

(Un)witting Servitude and Minds Manipulation

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Overview

Despite the profound crisis of the capitalist system, which is now more evident than ever in all aspects of social and individual life, there is no organised anti-establishment reaction from the majorities nor a rigorous and coherent discourse. A messenger, without populist or opportunistic concessions of a revolutionary ideal, is conspicuously absent.¹ The collapse of real socialism and the fictitious and corrupt “socialism of the 21st century” have also contributed to a conditioned rejection of the idea of a socialist transformation of society.

With this combination of circumstances, and on the basis of the almost absolute control of the instruments and means of production and communication, the latter with a practically unlimited capacity for the manipulation of minds, the dominant system is winning the battle. We hope that, sooner rather than later, this balance of power, which is disastrous for the future of humanity, will radically change.

The ideas of the ruling class are the dominant ideas in every epoch; or the class which exercises the dominant material power in society is at the same time its dominant spiritual power. The class which has at its disposal the means of material production has at the same time at its disposal the means of spiritual production, so the ideas of those who lack

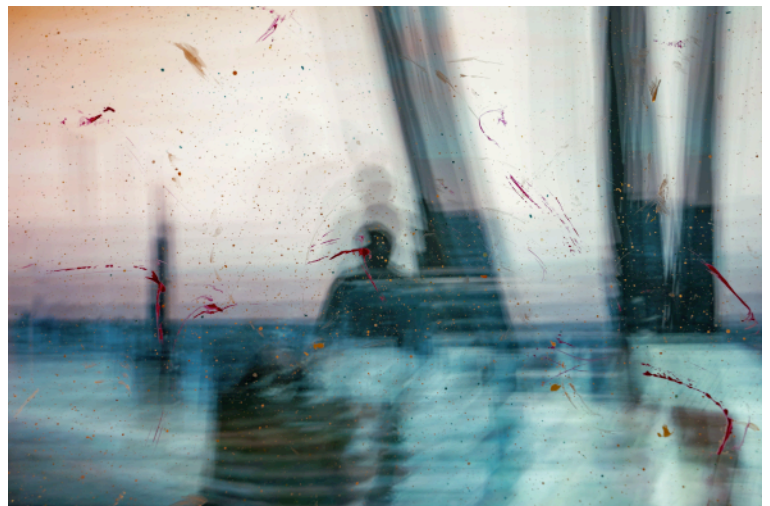


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¹ ↪ On the matter, see, of my authorship, *El colapso del progresismo y el desvarío de las izquierdas*, La Carreta Editores, Medellín, Colombia, 2017. Edición Dunken, Buenos Aires, 2015: *El papel desempeñado por las ideas y culturas dominantes en la preservación del orden vigente* (The role played by dominant ideas and cultures in the preservation of the current order). On the Internet: <https://www.surysur.net/teitelbaum-el-colapso-del-progresismo-y-el-desvario-de-las-izquierdas/>

the means of spiritual production are at the same time, on the average, subjected to it. (Marx and Engels, German Ideology, 1846. On the Production of Consciousness).

This was first described by the Roman poet and writer Juvenal 2000 years ago in his Satires when he coined the expression “Bread and Circus”, where he attributes the apathy of the Roman people in the face of the abuses of power to the fact that power hands out food and organises grandiose spectacles. As long as the people have enough to eat (from time to time) and have fun, power can do what it pleases. Juvenal’s vision of the relationship between power and people has strengthened a lot since then: the means used by power to manipulate minds are now very sophisticated.² And the “bread” that the people receive today—relative to the exponential growth of different basic needs (food, health, housing, education, healthy environment, etc.)—is proportionally less today than in the time of the Roman Empire.

The Material Bases of Manipulation

The means of production and communication, particularly those highly concentrated in large enterprises, constitute the material basis of the mental manipulation of the population. In factories and other enterprises, it began with the bodily manipulation of workers, the most complete expression of which is Taylorism or the “scientific organisation of work”. Its application in practice is Fordism, based on the idea of making the worker just another mechanism in the assembly line: the worker, instead of moving to carry out his task, stays in his place and the task comes to him on the assembly line. The speed of the assembly line inexorably imposes the pace of work on the worker.

