

# Mediations

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## **The Soviets of the Multitude: On Collectivity and Collective Work: An Interview with Paolo Virno**

By Alexei Penzin

Paolo Virno is one of the most radical and lucid thinkers of the postoperaist political and intellectual tradition. Of all the heterodox Marxist currents, *postoperaismo* has found itself at the very center of debates in contemporary philosophy. Its analytics of post-Fordist capitalism refer to Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, to Heidegger and his *Daseinsanalysis*, to German "philosophical anthropology," and to Foucault and Deleuze with their problematization of power, desire, and control apparatuses. Subjectivity, language, body, affects or, in other words, life itself, are captured by this regime of post-Fordist production. These "abstract" concepts and discourses have entered the reality of contemporary capitalism and become fundamental to it, as real, functioning abstractions. Such theoretical suggestions have launched enormous polemics over the last two decades.

Collectivity and subjectivity are two poles of the contemporary "culture industry." Virno proposes to rethink the meaning of this Adornian notion. "Culture industry" is a model for the whole network of production in the post-Fordist economy in which each subject-producer is a "virtuoso." In fact, in the actual conditions that have led to the disappearance of the standardized molds of the industrial Fordist epoch, there has been a profusion of performances without any pre-established scripts. This is one of the reasons why contemporary art provides the quintessence of virtuosic practices: the subjectivity of the contemporary artist is probably the brightest expression of the flexible, mobile, non-specialized substance of contemporary "living labor." However, there is still the need to identify its antipode, which classically is the collectivity.

To outline the opposite pole of subjectivity, I questioned Paolo Virno about the use of the term "multitude" — as a new political articulation of labor that avoids a repressive unification in the One (the State, nation, or a cultural "grand style") — in order to understand how it is possible to think its mode of unity, how new forms of micro-collectives work and how one might explain their explosive proliferation and creativity.

It is particularly interesting for me to ask the following questions not from a post-Fordist position, but rather from the post-socialist world, being myself part of a collective initiative that works in a space between theory, activism and artistic practices. In the post-socialist zone, new forms of labor (as well as poverty, extreme precariousness and anomie), which replaced the Soviet *ancien régime* under neo-liberal slogans with furious, destructive negativity, presented themselves as urgent or necessary components to the “transition to free market and democracy.” We witnessed the atomization and fragmentation of post-socialist societies, the horrifying violence of “primitive accumulation” (Marx) in the 1990s, followed by the violence of “primitive political accumulation” (Althusser) as the rebirth of some mutant form of a repressive State in the 2000s. Maybe we should break forever with the historical past of State socialism with its pompous glorification of monumental collectivity. However, is it really the case that, in the end, State socialism has to become the “communism of capital,” to use Virno’s words? Virno’s contribution is especially pertinent to understanding whether these new developments are forcing us to recall those revolutionary political institutions after which the Soviet Union was named: the soviets, or workers’ councils, which served as tools for democratic self-organization. This is the context in which we finally came to discuss “The Soviets of the Multitude.”

**Re-thinking the collective or “collectivity” occupies an important place in your theoretical work. In *A Grammar of the Multitude*, you speak of the necessity for a new articulation of relations between the collective and the individual. That would mean blurring the borders between the individual and the collective, private and public in contemporary post-Fordist production, understood as a “broad-based experience of the world.” You take as a point of departure Gilbert Simondon’s conception of the collective as something that is not opposed to the individual but, on the contrary, is a field of radical individualization: the collective refines our singularity. Recalling Marx’s notion of the “social individual,” which presupposes that the collective (language, social cooperation, etc) and the individual coexist, you elaborate quite a paradoxical definition of Marx’s theory as a “doctrine of rigorous individualism.” On the other hand, taking into account contemporary forms of labor, you propose the model of the individual “virtuoso,” which, as it seems, does not presuppose any other dimension of collectivity with the exception of the situation of public performance itself. Can we think of the realm of the collective as just a background, or a pre-individual material involved in a kind of teleology of individuation, or is the collective just a passive audience? Is the collective deprived of any constituent, affirmative or creative function? Could you clarify the place of the collectivity in your thinking?**

