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SEMIOTEXT(E) NATIVE AGENTS SERIES

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Published by Semiotext(e)
PO BOX 629, South Pasadena, CA 91031
www.semiotexte.com

Special thanks to John Ebert and Robin Mackay.

Design by Hedi El Kholti
ISBN: 978-1-63590-004-0

Distributed by The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, England
Printed in the United States of America

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Wars and Capital

Translated by Ames Hodges

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PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION CONTINUED

Money and capital remain empty (economic) “abstractions” without the flow of power; war and civil war constitute the most deterritorialized modalities of this flow. The market economy is not autonomous, it has no possibility of independent existence outside the power of these flows. The “economic” functions of money (measure, accumulation, general equivalent, means of payment) depend on a flow of destruction/creation that refers to something completely other than the Irenic, Schumpeterian definition of the entrepreneur’s activity. If money is not supported by a flow of strategic power that finds its absolute form in war, it *loses its value* as capital.

The expropriation of the means of production and the appropriation of the means of exercising force (the war machine) are the conditions of formation of capital and constitution of the state that develop in parallel. Capital’s accumulation and monopoly on force and the state’s accumulation and monopoly on force sustain each other reciprocally. Without war being waged externally (colonial and inter-state war) and without the state waging civil war and internal wars of subjectivities, capital would never have formed. And inversely: without capture and the valorization of wealth operated by capital, the state would never have been able to exercise its “sovereign” functions, all of which are based on the organization of an army.

The logic of Capital is a logic of infinite valorization that implies the accumulation of forces, and therefore a *continued* accumulation of a power that is not only economic but also strategic power over and knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the classes fighting.

The different moments of primitive accumulation can be assigned in particular to Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and England, in more or less chronological order. These different moments are systematically combined together at the end of the seventeenth century in England; the combination embraces the colonies, the national debt, the modern tax system, and the system of protection. These methods depend in part on brute force, for instance the colonial system. But they all employ the power of the state, the concentrated and organized force of society, to hasten, as in a hothouse, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. *Force is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power.*

— Karl Marx, *Capital*, Book I, Section VIII

In the section of *Capital* dedicated to primitive accumulation, Marx perfectly describes the two powers of deterritorialization that gave rise to capitalism: on the one hand, wars of conquest, the violence of invasions and appropriations of the “virgin” lands of the New World; on the other, credit, public debt (“Public credit

becomes the *credo* of Capital”¹), supported, carried, and organized by European states. For Marx, they only constitute the preconditions of capital, destined to be surpassed and reconfigured by “industrial capital” in the development of productive forces that provides the *progressive* material basis for the technology of revolution. Against this dialectic founded in the idea of a “truly revolutionary” path of (national) transition to the capitalism of bourgeois “revolution,” we offer this first and obvious fact: war and credit are the strategic weapons of capital throughout capitalism. As such, primitive accumulation and its telluric forces of deterritorialization are continuously repeated and differentiated, the better to advance by *accelerating* it as much as possible—the process of domination and commodification of all existence. To put it another way: *in the center as well as in the periphery*, primitive accumulation is the continued creation of capitalism itself.

Capitalism has been a global market from the beginning. For that reason, it can only be analyzed as a world-economy. What Marx called “primitive accumulation” (or “original accumulation”: *ursprüngliche Akkumulation*) to express the *capital*² meaning of this first major deterritorialization initially produced by war, conquest, and invasions takes place *at the same time* in the “New World” that was just “discovered” (external colonization) and in Europe (internal colonization). “Primitive accumulation” does not create the economic conditions of capitalism and the international division of labor describing North-South geopolitical division of a world that we still call our own without establishing the hierarchies of sexes, races, ages, and civilizations on which strategies of division, differentiation, and inequality are based that span the class composition of the international proletariat.