This stultifying work exhausted workers, many of whom opted to quit. Faced with an extremely high turnover rate, Ford found the solution: vertically raise wages to \$5 a day, which it could do without lowering profits **given the huge increase in productivity and the sharp drop in the cost of production that resulted from introducing assembly line work.** The new wages in Ford’s factories allowed its workers to become consumers, including of the cars they made. The workers, who were not at all interested in repetitive work that left no room for any initiative, regained their human condition (or thought they had regained it) as consumers outside of work, thanks to the relatively high wages they received.

This situation became widespread in the most industrialised countries, especially after the Second World War, and in a very limited and temporary way in some peripheral countries. They called this “the welfare state”,³ which had a profound influence on the consciousness of workers. [Workers] ... *came to accept the wage ratio and the resulting division of labour. Contrary to the expectations of revolutionary Marxism, they stopped questioning the capitalist paradigm, contenting themselves with the more modest ambition of improving their condition within the system. This also meant that their hope for freedom and self-fulfilment lay in their role as consumers. Their primary aim became to increase their wages to consume more.*⁴

² ↪ The ownership of the means of production, to which Marx and Engels refer, is the invariable basis for controlling minds. Yet the means and techniques for making this control effective have been enormously improved in recent decades, so that we can speak, as we shall see, of a real qualitative leap.

³ ↪ “The welfare state is not, as is often said, a state that fills the gaps in the capitalist system or that heals the wounds inflicted by the system with social benefits. The welfare state’s imperative is to maintain a rate of growth, whatever it may be, as long as it is positive, and to distribute compensation in such a way as to ensure a counterbalance to the wage ratio” (Dominique Meda, *Le travail, une valeur en voie de disparition*. Aubier, Paris, 1995, p. 135).

⁴ ↪ (Lars Svendsen, *Le travail. Gagner sa vie, à quel prix?* Editions Autrement, Paris, septembre 2013, pág. 140).

the relationship between consumer subject/consumed object has been inverted: the product has become the subject and the consumer the object.

The alienation of the worker in the product of his labour, described by Marx in the 1844 Manuscripts (Alienated Labour), has taken on a new dimension with the alienation of the consumer in the consumed product: the relationship between consumer subject/consumed object has been inverted: the product has become the subject and the

consumer the object. The collapse of real socialism and the purely fictitious and corruption-ridden “socialism of the 21st century” also contributed to a feeling of rejection of the idea of a socialist transformation of society.

The welfare state ended more or less abruptly with the fall in the capitalist rate of profit and the consequent fall in real wages. To give a new impetus to the capitalist economy and reverse the downward trend in the rate of profit, the application of new technologies (robotics, electronics, computers) to industry and services became widespread.

Introducing new technologies required a distinct form of worker participation in production, which could no longer be reduced to that of mere automatons. The operating system had to be modified and refined, as the new techniques, including computer technology, required different levels of training and knowledge.

This is how “management” was born in its different variants, all essentially aimed at making wage earners feel like they were participants—together with the bosses—in a common effort “for the well-being of all”. This did not imply the

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disappearance of Fordism, which remains in force for unskilled tasks and essentially subsists in the new conception of the enterprise: the control of personnel—one cornerstone of capitalist exploitation—which is carried out physically in the Fordist chain of production, is deepened in the post-Fordist era by other means.⁵ The new “management” aims at personnel psychology.

Personnel managers (or Human Resource Directors) are talking about “creativity” and “team spirit”, “personal fulfilment through work”, that work can—and should—be fun (“work is fun”) etc. and manuals are published on the same topics. Even “funconsultants” or “funconsultors” are hired to introduce into the minds of workers the idea that work is fun, that it is like a game (“gamification” of work).

If you ask employees whether they are satisfied in their work, many will say yes, that if they did not work, their life would be meaningless. And this is true even for those who perform the simplest tasks. In the Fordist chain, the company took over the body of the employee, with the new management it takes over the spirit of the employee. *The motivations and goals of the employee and the organisation are presumed to be in perfect harmony: The new management penetrates the soul of every employee. Instead of imposing discipline from the outside, it motivates from the inside* (Svendsen).

