André Gorz: Thinker of Emancipation

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André Gorz's multiform thought is entirely centred on liberation: from work, which prevents individuals from thriving; from consumption, which grows ever higher; and from the social system, which reduces individuals to mere pawns in a "megamachine".

This portrait of André Gorz is accompanied by two unpublished, critical perspectives on his work, one written by Robert Castel for *La Vie des Idées* in October 2012 ("Salariat ou revenu d'existence ? Lecture critique d'André Gorz"), the other by Bernard Perret ("Écologie et émancipation. Penser avec et contre Gorz"), both published in December 2013.

When mapping the European intellectual landscape of social critique since the 1960s, André Gorz distinguishes himself through his originality and singularity. His work on social and political society, which unquestionably stands out from the rest, is both recognised yet little known.

There are several ways of creating an intellectual portrait of an author. One is to trace the person's career and offer a history of the development and critical reception of their ideas. Another consists in listing the main themes of their work and discussing the specific contributions made to each one. A third way consists in identifying the unifying thread – which always exists – of their thought and showing how it structures and unifies their work. These different methods are not mutually exclusive, of course; instead they complete each other and thus allow a certain level of faithfulness to the author to be maintained. André Gorz's death at the end of September 2007 allows us to revisit and analyse his work as a whole. In this essay we shall therefore favour the third method. We consider it to be relevant for two vital reasons. Firstly, his work was not given the same reception everywhere. In the last interview that he gave in late 2006 to the *Nouvel Observateur*[1], where he worked as an economic journalist for almost twenty years under the pseudonym Michel Bosquet, André Gorz talked about his doctrinal heritage for the first time, stating, "The British think of me as an heir to Sartre; the Germans see me as a descendant of the Frankfurt School (Adorno and Marcuse); in France, I am considered more as a disciple of Illich". Existentialism, Critical Theory and Political Ecology: the whole protean nature of his work may be summarised in these few phrases referring to the way in which it was received, perceived and interpreted according to the readers' location. The second reason guiding this intellectual portrait is based on André Gorz's particular conception of the philosophical discipline. Unlike Gilles Deleuze, for example, who believed that philosophy served first and foremost to establish concepts, André Gorz saw it more as a means of thinking about oneself: "I therefore do not understand philosophy in the way of those who create great philosophical systems, but rather as an

[1] 14-20 December 2006.

attempt to understand oneself, to discover oneself, to free oneself and to create oneself"[2], he said in an interview given in 1984 to the magazine for young members of the German Social Democratic Party, the SPD. It was this unique conception of philosophy that can provide the key to the origins and unifying thread of his ideas. This epicentre, which consequently caused successive shock waves over the course of his career, was focused unquestionably on the question of alienation and, naturally, on the means of overcoming it: disalienation, liberation, emancipation – which, in a way, are the cornerstones of Gorzian philosophy, either from an individual or a collective vantage point or, better still, as the connection between the two. A little further on in the 1984 interview, André Gorz states, "Alienation, for me, has always been the philosophical question that best elucidates my personal experience. From early childhood, I had the feeling that, for other people, I was someone I could not be by myself (and vice versa)". Above and beyond his own particular case, what concerned him was the following question: "How can people endlessly hide from themselves the fundamental gap between what they are for themselves and what they are in and through their interactions with others, and claim to coincide and identify with their social being, their name, their affiliations? Clearly, the same question should be asked in reverse as well: why are individuals unable to recognise themselves in the consequences of their action or even, more often, as the authors or subjects of their action?"

Gorz's first three works were essays of pure philosophy: *Fondements pour une morale* (published as an abridged version in 1977 but written between 1946 and 1955), *Le Traître* (1958) and *La Morale de l'Histoire* (1959). They form the basis on which André Gorz would establish the foundations of his thought on the alienation, liberation and emancipation of individuals, social classes and society as a whole. Even if one can "access" Gorz's thought through any of his works, we believe that it is only possible to achieve a deeper understanding of his thought if one has been exposed to this pioneering trilogy.