As a result, by extension, and by *intension*, the *locus classicus* of the description of *wars of accumulation* must be reworked

starting with the moment, between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when landed gentry and the nascent bourgeoisie launched a civil war in England against peasant farmers, artisans, and day laborers for the privatization of common lands. The destruction of the community structure of villages and centers of domestic production, the abandon of subsistence crops and the expropriation of farms, reducing populations to misery, forcing a growing number of *uprooted* into mendicancy and vagrancy, and leaving them no other choice than between extermination and the forced march of disciplinization towards wage labor. Simultaneously, *enclosures*, the concentration of land and merging of tenures throughout Europe—a Europe submitted to the “bloody legislation” that Marx analyzed at length and that brought back slavery³ before generalizing the practice of internment as a structure of forced labor—was combined with the appropriation of the “masterless lands” of the “Americas.”

Conquest, or the pillaging of natural and mineral wealth combined with agricultural exploitation of “fallow lands,” led to a veritable genocide of indigenous populations. Their “void”⁴ would be filled by the slave trade due to “the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of blackskins” signaling “the dawn of the era of capitalist production.” “These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation,”⁵ *and they perpetuate it*: “Direct slavery is as much the pivot upon which our present-day industrialism turns as are machinery, credit, etc.,” wrote Marx in a letter from 1846.⁶ Primitive accumulation merges with the capitalistic conjunction of all of these processes that would never have come together without the illimitation of violence brought from the interior to the exterior in a manner of *anthropological war* that would quickly be called *pacification*.⁷

Flows of credit, public debt (operating “as one of the most energetic agents of primitive accumulation”), and wars of conquest maintain and support each other mutually in a process of immediately global deterritorialization. “The system of public credit, i.e. of public debts,” definitively invades Europe while the “colonial system, with its maritime trade and commercial wars, served as a forcing-house.” The tight relationship between war and credit, and the birth of the latter from the financial necessities of the former in its power of projection in *Guns and Sails*⁸ determine the global structure of the process of accumulation that started its ascent in 1492. (Before the discovery of America, J. M. Blaut insists, “Europeans indeed had no superiority over non-Europeans at any time prior to 1492.”⁹) Whatever the mercantile and usurious precedents, the origin of finance takes a new turn here, an *unspeakable* turn, one which makes all the difference. “Along with the national debt there arose an international credit system, which often conceals one of the sources of primitive accumulation in this or that people. [...] A great deal of capital, which appears today in the United States without any birth-certificate, was yesterday, in England, the capitalized blood of children.”¹⁰

And inversely, more primitively, when African blood cemented the bricks of the factories and banks of Liverpool and Manchester. Behind the extreme mathematical sophistication of finance, there is always the “brood of bankocrats, financiers, *rentiers*, brokers, stock-jobbers, etc.” described by Marx.

2.1 The War against Women

Systematizing the Italian and American work that has been developed since the 1970s in the context of the International

Feminist Collective, Silvia Federici does not hesitate to connect the destiny of women in Europe to that of the people colonized by Europe in a book that takes on the form of a manifesto, with a title inspired by Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and the anti-colonialist recuperation of the character of Caliban: *Caliban and the Witch*.¹¹ The birth of capitalism, she explains there, is not only synonymous with a war against the poor, it was “coeval with a war against women”¹² to subject them to the social division of labor at the *enclosure* of all forms of human relations—each of which passes through a new sexual order which *accumulates divisions in the production and reproduction of the labor force*. The debasement and demonization of women (“married to the devil”), the destruction of the knowledge they bore, the criminalization of contraception and “magical” practices of care took away control from women over their own bodies, which became the property of men, guaranteed by the state, while participating in putting the population to work.¹³ The conditions for assigning women to the labor of biological, economic, and “affective” reproduction of the labor force were thus defined.