*Material exploitation must hide behind non-material exploitation and get the consensus of individuals by new means. The accumulation of political power serves as a screen for the accumulation of wealth. It takes over not only the ability to work but also the ability to judge and to speak out. It is not exploitation that is abolished, but the awareness of it.*⁶

Henri Laborit, a surgeon and neurobiologist, writes that according to the experience we have, which varies according to our social class, our genetic heritage, our semantic and personal memory, we rank them hierarchically on a scale of

⁵ ↪ A detailed study of the organisation of work in companies that have incorporated robotics can be found in Benjamin Coriat, *L'atelier et le robot. Essai sur le fordisme et la production de masse à l'âge de l'électronique*. Editions Christian Bourgois, France. 1990. On the same subject: Michel Freyssenet, *Trabajo, automatización y modelos productivos*. Grupo Editorial Lumen, Argentina 2002.

⁶ ↪ Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Culture ou mise en condition?* Collection 10/18, Paris 1973, págs. 18-19

values which expresses our innumerable determinisms. *Our social determinisms are dominant, because societies, like all living structures, tend to maintain the state in which they find themselves to preserve their existence, subjecting the individual to their prejudices, their precepts, their 'values'. Such a subject is—it is said—balanced with its environment, an ideal state because it will not be the origin of any revolt. He will not even need to think*

Laborit argues that such behaviour, which avoids resorting to imaginative constructions of our structuring brain, has been very useful throughout certain stages of humanity when human beings had to defend themselves quickly and effectively against the aggressions of the external environment. But now—when man can dominate the environment—this behaviour has lost its original purpose. Nevertheless—to sum up Laborit's exposition—mastery over the environment gave rise to the accumulation of capital, and **I can't imagine a capital which is not built up to grow**. The result is the persistence of behaviour determined by the dominant system and the blocking of the emergence of the "imaginative man", capable of envisioning a different society.⁷

Laborit writes in his book *La nouvelle grille*:

In short, where to situate the class of "workers" and its class interests? It is likely that a senior cadre or a specialised

workers are encouraged to focus their lives as individuals within the company and fill their "free" time outside the company as "full time" consumers of various types of alienating entertainment.

worker may or may not be conscious of belonging to the proletariat, to the "workers' class," depending on the satisfactions—or dissatisfactions—of hierarchical domination that he or she feels. In the working class, there are perfect bourgeois who are happy to be so, even if they

*are exploited and stripped of their surplus-value, just as there are in the bourgeoisie genuine proletarians who are proud to be so, even if they take full advantage of their economic and political power, which they consider fair because they do not dispute the existence of hierarchical power, but its mode of distribution.*⁸

With the new technologies, this new management system has been installed in companies, whereby workers are encouraged to focus their lives as individuals within the company and fill their "free" time outside the company as "full time" consumers of various types of alienating entertainment: television series, electronic games (a real contemporary scourge), etc., whose vector is the media, highly concentrated in gigantic oligopolies.

In other words, the capitalist system in its present state tries to overcome its insoluble contradictions inherent in the appropriation by the owners of the instruments and means of production and exchange of a large part of social human labour (surplus value) by seizing most of the growing social leisure time (unequal distribution of social leisure time gained through increased productivity) to "put on surplus labour", as Marx writes in the *Fundamental Elements for the Critique of Political Economy* (*Grundrisse*) and by seizing also the scarce private leisure time left to those who work, commodifying it as an object of consumption. So it can be said that the wage slavery characteristic of capitalism, which

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could have been understood as limited only to the working day, now extends to ALL TIME in the lives of wage earners. Somehow, the difference between slavery as the prevailing system of antiquity (the slave in the master's service permanently) and modern wage slavery

has disappeared.

⁷ ↪ Laborit, Henri, *L'homme imaginaire*, essai de biologie politique, Union Générale d'Éditions, 1970, págs. 16-17

⁸ ↪ *La nouvelle grille*, Edic. Robert Laffont, Francia, 1987, págs. 184-185

The media are the instrument for maintaining and consolidating the hegemony of the ideology and culture of the capitalist system and formidable instruments for the neutralisation of the critical spirit, the domestication and the intellectual, ethical and aesthetic degradation of human beings.

Thus there is no longer any need for skilful politicians at the head of the state. The decadence, clumsiness and incapacity of the great majority of high-ranking state officials are notorious. It is now enough for them to be the faithful servants of the big bosses of finance, commerce and industry.