I owe a lot to Lev S. Vygotskij’s thoughts on the collective, on the relation between the collective and singularity.<sup>1</sup> His main idea is that the social relation precedes and allows for the formation of the auto-conscious “I.” Let me explain: initially there is

an “us”; yet — and here lies the paradox — this “us” is not equivalent to the sum of many well-defined “I’s.” In sum, even if we cannot yet speak of real subjects, there is still an inter-subjectivity. For Vygotskij, the mind of the individual, rather than an incontrovertible departing point, is the result of a process of differentiation that happens in a primeval society: “the real movement of the development process of the child’s thought is accomplished *not* from the individual to the socialized, *but* from the social to the individual.” Gradually the child acquires the collective “us,” which we can define as an *interpsychical* dimension, turning it into an *intrapsychical* reality: something intimate, personal, unique. However, this introversion of the interpsychical dimension, this singularization of the “primordial us,” does not happen definitively during childhood: it always repeats itself during adulthood. Experience is always measured — either in an insurrection, a friendship, or a work of art — through the transformation of the interpsychical into intrapsychical. We constantly have to deal with the *interiority of the public* and with the *publicity of the interior*.

This means that the human nature cannot be defined through the observation of a single member of its species, of his own perceptions, affects and cognitions. Instead, the human nature consists of a set of relations established between a plurality of individuals. To be more precise: instead of connecting given singularities, this “set of relationships” *constitutes* these single individuals as such. Human nature is located in such a thing that — not belonging to any individual mind — only exists in the relation *between* the many. To speak of human nature means to develop a *philosophy of the preposition “between.”*

I understand your objection regarding the “virtuoso”: in this case transindividuality, the collective dimension, *seems* to remain in the background, reduced to being the stalls of passive spectators, that in the maximum can applaud or boo the performance they are seeing.

But is that really the case? Maybe not. Let’s try to consider *l’artista esecutore* (the performing artist) through Vygotskij’s eyes. The audience — with its habitudes, competences and emotions — constitutes the *interpsychic* ambit, the preliminary “us” that the *virtuoso* introverts, turning it into something *intrapsychic*, singular. The virtuosic execution stages this transformation. If we think of contemporary production, we must understand that each individual is, *at the same time*, the artist performing the action and the audience: he performs individually while he assists the other’s performances.

In those factories in which cognitive work is predominant and verbal language constitutes the main productive instrument, the “public” is made of other *virtuosi* who, in their turn, head for the stage. At the end, what the single producer executes is the “score,” be it either collective or transindividual. In fact, this “score” is made of social cooperation, of the set of relations that define us, of the faculty of language, and so on.

Contemporary philosophical thought proposes critical models for understanding collectivity, reintroduced under the name of “community” (Jean-Luc Nancy, Giorgio Agamben). This thought deconstructs politically dangerous essentialist representations of community as One (a unified political body, the Leader, the State). At the same time, by introducing the logic of multiplicity and singularity, this thought confronts the vision of singularities as active and productive forces, considering them as a kind of static “being-together” of passive existences exposing themselves one to another. How does a political thinking that elaborates the concept of the multitude relate to this “community” discourse?

The thought of “community” carries a basic defect: it neglects the principle of individualization, that is, the process of the formation of singularities from something all its elements share. The logic of multiplicity and singularity is not sufficient, and we need to clarify the premise, or the condition of possibility, of a *multitude of singularities*. Enouncing it as a provocation: we need to say something about the One that allows the existence of many unrepeatable individuals. The discourse about the “community” prudishly eludes the discourse about the One. Yet, the political existence of the “many” as “many” is rooted in a homogeneous and shared ambit; it is hacked out of an impersonal background.

It is with respect to the One that the opposition between the categories of “people” and “multitude” clearly emerges. Most importantly, there is a reversion in the order of things: while the people tend to the One, the multitude derives from the One. For the people, the One is a *promise*; for the “many,” it is a *premise*.

Furthermore, it also mutes the definition of what is common or shared. The One around which the people gravitate is the State, the sovereign, the *volonté générale*. Instead, the One carried on the backs of the multitude consists of the language, the intellect as a public or interpsychical resource, of the generic faculties of the species. If the multitude shuns the unity of the State, this is simply because the former is related to a completely different One, which is preliminary instead of being conclusive. We could say: the One of the multitude collimates in many ways with that transindividual reality that Marx called the “*general intellect*” or the “social brain.” The *general intellect* corresponds to the moment in which the banal human capacity of thinking with words becomes the main productive force of matured capitalism. However, it can also constitute the foundations of a republic that has lost the characteristics of Stately sovereignty.