“Unproductive work,” as the classical economists and a good number of Marxists sagely explain, since it is situated before the valorization of capital and, therefore, non-payable work on the level of a *natural resource* and a *common good*, but regulated in the framework of natal and familial (bio-)politics fiercely promoted by mercantilism. With Maria Mies, Silvia Federici can therefore risk a parallel between the unpaid work of reproduction performed by women (paired with the appropriation of their profits by male workers) and the forced labor of slaves; and she studies the way in which the “war against women” aimed at disciplining them is part of the framework of a new type of patriarchy, the salaried patriarchy.¹⁴

With its hundreds of thousands of executions, the “witch hunts” were the bloodiest episode of this war against the relative autonomy and freedom of women waged since the end of the Middle Ages.¹⁵ “Witch hunts” are not the infamous mark of a God of the Middle Ages as described by a “history of mentalities” but the *Sabbath of Capital*.

In the most common functioning of an “art of government” which is “neither sovereignty nor the pastorate”¹⁶ military campaigns of “evangelization” allowed witch hunts to be exported to the New World, while the resistance of the “Indians” contributed to bringing the myth of the Good Savage to an end¹⁷ and to declaring that women, who were very involved in indigenous revolts, were essentially a danger to the colonial order. (And yet it is Caliban and not his mother Sicorax, the “sorceress” whose powers and influence over her son are not at all hidden by Shakespeare, who becomes the hero of Latin American revolutionaries....) Conversely, and at the risk of throwing off even the most well-established chronologies, the political strategy of extermination of the Savages could have influenced the massacre of Protestants while inspiring the long-term witch hunts (sodomites and cannibals) in our old Europe threatened by the *turba damnationis* of the poor.¹⁸ More generally, Michel Foucault was able to show the action, starting at the end of the sixteenth century, of this “sort of boomerang effect colonial practice can have on the juridico-political structures of the West.” And he explains:

It should never be forgotten that while colonization, with its techniques and its political and juridical weapons, obviously transported European models to other continents, it also had a considerable boomerang effect on the mechanisms of power in the West, and on the apparatuses, institutions, and

techniques of power. A whole series of colonial models was brought back to the West, and the result was that the West could practice something resembling colonization, or an internal colonialism, on itself.¹⁹

Such that the turns, detours, and boomerang effects of the *cycle of historical reciprocity of nationalism, racism, and sexism* are in every sense constitutive of the ecumenical power of capitalistic enveloping of the world in the permanent war that serves as vector and tensor. This *ecumene* cannot be imagined without the “technologies” of biopower and a biopolitics that is contemporary with the emergence of capitalism, of which the colonies are also the laboratory, and it throws a rather harsh light on the supposedly “progressist” reality of the transition, which could more appropriately be called a *continued break*.

2.2 Wars of Subjectivity and the Majoritarian Model

In his course at the Collège de France under the title *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault undertakes to expand the meaning of war and the typology of wars that took place during the first period of primitive accumulation. To do so, he draws our attention to a generally overlooked aspect of the “major social struggles” that marked the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and of which the “Peasants’ War” (1524–1526) is one of the most striking aspects.

Foucault observes that this “transition” was the theater of a specific type of war where the stakes were modes of subjectivation and behavior. The Christian “pastorate,” which exercised a subjective power of control over individual behavior (“One must become subject to become an individual”—and *subject* in every

sense of the word), entered into crisis under “the assault of counter-behavior,” of these “behavioral insurrections,” which he calls “pastoral revolts,” against the new economic conditions and government of behavior. The passage from “governing souls” to “political governing of people” did not consist in a simple transfer of pastoral functions from the Church to the State. It was much more both the intensification of the spiritual forms of control of individual behavior (both the Reform and Counter-Reform exercised “a much greater hold on the spiritual life of individuals than in the past”²⁰) and the extension of their temporal efficacy, redirected by these mechanisms of “governmentalization of the *res publica*”²¹ that put the new theological ethics of labor and wealth at the service of the disciplinarization and forced labor of the population.

The cardinal sin is no longer avarice but sloth, the fruit of “weakening discipline” and “loosening of morals” that must be *reduced* in the passage from disorder to order. Which also explains, as Foucault emphasizes in *Madness and Civilization* that “the relationship between the practice of confinement and the insistence on work is not fully defined by economic conditions,”²² because the imperative to work is all the more *indissociably economic and moral* in that it encounters innumerable forms of resistance requiring a combination of civil law and moral obligation.

