The Multitude Strikes Back?
Boredom in an Age of Semiocapitalism

The ‘Autonomist’ tradition of Marxist thought insists that the affective and emotional register of our lives is shaped fundamentally by transformations in the productive process now unfolding in the global North. As such, the very formation of subjectivity itself has become the privileged terrain of class struggle. Although a key aspect of this subjectivity is arguably that of ‘boredom’, the Autonomists do not address this phenomenon as such. This talk will therefore speculate as to how boredom, understood as a tangible if characteristically ambivalent (and ambient) mood or affective condition, might be understood in broadly Autonomist terms. Some of the questions to be addressed here are: is there a specifically 21st-century boredom? If so, does it retain any of the incipiently ‘resistant’ qualities that might be found in the type of boredom more characteristic of the ‘classical’ phase of Fordist capitalism? Are there qualitative changes in the way our body-minds are situated in time-space during the era of what Franco (‘Bifo’) Berardi calls ‘semiocapitalism’, and how might such an alteration relate to boredom, especially with regard to the perpetual speed-up in such things as informational and semiotic flow, and ever-tightening and accelerating circuits of capitalist valorization?

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1:30 – 2:30 pm • SSC 5220
Refreshments 1:00 pm • SSC 5230

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All Welcome!