan and the Emerging Society of Enjoyment* (New York: SUNY Press, 2004).

[11] Fleming, *The Mythology of Work: How Capitalism Persists Despite Itself*, 51.

[12] http://dreeps.net (accessed 1 February 2018).

[13] Koji Morioka, "Work Till You Drop," *New Labour Forum* 13, no. 1 (2004).

[14] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bxKTsEpNxo&t=56s (accessed 1 February 2018).

[15] Robert Pfaller, "Where Is Your Hamster? The Concept of Ideology in Slavoj Žižek's Cultural Theory," in *Traversing the Fantasy: Critical Responses to Slavoj Žižek*, ed. Geoff Boucher, Jason Glynos, and Matthew Sharpe (Cornwall: Ashgate, 2005), 114.

[16] https://www.kongregate.com/forums/3-general-gaming/topics/444332-why-are-idle-games-so-increasingly-popular-these-days (accessed 2 February 2018).

[17] Slavoj Žižek, "The Inherent Transgression," *Cultural Values* 2, no. 1 (1998): 7.

[18] Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Duke University Press, 2011), 2. Frederic Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital: Spinoza & Marx on Desire* (London: Verso, 2014).

[19] http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/copywriter-dies-after-apparently-working-30-hours-in-a-row-9013921.html (accessed 1 February 2018)

[20] Ian Bogost, *Play Anything: The Pleasure of Limits, the Uses of Boredom & the Secret of Games* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 210.

[21] Fleming, *The Mythology of Work: How Capitalism Persists Despite Itself*, 55.

[22] McGowan, *The End of Dissatisfaction? Jacques Lacan and the Emerging Society of Enjoyment*.

[23] https://www.kongregate.com/forums/3-general-gaming/topics/444332-why-are-idle-games-so-increasingly-popular-these-days (accessed 2 February 2018).

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