The importance and radicalness of the wars of subjectivity in Europe and in the New World are made manifest in the destruction carried out by primitive accumulation not only on the level of the material conditions of life, but also in terms of existential territories, universes of values, cosmology, and the mythologies at the foundation of the “subjective life” of the colonized people and the poor of the so-called “civilized world.” Deterritorialization

deprives the colonized, women, and the proletariat of their “an-organic” life, to use one of Deleuze and Guattari’s expressions that should be redirected towards Foucault’s analysis. In fact, biopower can only invest life as administration of the “biological” conditions of the species through the state (fecundity, mortality, health, etc.) because primitive accumulation was previously the agent of destruction of this “subjective” dimension. The wars of subjectivity are therefore not a “supplement” to Capital in its “subjective” face, they constitute the most “objective” specificity of the wars against women, the mentally ill, the poor, criminals, day-laborers, workers, and more. They are not content with “overcoming” the adversary (to negotiate a better peace treaty, according to the classical idea of inter-state warfare) since their aim is precisely the “conversion” of subjectivity, the conformance of behavior and practices to the logic of the accumulation and reproduction of capital.

In this sense, the production of subjectivity is both the first of the capitalist productions and a major *object* of war and civil war. The formatting of subjectivity is their *strategic concern*, and it is found throughout the history of capitalism. For Félix Guattari, from whom we are borrowing the term, the “wars of subjectivity” are political wars of “formatting” and “steering” of the subjectivity needed for the production, consumption, and the reproduction of Capital. They are not foreign to the intense struggles waged inside insurrectional and protest movements to define the forms of organization and subjectivation of the revolutionary war machine (militancy, modes of action, strategy, tactics, etc.). For Michel Foucault, they form the web of resistance and invention of an “other” subjectivation that is found not only in every experience of revolutionary rupture,²³ but also in the last displacement that he was able to consider, since the

passage to the ethics of a “militant life” through *parrèsia* is itself a “war against the other.”²⁴

The violent processes of deterritorialization that are at the heart of primitive accumulation (understood in the narrowest sense of the term, even in the witch hunt²⁵) and of the globalization that accompanies it are therefore always inseparable from wars of subjectivity. Construction of the “majoritarian model” of Man as male, white, and adult transforming women into a minority gender and the colonized into a minority race is a strategic mechanism that *necessarily* takes place simultaneously in the colonies of the New World and in Europe, where it was well known that “diversities provide Satan with marvelous commodities.”²⁶ Such that the first *European construction* becomes that of a “Little Big Man” emerging from this space of terror benefitting all of the strategic “exchanges” in favor of the continued formation of a *global proletariat*.

The power relations and divisions established by the majoritarian model became deeply linked to organizing relationships of exploitation both in the homeland and in its peripheries. Because it is *with* primitive accumulation and *as* the continued accumulation of capitalism that the model majority (men)/minorities (women) functions within European wage labor by being combined with class exploitation.

The war against women produces a differentiation and a sexual division of labor that is revealed to be strategic for the history of the accumulation of capital and the struggles that oppose it. In a society in the process of being monetized, women only have access to money indirectly, through the wages of the male worker to whom the women find themselves in a situation of dependence and inferiority. Dominated according to class logic, male wage laborers became dominant in the logic of the majority/

minority model. Wages and their modalities of distribution are synonymous with a form of domination of women and forced promotion of the “bourgeois” nuclear family in the labor world, which repeats the refrain even in its most revolutionary movements. “Proletarian antifeminism” (to use Thönnessen’s expression) and workers’ defense of women’s rights reduced to the condition of mother and homemaker go hand in hand. As Maria Mies observes: “Proletarianization of men is based on the housewifization of women. Thus, the Little White Man also got his ‘colony,’ namely, the family and a domesticated housewife.”²⁷

Despite some feminist critiques, the Foucauldian microphysics of power reveals itself here to be a vital instrument in accounting for the way power also passes through the dominated, such that “micropolitics” becomes the privileged terrain of the dynamics of division, differentiation, and antagonism. In fact, the entire “class composition” of the proletariat is traversed with lines of fracture that at the origin are veritable molecular “civil wars” that cannot be reduced to any type of ideological conflict.