The Media

The oligopolistic or quasi-monopolistic concentration of mass media (including electronic communication) and mass entertainment products is at its peak. Large corporations have almost total global control of these products, through which they dictate to human beings how they should think, what they should consume, how they should use their leisure time, what their aspirations should be, etc.

They are the instrument for maintaining and consolidating the hegemony of the ideology and culture of the capitalist system and formidable instruments for the neutralisation of the critical spirit and the domestication and the intellectual, ethical and aesthetic degradation of human beings. They standardise human reflexes and behaviour on a planetary scale, destroying the originality and richness of the culture of each person. They are the vectors of the dominant system's ideology, which filters information and tinges the already filtered information with this same ideology according to its particular interests.

Much of this virtual communication in service of the reproduction of the dominant system is not unidirectional: every time a person uses their computer for any reason, communicates via Facebook or other similar means, pays for something with a credit card, and in some cases, when they turn on the lights or turn on the oven in their house (see note 9), they are providing information to the system about even the smallest details of their lives. Information that is marketed, thus allowing large economic consortiums and political, social and cultural groups to personalise—choose the recipients of—their persuasive campaigns.

These media with their sophisticated techniques serve as a privileged platform for obsequious journalists, political scientists, sociologists, economists, media philosophers and other “opinion makers” who justify the dominant system and Margaret Thatcher's TINA - “There Is No Alternative”. Transnational corporations reach hundreds of millions of people with their products (news and other) and are the real shapers (or rather deformers) of public opinion.

The techniques for maintaining the hegemony of capitalist ideology have acquired a scientific hierarchy. The mechanisms of mental manipulation are the subject of academic work and international seminars. At Stanford University, California, there is a Persuasive Technology Laboratory headed by B. J Fogg, who has written a book whose title says it all: *Persuasive Technology: Using Computers to Change What We Think and Do* (Interactive Technologies). This discipline is also called captology.

From 6 to 8 June 2012, the “7th International Conference on Persuasive Technology” was held in Linköping (Sweden). The call for the conference explained that *Persuasive technology is an interdisciplinary scientific field that studies the*

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design of interactive technologies and services to change people's attitudes and behaviour. It brings together fields such as classical rhetoric, social psychology and ubiquitous computing,⁹ and it often involves its specialists in the design of applications in domains such as health, business, security and education. The conference will provide the latest information on how to design mobile and web-based applications, such as mobile games and

social networking sites, to influence behaviour, thoughts and feelings. Similar meetings and conferences are often held in different parts of the world.

Alain Accardo sums this up well when he writes: In fact, all the social practices in which we take part have implicit pedagogical effects and contribute, a little or a lot, to "plier la machine" in us, most often, though not always, in conformity with the needs of the system.

Accardo then refers to the three domestication devices integrated into the capitalist system that he considers essential: the school and university system, the media system of information-communication and the political system of representative democracy.¹⁰ The question arises whether it is correct to call today's servitude "involuntary".

As a law student, Etienne de la Boétie wrote his extraordinarily lucid, profound and topical Discourse on Voluntary Servitude at 18 in 1548. On the first page of his Discourse, Boétie writes that, while it is a disgrace to have only one master, it is much worse to obey several. He warns that in his Discourse he does not want to discuss whether republics are better than monarchies and that he reserves that question for another time. But he notes that, under any government, the governed eventually get used to obeying it, to trust it to the point of granting it supremacy. And he asks himself: *What is this horrible vice of seeing an infinite number of men not only obey, but serve, not being governed but tyrannised, having neither property, nor parents, nor children, nor their own lives belonging to them?*¹¹

Language as a Means of Ideological and Cultural Domination

There has always existed a series of expressions that have a precise ideological content that comforts the established order. Politicians, economists, journalists, etc., create and popularise other expressions or change the usual meaning of some of them according to the dominant system's need to mask reality and maintain the consensus of the majorities.