In the period in which Gorz was "tackling" the question of alienation, it was not a new idea in theoretical debates. It was the subject of many reflections, particularly in relation to the works of Lukács in 1920s Germany. In France, however, the Communist Party's authoritarian control over critical thought, and what Gorz (and others) called "Stalin's Catechism", prevented this philosophical issue from being expanded upon further. This was one of the reasons that led Gorz to move closer to the main leaders of the Italian Communist Party, who maintained far more distant relations with the USSR than their counterparts in the French Communist Party. Gorz allowed some texts that were representative of these ideas to be published in the review *Les Temps Modernes* in which he played a very active part with Sartre and de Beauvoir. One of the main themes in that current of thought was the relationship to work.

The end of work

André Gorz is often presented as one of the theorists of the "end of work", to use the title of the book by Jeremy Rifkin (who is also included in the same category). This

[2] "L'Homme est un être qui a à se faire ce qu'il est", interview for the monthly review of DGB, the German confederation of trade-unions, in January 1984, reproduced in Christophe Fourel (ed.), *André Gorz, un penseur pour le XXIe siècle*, p. 249-267 (second edition, Paris, La Découverte, 2012). A different version of this interview was previously published in English: « A discussion with André Gorz on alienation, freedom, utopia and himself », afterword to *The Traitor,* p.273-307 (Verso, 1989).

categorisation is not improper, of course, but it skips over not only the subtlety of Gorz's analysis but also the development of his thought on this matter.

In a reflection on employment and work in André Gorz's thought[3], Denis Clerc and Dominique Méda conclude their text with these words: "Yes, says Gorz, work is important because it enables us to produce what we need. Yes, technology is important because it enables us to carry out that production with as little work input as possible. However, work and the economy are not everything in life: if we restore them to their rightful (modest) place, they will play the role of a stepping stone towards a society that is no longer one-dimensional, and therein lies true enrichment". They continue: "Work no doubt allows the realm of necessity to give way to the realm of freedom, but Gorz rightly adds that if work is the condition for emerging from the realm of necessity, it by no means organises the realm of freedom". Realm of necessity on the one hand and realm of freedom on the other – Marx set out this distinction for the first time in a short but famous passage in Book III of *Capital*.

Gorz's ideas, indeed, were wholly in keeping with Marx's thought, which, as Richard Sobel states, considers "the question of the liberation of work (as found here and now, under capitalist oppression) as the only real point of departure for any reflection on social emancipation"[4]. He nevertheless went beyond Marx on this question, asserting an anthropological conception of work closer to that of Hannah Arendt than to that of the author of *Capital*, while enriching his reflection through an uninterrupted dialogue with certain Marxist texts.

Without over-simplifying, several phases can be identified in the evolution of Gorz's thought regarding the role of work in social emancipation. Initially, in the 1960s, Gorz followed a "classic" Marxian line (man is *homo faber* above all), although he was inspired by the heterodox critique developed by his Italian friend and union member Bruno Trentin (who, much later, became general secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)). In his 1967 work *Le socialisme difficile*[5], Gorz stressed that "social production will continue to be based primarily on human work; the social work of production will remain the primary activity of individuals, and it is mainly through their work that they will be integrated into society and belong to it". The focus of the struggle for emancipation therefore lay in the capacity to resist the dispossession of knowledge to which capitalism subjected workers through the increasingly subtle division of labour. The real evolution of Gorz's work, and his originality as regards that of Marx, would come about in 1980 with the publication of his book *Adieux au prolétariat*[6]. This book, although widely read, was not always properly understood, especially by the trade unions (the French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) in particular, with which Gorz nevertheless maintained very close links). It is true that in this work Gorz developed the idea that the workers' movement was no longer the space in which the overcoming of capitalism could be conceived. As a result, the emancipation of the working class cannot be the condition for a liberation of society as a whole. However, in this book, which centred on his thoughts concerning alienation and emancipation, Gorz transformed the approach of the Marxian dichotomy between realm of necessity and realm of freedom by "importing" into it (or rather incorporating) the concepts of