Ashis Nandy has remarkably described how, in India, construction of the majoritarian model by the British colonizers still passes, essentially, through the same stages since the establishment of a new “colonial hierarchy of sexual identities,” according to which “the masculine is superior to the feminine and the feminine is in turn superior to femininity in men” through a devalorization of Indian androgynous cosmology.²⁸ Normality is identified with the adult *homo europeaus*, at one and the same time virile, competitive, full of a warrior spirit, rejecting the impotence of the effeminate, while children like the colonized are relegated to the “primitive” world, synonymous with a situation of inferiority that only “development” (the process of civilization) can correct.

The mechanism of majority/minority power energizes the war of subjectivities of internal colonization and external colonization by establishing hierarchies of race and sex, but also civilization. The latter is perfectly “performed” by the Schmittian assertion according to which Indians “lacked the scientific power of Christian-European rationality. [...] The intellectual advantage was entirely on the European side.”²⁹ Which also explains how the discovery of the New World could appear as an “authentic epistemological event” compensating for Galilean decentering with a “terrestrial-imperialist recentering of Europe.”³⁰

“Primitive accumulation” would therefore have to be called *first accumulation (initiale* in the French translation by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, or *originelle* (original): *ursprünglich*) from which an international division of labor can already be traced with the hierarchies that are only of “class” because they are also of gender, race, and civilization. In other words, an *accumulation of potential and power (puissance et pouvoir)* that prevents simplifying the world-economy in its process of emerging by opposing the class struggle in the homeland and the race struggle in the colonies when the majority/minority mechanism is operational, under different modalities, on both sides of the Atlantic. There is an identity of nature and differences of regimes with multiple intersections.

2.3 Liberalism and Colonization: The Case of Locke

The intellectual biography and doctrinal apparatus of John Locke have long been studied to ascertain whether he was the founding father of political liberalism, at the origin of the entire American tradition, and the “elder statesman of modern political economy” (Marx). Despite there being a sizable amount of Anglo-Saxon literature on Locke, most of which is unknown in

France, little of it has been focused on his long colonial career and the repercussions it had on his philosophy as a whole—a philosophy in which the concept of “America” is omnipresent. The study of Locke’s liberalism—and liberalism *itself*—would be singularly enriched by it and reinserted in the history (or counter-history) that we are retracing here in broad strokes.

Locke was in fact a secretary of the Lords Proprietors of the Province of Carolina (1668), where he held land under the constitutional rules to which he contributed and according to which “every freeman of Carolina shall have absolute Power and Authority over his negro slaves.”³¹ Starting in 1673, he became secretary and treasurer on the Council of Trade and Foreign Plantations (1673) but also a stockholder in different companies, including the Royal African Company, which managed the slave trade and held a monopoly over it in West Africa.

The English “agricultural” model of colonization, of which Locke was an ardent defender, relied on this very lucrative trade. The fact that there is an immediate contradiction with the opening lines of the first of the two *Treatises on Government* (“Slavery is so vile and miserable...”³²), which condemn slavery and contributed to establishing his position as a liberal philosopher, is evidence that cannot be resolved by subtle distinctions between “contradictions in practice” and “contradictions in principle” or between “strong racism” and “weak racism.” It is in fact the *contradictory reality* of the liberal model’s universalism that is established here in the usage and in the name on an “Englishman,” including the racism “of civilization” in his colonial/colonialist constitution, at a time when the modern concept of race was not yet biologically—or “scientifically”—defined, and where the legal system of plantation slavery was negotiated under pressure from a circle of “Royal Adventurers” to which Locke