In conclusion, the thought of the “community,” even if laudable in many respects, is an impolitic thought. It takes into account only some emotional and existential aspects of the multitude: in short, a lifestyle. It is obviously important, but what it is fundamental to understand is the work and the days of the multitude as the raw matter to define a well-rounded political model that moves away from that mediocre artefact of the modern State, which is at once rudimentary (regarding the social cooperation) and ferocious. What is fundamental is to conceive the relation between

the *One* and the *Many* in a radically different way from that of Hobbes, Rousseau, Lenin or Carl Schmitt.

Your argument related to our subject also develops on the level of the critical appropriation of concepts in German “philosophical anthropology” (Arnold Gelen, Helmut Plessner). As you say, what we nowadays call “human nature” is the basic “raw material” for the capitalist production. “Human nature” interpreted as a set of “bio-anthropological invariants,” as a kind of potentiality referring to the faculty of language, to neoteny as the retention of juvenile traits in adult behavior, to “openness to the world” (i.e. the absence of fixed environment), etc. You state that these anthropological invariants become sociological traits of a post-Fordist labor force, expressing themselves as permanent precariousness, flexibility, and the need to act in unpredictable situations. Post-Fordist capitalism does not “alienate” human nature, but rather reveals it at the center of contemporary production, and by the same move, exposes it to apparatuses of exploitation and control. Former ways of easing the painful uncertainty and instability of human behavior through ritual mechanisms and traditional social institutions melt into air. How does this new moment change the specificity of collective work today? Is it possible to speak of the collective dimension as a practice of self-organization, mutual aid, and protection without any institutional framework? Can we say that this collectivity is now forming in the context of life outside of the sites of production, in the space of “socialization outside of the working place”?

Let us agree on the use of the word “institution.” Is it a term that belongs exclusively to the vocabulary of the adversary? I don’t think so. I believe that the concept of “institution” is also (and perhaps mainly) decisive to the politics of the multitude. Institutions constitute the way in which our species protects itself from uncertainty and with which it create rules to protect its own praxis. Therefore, an institution is also a collective, such as *Chto delat/What is to be done?*<sup>2</sup> Institution is the mother tongue. Institutions are the rituals we use to heal and resolve the crisis of a community. The true debate should not be between institutional and anti-institutional forces; instead, it should identify the institutions that lay beyond the “monopoly of the political decision” incarnated by the State. It should single out the institutions that meet the “general intellect” referred by Marx, that “social brain” that is, at the same time, the main productive force and a principle of republican organization.

The modern central state is facing a radical crisis, but it has not ceased to reproduce itself through a series of disturbing metamorphoses. The “state of permanent exception” is surely one of the ways in which sovereignty survives itself, indefinitely postponing its decline. The same applies to what Marx said about joint-stock companies: these constituted “an overtaking of private property operated on the same basis of private property.” To put it differently, joint-stock companies allowed the overcoming of private property but, at the same time, articulated this possibility in such a way that

they qualitatively reinforced and developed that same private property. In our case, we could say: the state of permanent exception indicates an overcoming of the form of the State on the same basis of its “statuality.” It is a perpetuation of the State, of sovereignty, but also the exhibition of its irreversible crisis, of the full maturity of a no longer statal republic.

So, I believe that the “state of exception” allows us to reflect on the institutions of the multitude, about their possible functioning and their rules. An example: in the “state of exception”, the difference between “matters of right” (de jure) and “matters of fact” (de facto) is so attenuated that it almost disappears. Once more, the rules become empirical data that can even acquire a normative power. Now, this relative distinction between norms and facts that nowadays produces special laws and such prisons as Guantanamo can suffer an alternative declension, becoming a “constitutional” principle of the public sphere of the multitude. The decisive point is that the norm should exhibit not only the possibility of returning into the ambit of facts, but also to its factual origin. In short, it should exhibit its revocability and its substitutability; each rule should present itself as both a unit of measure of the praxis and as something that should continuously be re-evaluated.