[3] "Emploi et travail chez André Gorz", Chapter 5 in *André Gorz, un penseur pour le XXIe siècle, op. cit*.
[4] Richard Sobel, "Le règne de la nécessité borne-t-il l'émancipation sociale ?", *Revue économique* – vol. 62, N°2, March 2011.
[5] Paris, Galilée. Published in English as *Socialism and Revolution*, Allen Lane, 1975.
[6] Subtitle: *au-delà du socialisme,* Paris, Seuil, [originally published by Galilée], 1980. Translated into English as *Farewell to the Working Class. An Essay on Post-Industrial Socialism,* Pluto, 1994.

heteronomy and autonomy inspired by the thought of Ivan Illich, with whom he had had an intellectual bond since the early 1970s. And yet, should we talk of a turning point in Gorzian thought? This is not an easy question to settle. The limitations of this article do not allow us to develop the point further; we shall simply highlight that if Gorz's thought incorporated Illichian concepts, it is because his method of extending (and even exceeding) the Marxian conception was already latent in Gorz's first books, particularly *La Morale de l'Histoire* (1959).

Furthermore, Gorz was a perceptive observer, anticipating the developments at work in capitalism. And yet, the nature of productive work had evolved primarily through an increased division of labour. Gorz therefore sought to adapt his understanding of these developments using updated intellectual tools. According to him, it was thus no longer possible to imagine that the productive power of the workers' collective could become an adapted instrument of liberation for society as a whole. Productive social work became the realm of heteronomy. In other words, "the set of activities that individuals must accomplish as functions coordinated from the outside by a predetermined organisation". Under these conditions, it was better to strive to make work, over which the workers had less and less control in terms of organisation and cooperation (even self-management), as effective as possible so as to shift the focus of the struggle for emancipation onto reducing the working time, because productivity gains would allow for it. Individuals could therefore expect to flourish outside and to develop autonomous activities outside the sphere of work; in other words, for Gorz, activities that constituted an end unto themselves. The other aspect that inspired Gorz to develop his ideas concerned the employment dynamic. Indeed, he observes that the productivity gains made through the division of labour and technological progress were such that employment was doomed to continually shrink, to the point that Gorz states in *Les Métamorphoses du travail* that "the economy no longer needs everyone to work - and will do so less and less"[7]. He adds, "The work society is outdated: work can no longer serve as a foundation for social integration". Hence the book's subtitle: *quête du sens* ("quest for meaning"). A society that does everything to economise on work cannot, therefore, glorify work as the source of personal identity and self-realisation. Public policies that make job creation their aim are therefore destined to fail, and are even a decoy. For him, on the contrary, a realistic policy should consist in implementing methods of "redistributing work which will reduce the amount of work *everybody* does, without for all that deskilling it or compartmentalizing it"[8]. However, several authors have criticised Gorz's economic reasoning and, supported by statistics, contested his theories stating that the reduction of employment was unavoidable[9]. More specifically, they criticised him for over-generalising the phenomenon, while recognising that his theories were by no means unfounded if one only makes the effort to stand back. It should also be mentioned that the criticisms directed at André Gorz were made before the economic and financial "crisis" triggered by the collapse of the Lehman Brothers bank in autumn 2008. Ever since, changes to employment (sharp rise in unemployment, increased precariousness, deterioration in the quality of employment) as well as the growing inefficiency of employment policies have merely reinforced Gorz's theories by giving them even greater relevance.

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[7] *Critique of Economic Reason*, Verso, 1989, p. 70. Original French edition: *Métamorphoses du travail, quête du sens,* Paris, Galilée 1988.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 71.
[9] Cf. D. Clerc and D. Méda, *op. cit.*

André Gorz then took an important step on the issue of emancipation from work when he stated, in the mid-1990s, that he was in favour of establishing a subsistence income, which we shall deal with again in the latter part of this text.