fully belonged. Which also explains how the English philosopher can, *without contradiction* from *his* liberal perspective, stigmatize the *political* “slavery” that absolute monarchy would like to introduce *in Europe* by subjecting all nations to a permanent state of war dominated by the arbitrary against all. The description given of it (the king has “degenerated into a wild beast”) is reminiscent of the Black Legend of the “Spanish technique” of colonization by systematic “rapin and plunder” deftly maintained in the context of “mercantilist” rivalries between the major European powers. That is the charge leveled against absolute monarchy: *confusing Europe with the worst of the colonies*, at the risk of maintaining “eternal seditions” and giving rise to principles capable of encouraging “popular uprisings” by threatening the very principle of government. In the foreword to the French translation by David Mazel, published in Paris in Year III of the Republic (1795), Locke’s political project is presented in a formula full of Solonian classicism: “finding a midpoint between these extremes.”³³

Because a man “cannot, by compact, or his own consent, *enslave himself* to any one, nor put himself under the absolute, arbitrary power of another,”³⁴ it is up to the “people,” by “consent” to be the source of *political power* and *civil society*—“of political or civil society,” to use the title of the central chapter of the *Second Treatise of Civil Government*. Its members place their “natural power” into the hands of the “community” which is asserted as a *commonwealth* by the power of “preservation of property” (VII, 85) without resorting to war, which is also for Locke, as a good European, the only true condition of *slavery* as it is “the state of war continued, between a lawful conqueror and a captive” (IV, 24). Since “that absolute monarchy [...] is indeed inconsistent with civil society” (VII, 90) because it is a *continuation*

of war by other means directed against its people, it is no less evident that civil society will be the affair of a *people of property owners* for whom the political problem—with which liberalism identifies through the intermediary of Locke—is that of a *return (of the repressed) of enslavement* of the “negroes” of America on European soil and in England, of which he ensures the “prosperity” *by means of war* that are the means of *colonial difference*. How, in fact, could the *razzia* of slaves and the slave trade fall under the laws of “just war” in the European theater? Yet isn’t this colonial difference completely relative given the conditions of the *poor* in this same theater of operations?

It falls to a people of property owners to *express* nascent capitalism and its concepts of labor, private property, and money, concepts which are lacking in the colonized, even in the state of nature of which they transgress the laws. Land is left fallow and spaces left vacant (*vacuis locis*) because “the wild Indian, who knows no enclosure” (V, 26) does not subject them to “human industry” and the work of *making value* (*mise en valeur*) which is supposed to be at the *natural* foundation of “property.” Nomads living off hunting and gathering do not “work” to *give each thing its proper value* and to exempt themselves from the divine injunction to make the earth fruitful: “God gave the world [...] to the use of the industrious and rational, (and *labour* was to be his *title* to it)” (V, 34). It is a first breach of natural law, of individual property, of the *exclusive private property (proprietas)* of land that a person *encloses* by labor and separates from what is common in the (“very modest”) limits of the use he or she will make of it. It is also, at least indirectly, a first justification of the colonial appropriation of these shared and *waste* lands of the Americas by the enactment of a politics of enclosure that can only mean *expropriation without consent* of its inhabitants

without law, even natural law (it does not occur to Locke that here, in this act of war and in this reason that could be authorized by Grotius,³⁵ there is the principle of explanation of these *vacant places, vacant habitations* after two centuries of European colonization...).

The difference in civilization is revealed to be so absolute ("the morals of these people [...], what strangers they are to humane feelings"³⁶) that the place of the savages that are said to live "in harmony with nature" is far from assured in a state of nature of which the trait is to make "private possessions" (V, 35³⁷) compatible with a "state also of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal." It is such an improbable historical state that "the promises and bargains for truck" *require* people to have relationships of truth and respect for giving one's word that they could take place between "a Swiss and an Indian, in the woods of America" (II, 4 and 14) ... The European in America would thus come to incarnate the law of nature, which is nothing other than a pure *self-interested calculation* shared by those who make their own laws! Returning to the work that would give the earth its value, the demonstration finally shows its anachronism in full by making itself accountable to the present: in America, "a king of a large and fruitful territory there feeds, lodges, and is clad worse than a daylabourer in England" (V, 41) because of the difference in revenue between an "acre of land" cultivated here (for which Locke deems the profits to be very precisely 5£) and there: "if all the profit an Indian received from it were to be valued, and sold here; at least, I may truly say, not one thousandth." (V, 43). There is no passage between here and there for Indians who have not been able to reach the final stage of the state of nature which is the invention of money: in its use "by consent," it transforms the land into *capital* aimed at producing