**On an empirical level, the specificity of contemporary production saturated by “mass intellectuality” — both in mainstream currents of business and cultural industry, and on the side of alternative or resistant political and cultural forms — consists of the formation of relatively small collectives, workgroups, research teams, organizational committees, various collaborations, initiatives, etc. They have definite and more or less long-term tasks like realizing a project, preparing a publication or a conference, designing an exhibition or, on the other hand, organizing a social movement with regard to this or that pretext, initiating protests around this or that event, etc. How would you locate this proliferation of micro-collectives in a broader context of recent developments in post-Fordist production?**

Micro-collectives, workgroups, research teams, etc. are half-productive, half-political structures. If we want, they are the no man’s land in which social cooperation stops being exclusively an economic resource and starts appearing as a public, non-stately sphere. If examined as productive realities, the micro-collectives you mention have mainly the merit of *socializing the entrepreneurial function*: instead of being separated and hierarchically dominant, this function is progressively reabsorbed by living labor, thus becoming a pervasive element of social cooperation.

We are all entrepreneurs, even if an intermittent, occasional, contingent way. But, as I was saying, micro-collectives have an ambivalent character: apart from being productive structures, they are also germs of political organization. What is the importance of such ambivalence? What can it suggest in terms of the theory of the organization? In my opinion, this is the crucial issue: nowadays the subversion

of the capitalistic relations of production can manifest itself through the institution of a public, non-stately sphere, of a political community oriented towards the *general intellect*. In order to allow this subversion, the distinctive features of post-Fordist production (the valorization of its own faculty of language, a fundamental relation with the presence of the other, etc.) demand a radically new form of democracy. Micro-collectives are the symptom — as fragile and contradictory as they may be — of an *exodus*, of an enterprising subtraction from the rules of wage labor.

**In the contemporary “creative industry,” collective work often takes the paradigmatic form of “brainstorming.” It consists of the discussion and production of both ideas and solutions, even if a considerable part of them are rejected after critical examination, though this work sometimes opens the door for unexpected innovations. In the conditions of Fordism, massive collectivities — organized through a strict disciplinary division of labor — produced the well-known effect of the multiplication of separate productive forces of workers (“the whole is more than the sum of its parts”). Maybe it would be possible to make a (disputable) assumption: under the conditions of post-Fordism, collective work can be organized through “subtraction” when the result of the work is inferior to the sum of the collective effort. This becomes a sort of exception, an unexpected innovation (“the whole is less than the sum of the parts”). On the other hand, if not considered in terms of products, such collective work produces a feeling of strong subjectivity and strength, valorizing each member of the collective. What is your opinion? Would it be possible to connect this “subtractive” mode of functioning with the disappearance of a measure for work in contemporary production?**

That’s the perfect way of saying it, that in post-Fordism, “the whole is less than the sum of parts” — I will repeat this expression from now on. It is a formula that correctly expresses the copiousness of social cooperation regarding its economical-productive finality. We are currently witnessing a phenomenon in collective intelligence that is identical to what happened thirty years ago in Italy, with the Sicilian oranges, when tons of fruit was destroyed in order to keep prices high. But this comparison only works to a certain extent. Nowadays, the quota of collective intelligence that is thrown away in the production of goods is not physically destroyed, but somehow remains there, as a ghost, as a non-used resource that is still available. The power that is freed by the *sum of the parts*, even if not expressed in its *whole*, meet a very different destiny. Sometimes it becomes frustration and melancholic inertia, or it generates pitiless competition and hysterical ambition. In other cases, it can be used as a propeller for subversive political action. Also, here we need to bear in mind an essential ambivalence: the same phenomenon can become both a danger and a salvation. The copiousness of collective intelligence is, altogether, *heimlich* — familiar and propitious — and *unheimlich* — disturbing and extraneous.

In one of your statements in which you discuss the contemporary culture industry, you argue that post-Fordist capitalism provides relative autonomy for creativity.<sup>3</sup> It can only capture and appropriate its products, commercializing and instrumentalizing the innovations emerging in subcultures, in “ghettos” — alternatives to the mainstream — as well as, we can suppose, in the field of production of critical knowledge and art. Referring to Marx’s dichotomy, you say that this means a return to “formal subsumption.” Therefore, capitalists do not organize the whole chain of production process, they just capture, and commodify, spontaneous, “self-organized” social collaborations and their products. This thesis seems to be contrary to the position of Negri and Hardt. They describe postmodern “biopolitical production” as an effect of real subsumption of labor under capital. Could you explain your argument and the differences of your position regarding this question?