Victor Klemperer, a German writer and philologist, wrote a book in which he shows, through anecdotes, passages and readings, the words most frequently mentioned by the authorities of the Third Reich (and by the people who, without reflecting on them, repeated them), such as 'heroism', 'fanaticism', 'eternity', among many others, together with various ideas that shaped the theory (and practice) of Nazism. According to Klemperer, *Nazism was introduced into the flesh*

⁹ ↪ Ubiquitous computing or "ambient intelligence" is the integration of computing into people's environment, so that computers are not perceived as distinct objects. The person interacts naturally with computing devices and computer systems which interact with each other and can perform any daily task through these devices (turning on the lights, starting the heating, the oven in the kitchen or the TV, turning the computer on and off in the workplace, etc. from near or far). These devices may have a practical utility (such as the one that prevents starting the car if the driver has not fastened his seat belt, which induces a positive behaviour) but on the one hand, they turn the human being into just another robot and they allow remote control of all activities, even the most routine ones, of people.

¹⁰ ↪ Alain Accardo, *Notre servitude involontaire*, Edit. Agone, Francia, 2001, pág. 50 y ss

¹¹ ↪ La Boétie, *Discours de la servitude involontaire*. Edit Mille et Une Nuits. 1995, págs 7, 8 y 9

and blood of the masses through isolated words, expressions and syntactical forms that it imposed by repeating them millions of times and which were adopted mechanically and unconsciously.¹²

At the same time, some political leaders often use the first and second person plural to capture the audience: “we will do ...” ... “you will build ...”. This is one form of political storytelling. Another form of government storytelling comprises telling people stories (lying) when they are unable or unwilling to fulfil a commitment they have previously made to the public (increasing pensions, effectively combating an epidemic, increasing the staffing of schools and hospitals, etc.).

Eric Hazan,¹³ in his book LQR, analyses the current “novlangue” in France. Some say rightly that each language or group of languages contains its structure of thought. English is now the world’s lingua franca, boosted in recent decades by communications and electronic games, and used predominantly in all media: artistic, political, cultural, scientific, etc. This situation has a double effect: the ideological content of many expressions commonly used in English and the mental structures specific to that language are imposed, whilst we lose the ideological and structural diversity of other languages through non-use. Moreover, given the dialectical interrelationship between language and thought, the dominance of English as the “lingua franca” leads to a kind of one-world thinking, as the French linguist Claude Hagège argues.¹⁴

Half a century after George Orwell wrote his book 1984, many of his visions of a future society could be taken into account when we realise how the world works. Our aim is not to focus on the political aspect of this work of science fiction but neo-language, since, in this book, Orwell offers a profound explanation of the use of a new language to control human thought and shows how profitable the media are in spreading neo-language and the doctrine of Big Brother. In the end, what is at first only part of Orwell’s imagination ends up being the perfect example of the way the media works, because, like it or not, the news is written in neo-language. In this way, Orwell discovers that through language ideological concepts are expanded that are necessarily linked to a subjective load and that are sometimes radically opposed to the original meaning of the word or phrase in question.¹⁵

This is how they call:

- **The international community**, to a handful of great powers that decide and take actions that affect the whole of humanity and that, at the same time, confront each other.
- **Collateral damage** means attacks on civilian populations in times of war, resulting from a failure to respect the obligation to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants and/or for the deliberate purpose of spreading terror.
- **Market economy** to capitalism.
- **Globalisation** to imperialism.
- **Flexibilisation of labour** to the unlimited right of employers to dismiss workers.
- **A school dropout** to the loss of schooling for poor children.
- **Homelessness** refers to people who are homeless.
- **Democracy** refers to a system of government that practices different levels of authoritarianism.
- **Durable (or sustainable) development** is a way of justifying compliance with the capitalist system’s imperative to produce superfluous goods, and/or exceeding the real needs for necessary goods, to continue to amass capital and produce profits, whatever the ecological and social costs.

¹² ↪ Víctor Klemperer, *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, La lengua del Tercer Reich. Reflexiones de un filólogo. Editorial Minúscula, Barcelona, 2001.

¹³ ↪ Eric Hazan, *Lingua Quintae Republicae*) *La propagande au quotidien*, Editions Raisons d’Agir, Paris, 2006

¹⁴ ↪ Claude Hagège, *Contre la pensée unique*, Edit. Odile Jacob, enero 2012

¹⁵ ↪ Toledano Buendía, S. (2006). La neolengua de Orwell en la prensa actual. La literatura profetiza la manipulación mediática del lenguaje. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 62

- **The scientific community** to a minority of conveniently mass-mediated scientists who, on behalf of governments, guarantee medicines and vaccines whose efficacy and side effects are not sufficiently proven.