goods for commerce. Announcing the end of equality and the *natural limits* linked with the satisfaction of needs, money opens the way to the unlimited appropriation of land *and labor*, and to a first form of government (or governmentality) between individuals who have become unequal by "larger possessions and a right to them" (V, 36). Here a first form of development is reached, both monetary and proto-legal (in this order), of a *Far West* that is decomposed into a *war on waste*.³⁸ For Locke, however, it is a *good* that must be sought by society because it increases its overall wealth and benefits even the poorest day-laborers... A *fairy tale*, duly retold by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*, in the name of a "*previous accumulation*" dismantled by Marx (*the wealth of the nation ensures the poverty of the people*).

It is hard to disagree with MacPherson when he asserts that the institution of civil government that arose from this monetized state of nature to safeguard the "property of each person" means making the market economy and its class divisions the permanent foundation of civilized society.³⁹ Thus Locke inscribes the development of colonialism in America in the global economy of nascent capitalism as a step in *civilizing a single world*: "for I ask, what would a man value ten thousand, or an hundred thousand acres of excellent *land*, ready cultivated and well stocked too with cattle, in the middle of the inland parts of *America*, where he had no hopes of commerce with other parts of the world, to draw *money* to him by the sale of the product? It would not be worth the enclosing" (V, 50).

The full capitalist rationality deployed here in a colonial geopolitics of the state of nature obeys the historical logic of accumulation by the "commerce" of appropriation of the world. It allows the philosopher to replay, reconstruct, and displace onto the American stage in a veritable order of reasons the expropriation

without consent of the English peasants, which does not appear as such in the two *Treatises*—except in its supposedly most *natural* result: the people no longer owning land would have the capability of acquiring through their labor the *monetary* means to subsist by *transferring the gain in recompense for the labor into the pocket of another*⁴⁰... If the politics of enclosure were for Locke the “touchstone of the English path to colonizing America,”⁴¹ it is the fate of the “poor,” who must at all cost be put to work by submitting them to the regime of *workhouses* and “industry schools” for the children, by forcing them to enlist in the navy, or by deporting them to plantations,⁴² evocative of slavery in their *indentured servitude* in a world that commerce has made more “prosperous” than ever. Proof if needed that “the growth of the poor must therefore have some other cause, and it can be nothing else but the relaxation of discipline and corruption of manners; virtue and industry being as constant companions on the one side as vice and idleness are on the other.”⁴³

The limits of the civilizing function of labor are immediately measured after the introduction of money which founds the principle of rationality of unlimited accumulation by disassociating appropriation (of land) and labor (of landless men), *which can be appropriated* by following a law of nature *and of reason*. The full development of rationality coinciding with the flourishing of the *persona aconomica* is then more an affair of appropriation and expropriation than of labor, and the “industrious man” is no longer the “rational man.” He is the poor, laborious man submitted to the authority of the state which administers and disciplines its labor force by maintaining it in the shortest circuit of subsistence “from hand to mouth,” and the least capable of “elevating its thoughts beyond the immediate problems of existence” on a daily basis. The laborious class, which is as limited in

its possibilities of acquiring knowledge as it is of wealth,⁴⁴ could not be granted the right to revolt, since exercising insurgence depends, as a right, on a choice of reason and constitutes in fact *the only criteria of citizenship*⁴⁵—in its difference with subjection to an arbitrary and absolute power against which the “people” is right to revolt against to maintain its own safety and the security of its goods, “the reason why men enter into society” (XIX, 222). We find “freedom against slavery” by inclusive exclusion of the new proletariat, whose condition is considered so harshly by English economists after 1660 that there is no other “modern parallel except in the behavior of the least reputable of White colonists towards colored labor.”⁴⁶ White or Black, the labor force, which represents “the most essential, fundamental, and precious commodity”⁴⁷ is definitively not the “political” people where each person leads his or her understanding enough by reason to give themselves by mutual consent a “civil government” to be constituted into a “civil society” of which the *legislative* is “the soul that gives [it] form, life, and unity” (XIX, 212).