Those who study social communication are very attentive to the so-called “pragmatic paradoxes.” What is that all about? Of exhortations or intrinsically contradictory orders, such as “I order you to be spontaneous.” The consequence is an obvious antinomy: I cannot be spontaneous if I am obeying to an order and, vice-versa, I cannot obey to an order if I am behaving in a spontaneous way. Alas, something similar happens in contemporary production in which there is the imperative to be efficacious through behaviors that cannot be conformed to any predetermined obligation. To show this paradox, I sometimes speak of a return of the “formal subsumption” of labor under capital. With this expression, Marx designates that moment in the industrial revolution in which capitalists appropriated a production that was still organized in a traditional way (craftsmanship, small rural property, etc). It is obvious that, in our case, it is a very particular “formal subsumption,” for the capitalists appropriate not something that already existed but, on the contrary, an innovation that can only exist with the recognition of a certain autonomy of social cooperation. This is a rough similarity. It is obvious, however, that the paradox “I order you to be spontaneous” tests the contemporaneous social conflict: the match point lies in the stress of either “I order you” or of “to be spontaneous.”

In our present time, the labor force enriches the capital *only if* it takes part in a form of social cooperation that is wider than the one presupposed by the factory or the office. In post-Fordism, the efficient worker includes — in the execution of his own labor — attitudes, competences, wisdoms, tastes and inclinations matured somewhere else, outside that time specifically dedicated to the production of goods. Nowadays, he who deserves the title of *Stakhanov* is he who is professionally entangled in a net of relations that exceeds (or contradicts) the social restrictions of his given “profession.”<sup>4</sup>

**As is well known, many avant-garde movements in twentieth-century art were organized by the logic of groups and collectives, which claimed that their programs aimed at revolutionizing the traditional aesthetic forms (dada, surrealism, Soviet**

avant-garde, situationism, etc). Over the past twenty years, artists and curators have visibly become more and more interested in collective work, and they make this interest the subject of research and representation in their practice. Probably, the logic of innovation in contemporary art depends on collective work and co-authorship, and the artistic collectivity is not just a matter of some “party-style” sharing of a common program. You work on a theory of innovation in your recent texts, which has been partially published in the book *Multitude between Innovation and Negation*. How do you take into account this dimension of collectivity and co-authorship? Could we say that the moments of co-innovation are simultaneously the moments in which the subjectivization of the collective takes place?

I believe that there are two main differences between the avant-gardes of the first part of the twentieth century and the present collective artistic practice. The first concerns the relation with reproducibility of the work of art. Walter Benjamin noted that the dadaists and surrealists anticipated, with their expressive inventions, the functioning of techniques that, within a short period of time, would guarantee the unlimited reproduction of artistic objects. The historical avant-gardes tried to manage the transformation of the unicity attributed to the aura of the work of art into the condition of seriality in which the “prototype” — the original model — lost its weight. Obviously, the present collective artistic work accepts, from the beginning, technical reproduction, using this characteristic as the starting point to produce a sparkle of unicity, of unmistakable singularity. Using a slogan, I would say that the challenge is a sort of *unicity without aura*: a non-original unicity that originates in — and exclusively in — the anonymous and impersonal character of the technical reproduction.

The second difference concerns politics. The historical avant-gardes were inspired by the centralized political parties. In contrast, today’s collective practices are connected to the decentered and heterogeneous net that composes post-Fordist social cooperation. Reusing your nice formula, I would say that co-authorship is an attempt to correct on an aesthetic level the reality of a production in which “the whole is less than the sum of parts.” It is an attempt to exhibit what would be the sum of the parts if it was not reduced to *that* whole.

In conclusion, I’d like to ask you a question that departs from the local situation I share with my friends from the Chto delat/What is to be done? group as well as other new initiatives, movements, political and artistic collectives from the post-socialist, or post-Soviet world. Here, collectivity has a different wager in the course of the history of the revolutionary movement — from the “soviets” (worker councils) as organs of direct democracy and self-government, to their function as organizers of the production process in early USSR, and finally their bureaucratization and submission to Party control. We are also aware of Stalin’s “collectivization.” This complicated historical experience also had an artistic dimension — just think of Alexander Rodchenko’s famous idea of “workers’

**clubs” as places of mass engagement and politization. Nowadays, the activists of new political movements in post-Soviet countries try to rethink this political, historical and aesthetic experience. What is your relation with the experience of the soviets? Was it important for your political formation?**