We should add that the “twitterisation” of language, i.e. its extreme impoverishment (most people, especially young people, use an increasingly restricted vocabulary) inevitably leads to the impoverishment of thought. Electronic communication networks such as Facebook often have negative consequences for the exercise of reflective awareness or introspection, one of the fundamental elements (the other being external communication) of the development of consciousness and the formation of personality.

There is an interdependence or dialectical relationship between oral and written expression and the formation of logical thinking, the capacity for abstraction and conceptualisation and the ability to differentiate between the real and the virtual.

Lev Vigotsky writes: All the elementary psychic functions usually connected with the process of concept formation do take part in it but in a completely different way. They do not develop as independent processes according to the inner logic of their laws, but as processes mediated by the sign or the word, as processes aimed at solving a task, forming part of a new combination, a new synthesis in which each of the involved processes gains its true functional value. Concerning the problem of the development of concepts, this means that none of these processes, neither the accumulation of associations, nor the development of the capacity and stability of attention, nor the combination of ideas, nor the determining tendencies, however developed, can separately lead to the formation of concepts. Consequently, none of these processes can be taken as the determining, essential and decisive evolutionary factor in the development of concepts. A concept is impossible without words, thinking in concepts is impossible without language-based thinking. The new, essential and central aspect of this entire process, which can rightly be considered the cause of the maturation of concepts, is the specific use of the word, the functional use of the sign as a means of concept formation.¹⁶

Jean Piaget, with a different approach from Vigotsky, also emphasised the intimate relationship between thought and language.¹⁷

Michel Desmurget provides statistics on the extremely harmful effects of the over-consumption of television and the use of the twitter language on French children and adolescents.¹⁸

Fear

Fear—whether justified—of contracting a virus during a pandemic or of being the victim of a terrorist attack can provoke instinctive self-defence reactions in people, neutralise their will, and even deprive them completely of discernment and/or a critical sense.¹⁹

These are situations of extreme vulnerability that make people prone to accept unjustified governmental measures, contrary to collective and individual rights.

¹⁶ ↪ Vigotsky, Pensamiento y Lenguaje, pag 72 de la edición electrónica http://www.ateneodelainfancia.org.ar/uploads/Vygotsky_Obras_escogidas_TOMO_2.pdf

¹⁷ ↪ Piaget, J. e Inhelder, B. (1968). Psicología del niño; Piaget, J. (1968/1976). El lenguaje y el pensamiento en el niño. Estudio sobre la lógica del niño (I), etc.

¹⁸ ↪ Desmurget, TV Lobotomie, la vérité scientifique sur les effets de la télévision. Edit J’Ai Lu, Paris, reedición septiembre 2013 y La fabrique du crétin digital- Les dangers des écrans pour nous enfants. Edit du Seuil, septembre 2019.

¹⁹ ↪ See Emilio Mira y López, “El miedo”, Cuatro gigantes del alma, Editorial El Ateneo, Buenos Aires, 1950

Art is a Form of Knowledge of the Creator and the Reader/Viewer

So culture has always been subversive. Some attribute to Goebbels, others to Millán de Astray the phrase: “When I hear the word culture, I reach for my revolver”.

Now, with a similar philosophy, among the activities restricted or interrupted because of the pandemic, the authorities’ preferred targets are the artistic ones (theatres, concert halls, museums, etc.). A rave party is not a cultural activity: a heteroclite gathering of a crowd that shakes for hours with less grace than a chimpanzee to the rhythm of a monotonous sound while consuming alcohol and drugs. This suggests a low IQ of the participants. And to deduce the tendency of the government, which tolerates it and instead violently represses public demonstrations of social demands.