This liberal idea of a contract-consent founding legislation on the legitimacy of the people included in it imposes on Locke a *continuist* perspective on servitude and a *differential* perspective on reason,⁴⁸ according to which beings incapable of governing themselves, both inside (children, women, “madmen,” “idiots,” and the poor: *laboring poor* and *idle poor*) and outside (primitives/savages), should, in one way or another, be governed without consent.

It is based on a (geo-)politics of the understanding connecting in a new way internal and external colonization in the “identity of consciousness” of a new *subject of governance of the self and of others* which is established in this history of the state of nature where each “man has a property in his own person” (V, 27). Since

Locke, who forges in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* the nominal expression *the Self, subjection (subjectio)* to work is connected with the *appropriation* and the appropriation of a “Self” in the construction of the *possessive subject* as it combines, at the junction of psychology, epistemology, law, politics, and economics, with the European invention of the liberal consciousness.

“The Dominion of Man, in this little World of his own Understanding, being much the same, as it is in the great World of visible things.”⁴⁹ Critical of the universality of “innate ideas” imprinted in the soul by divine insemination, Locke’s empiricism endeavors to define the real “operations” of the mind that affirm by “reflection” the identity of thought and knowing for a consciousness whose self-consciousness is the promise of a conquering the process of totalization of knowledge and condition of reality of the responsibility of the person. Thought is no longer a metaphysical “substance” (Descartes), it becomes the object of work and an *appropriation* (it is *appropriated*) that makes me *accountable as a* (moral and legal) *Person* “capable of Law” and “responsible for his actions” by this “self-consciousness.” A *con-science* to use the neologism proposed by Pierre Coste in his translation done in close consultation with Locke to account for what the philosopher was the first to call “self-consciousness,”⁵⁰ without which the White Man, launched into the “discovery of the material world,”⁵¹ placed at the intersection of empiricism and Empire in the strictest correlation between economic power, cognitive power, and normative power, would not know how to guide his understanding—or launch his ship—on the “great ocean of knowledge,” like England was able to “make trade work” with the other nations of the world. All of this movement of “reflection” that is implied in the *Western identification*

of the identity of the same and the identity of the self, of the “proper” and “propriety”—in such a way that it is on this personal identity which means “the sameness of a rational Being” that should be “founded all the right and justice of reward and punishment; happiness and misery being that for which every one is concerned for *himself*.”⁵²

Yet this personal identity must of course be built on a *self-discipline* conceived of as an apprenticeship of authority and power over oneself and others, the keys to which are education (“suited to our English gentry”) and submission to the hierarchical matrix of the patriarchal family. The fact that *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (published by Locke in 1693) was a best-seller throughout the eighteenth century is a clear indication, fully resonating with the puritan and accountable ethics of capitalism,⁵³ and the system of *habits* that it endeavored to promote.⁵⁴ More than a simple *instruction*, it is “a regulation of the whole of conduct which, penetrating to all departments of private and public life, was infinitely burdensome and earnestly enforced”⁵⁵ that is at the heart of this capitalist *civilization* (to use another of Max Weber’s words) and of the wars of subjectivity it promotes in the name of a proprietary universality that “teaches” *others* about their inclusive exclusion/exclusive inclusion in the majority model of the wars of the *Self*. Because it goes without saying that all people will be members of “political and civil society” when it is a question of being governed, albeit with different status. The “Self-service” of liberalism.

2.4 Foucault and Primitive Accumulation

Various authors in the nebula of postcolonial studies have criticized Foucault for largely overlooking the colonial genealogy of