Before saying something about the soviets, I’d like to gesture to the political-intellectual tradition from which — without meriting it — I come. The critique of that modern barbarity that is wage labor, dependent on the employer, the critique of that “monopoly of the political decision” that is the State — these were our references in the 1960s and 1970s, and they still are today. These references made us enemies of the real and ideal socialism. From the beginning, our tradition longed for the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the CPSU. It was divorced from the culture and the values of the “labor movement,” and this allowed it to understand the meaning of the labor fights against the wage. It recognized capitalism’s devotion to “permanent revolution,” to the continuing innovation of the labor process and ways of life, in order to avoid astonishment or lament, since the production of surplus value is no longer connected to the factory and sovereignty does not coincide any more with the nation-states.

No nostalgia, hence. On the contrary, there is a lasting sense of relief for the fall of a regime founded on the cancerous metastasis of the State and on the glorification of labor (of that work that any laborer desired to suppress). Saying so, now we can speak of the soviets. The problem is: how do you articulate a public sphere that is no longer connected to the State? What are the institutions of the multitude?

The democracy of the multitude takes seriously the diagnosis that Carl Schmitt proposed, somewhat bitterly, in the last years of his life: “The era of the State is now coming to an end [...]. The State as a model of political unity, the State as titleholder of the most extraordinary of all monopolies, in other words, the monopoly of political decision-making, is about to be dethroned.” With one important addition: the monopoly of decision making can only really be taken away from the State if it ceases once and for all to be a monopoly. The public sphere of the multitude is a *centrifugal force*. In other words, it excludes not only the continued existence, but also the reconstitution in any form of a unitary “political body.” But here, the crucial question returns: which democratic bodies embody this centrifugal force?

Hobbes felt a well-known contempt for those “irregular political systems” in which the multitude adumbrated itself: “Nothing but leagues, or sometimes mere assemblies of people, without union to any particular designee, nor determined by obligations of one to another.” Well, the democracy of the multitude consists precisely of such institutions: leagues, assemblies and, why not, *councils* (“soviets” in Russian). Except that, contrary to Hobbes’s negative judgment, here we surely are not dealing with ephemeral appearances. The leagues, the assemblies, the soviets — in short, the organs of non-representative democracy — give political expression to the productive cooperation that has at its core the general intellect. The soviets of the multitude

produce a conflict with the State's administrative apparatuses, with the aim of eating away at its prerogatives and absorbing its functions. Those same basic resources — knowledge, communication, etc. — that are the order of the day in the post-Fordist production are translated into political praxis.

What I mean is that the word "soviet," which became unpronounceable due to solid historical reasons, has now, and maybe only now, acquired a pregnant meaning. We can only realistically speak of the soviet at the dawn of the State, in the period of the cognitive work in which we must valorize whatever is singular and unique in the experience of each member of our species. Of course, to say *that*, we need to find other words.

**Notes**

1. Lev Semyonovich Vygotskij (1896–1934) was a Soviet psychologist and internationally-known founder of cultural-historical psychology. Vygotskij was a highly prolific author. His major works span six volumes, written over roughly ten years, from his *Psychology of Art* (1925) to *Thought and Language* (1934). The philosophical framework he provided includes not only insightful interpretations about the cognitive role of tools of mediation, but also the re-interpretation of well-known concepts in psychology such as the notion of internalization of knowledge
2. Chto delat/What is to be done? ([www.chtodelat.org](http://www.chtodelat.org)) was founded in 2003 in Petersburg by a group of artists, critics, philosophers and writers from Petersburg, Moscow, and Nizhny Novgorod with the goal of merging political theory, art and activism. Since then, Chto delat has been publishing an English-Russian newspaper on issues central to engaged culture, with a special focus on the relationship between a re-politicization of Russian intellectual culture and its broader international context.
3. See, for example, Sonja Lavaert and Pascal Gielen, “The Dismeasure of Art: An Interview with Paolo Virno” in *Open. Cahier on Art and the Public Domain* 17, 2009. <http://www.skor.nl/article-4178-nl.html?lang=en>.
4. Alexey Stakhanov (1906–1977) was a miner in the Soviet Union, Hero of Socialist Labor (1970), and a member of the CPSU (1936). He became a celebrity in 1935 as part of a movement that was intended to increase worker productivity and demonstrate the superiority of the socialist economic system.