
HUMAN AUTONOMY AND THE OVERCOMING OF ALIENATION IN IMMATERIAL LABOR WITH REFERENCE TO ZEN BUDDHISM

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ABSTRACT

This paper, will be a reflection on the changes in labor and alienation in the information age. It will focus specifically on the concept of immaterial labor and how this effects human autonomy and the consciousness of alienation. The paper will trace these concepts from the writings of Marx, to the approaches of Hardt and Negri and Franco “Bifo” Berardi. It will then show how the shortcomings of these theories which concern human autonomy in the face of the alienation of material labor can be complemented by the insights into practice developed by Zen Buddhism.

Keywords: Immaterial Labor, Semiocapitalism, Alienation, Zen Buddhism

Introduction

We are living in an age where information and communication over electronic networks has a great influence on our perception of reality and even on our perception of ourselves. Our activities, our work and our labor increasing rely upon these networks. We are increasingly dependent upon the various kinds of media and social media with which we interact through our smart phones.

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