... In the artistic process, the artist is, like the scientist, a careful observer of reality. In the same way, as in the previous case, the artist induces from reality a series of interesting aspects he wants to delve into. These experiences that the artist has selected, intensifying specific details of reality, he then converts them into forms. These forms, be they word, colours, sounds, volumes, etc... are combined according to the rules of his art (be it original inspiration or a specific conventional

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style) to get the finished work. This work must now be communicated to the viewer to produce the desired aesthetic experience. The viewer perceives the work, internalises it and experiences similar (or perhaps other emotions as well) to those of the author. These new visions of experience will now be

contrasted again with reality by the viewer, questioning it in the new state revealed by the work of art.²⁰

Conclusion

The pandemic is revealing that rational and humane management of society in terms of health, food, housing, education, leisure time, etc. and the capitalist system are incompatible.

This can be seen to be the case because governments cannot solve the equation between fighting the pandemic and making the economy work: if health measures are increased, the economy grinds to a halt, unemployment rises, more and more people go hungry, many children—particularly poor children—drop out of school, etc.

To avoid an outbreak, some governments are taking timid measures that escape the current capitalist logic: they ensure

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—or promise to ensure—a minimum income for people who have stopped working, they partially compensate small entrepreneurs for the losses they have suffered, although they carefully avoid touching the right to property, such as requisitioning hotels to house the homeless or to set up

emergency hospitals.

On the other hand, the pandemic is enriching disproportionately a tiny minority that owns some strategic sectors such as online commerce and large laboratories that have contracted with states to sell billions of vaccines under conditions that

²⁰ ↪ Guillermo Fernández; [consultor de proyectos museísticos](#)

have not been made public. And when other large business conglomerates get into difficulties, they receive multi-billion-dollar loans with state guarantees.²¹

Bizarrely, a few big capitalists and a few members of the financial world are now advocating a reduction in working hours and a major redistribution of income. Inaudible discourse by the “progressives” and those who call themselves leftists, who continue to propose remedies—in reality, placebos—within capitalism but refrain from questioning it globally.

Given this panorama, it is worth asking whether the dominant system is not taking humanity to a point of no return, where the oppressed and exploited masses will totally and definitively lose the capacity to realise their current degraded and degrading condition and the capacity to imagine and impose a better alternative in a radically different society. A society that is not governed by the laws of the market, where capitalist exploitation does not prevail and where technological progress, applied science and the automation of production, as Marx wrote in 1857, *free human beings from necessity, from physical labour and alienated labour which will allow for their full realisation...* Marx added: *Free development of individualities and thus not the reduction of the necessary labour-time with a view to putting in surplus-labour but in general, the reduction of the necessary labour of society to a minimum, to which then corresponds artistic, scientific training, etc., of individuals thanks to the time that has become free and the means created for all.* (Karl Marx, Fundamental Elements for the Critique of Political Economy (Grundrisse), [Contradiction between the basis of bourgeois production (the measure of value) and its development. Machinery, etc.]).

²¹ ↪ At the end of December 2020, the French group Lagardère (BNP Paribas, Caisse Régionale de Crédit Agricole, Mutuel de Paris et d'Ile-de-France, Commerzbank Aktiengesellschaft Paris Branch, Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank, Crédit Lyonnais, ING Bank N.V. French Branch, Natixis, Société Générale, UniCredit Bank AG) owner of the Hachette publishing house, the Relay boutiques installed in all airports and railway stations, Europe 1 radio, Paris Match magazine and the Journal du Dimanche newspaper received a loan of 465 million euros guaranteed by the State at the level of 80%.

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❖ **About the author:** Alejandro Teitelbaum is a Fellow Associate with Jus Semper since 2010. He worked for many years on the issue of human rights in the realm of global corporations and other business enterprises. As the former Permanent Representative, successively from 1985 to 2006, to the United Nations Office in Geneva, for the International Federation of Human Rights and the American Association of Jurists, he spent time toiling with the bureaucracies of the UN and member states in pursuit of an international legal framework that would harness the business activity so that it would stop violating a wide array of human rights in its sphere of influence, as is customarily the case today. As such, he witnessed how, time and time again, the bureaucracies succumbed to the will of the leading economic powers, that were adamant at maintaining the preeminence of corporate interests over their responsibility for their infringement on human rights. Alejandro Teitelbaum is a Lawyer, Universidad de Buenos Aires, and a Postgraduate in International Economic Relations at the Institute of Economic and Social Development Studies, Université Paris I.



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