A philosophy of the alienated praxis – The ideal of autonomy

The distinction between the sphere of heteronomy and the sphere of autonomy that is found in *Farewell to the Working Class* has provoked criticism and caused regular errors of interpretation. Furthermore, a proper understanding of this dichotomy is more difficult given that Gorz eventually rejected his own early theorisation in terms of "spheres", particularly when he published *Misères du présent, richesse du possible* (1997). However, this representation, based on reflections of moral and political philosophy, was one of the permanent features of his work. Gorz developed his unique philosophy not only as a creative disciple of Sartre and Marx, but also under the direct influence of German critical thought and in deep-rooted convergence with Alain Touraine's philosophy on the subject. While the twofold issue outlined in the introduction – alienation defined as the impossibility of wanting what one does and therefore of carrying out actions that one would consider one's purpose and, on the other hand, sovereignty and autonomy of the subject – makes sense primarily when linked generally to the Sartrean dialectic of freedom presented in *Being and Nothingness*, it borrows more specifically from Sartre's reinterpretation of Marxian theories in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, which we shall summarise very briefly as follows: while the conditions for social existence determine individual existence, they are the product of the free praxis of those individuals. This materialised practice, collective but not collaborative, should not, however, be confused with the purpose established by each individual. Indeed, according to Gorz, "the majority of Marx's work shows how men see their praxis objectivised and diverted from its true purpose by the praxis *of others*; it, too, becomes *other* and falls into an inert *system* in which inhuman necessities are realised through the alienated freedom of individuals. The fundamental reason for alienation is that (I am greatly simplifying) the world, instead of being produced as the *voluntary common* object of all (through voluntary cooperation and division of labour), is produced as the unwanted totalisation, through inert matter and inorganic laws, of a swarm of incompatible praxes"[10].

After 1980, when Gorz refused all credit for the theory of which he had been one of the most passionate advocates since the 1960s, and according to which it was possible to self-manage the entire social process of production, he returned – stimulated by Illich's contribution – to a Sartrean conception in which activities, which he claimed belonged to the "sphere of heteronomy", relate to the functioning of society as a material system; except that the organisation of this sphere now responds to an aim that is partly conscious because it encompasses not only market transactions but also the administrative machinery and public services that are drastically expanded at the same time (transport, telecommunications, training, medicine, legal and police systems, currency as a universal equivalent). Nevertheless, the idea that its logic and effects escape *each of its subjects* is still key. As an "effect of the system", power – which should not be confused with domination – continues to be analysed as the result "of the structure of the material system of relationships in which a law appearing to govern things enslaves people through the mediation of other people"[11].

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[10] From an unpublished, undated document that can nonetheless be dated to around the start of the 1950s: "Forces et faiblesses du marxisme aujourd'hui",(Strengths and weaknesses of Marxism today) Fonds André Gorz, Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine (IMEC), reproduced with the kind permission of the director Olivier Corpet, executor of André Gorz's body of work.

[11] *Farewell to the Working Class, op. cit.*, p. 53.

His theory of that period can thus be summarised as follows: there exist two distinct spheres, the condition of individual autonomy on the one hand and, on the other, the freedom of association on which a civil society is based.

Existential phenomenology: the unsocialisable as a source of morality

The work of André Gorz thus calls for a reflection on and redefinition of the relationships between individual and society in modern societies. The way in which he poses the problem of the process of socialisation was borrowed from phenomenology and led him to stress the fact that the "lived world" of sociologists bore little relation to that of phenomenologists or to Husserl's *Lebenswelt*, hence his break from Jürgen Habermas and theoretical complicity with Alain Touraine: "For Habermas, individual autonomy is a moral and psychological competence acquired through socialisation; for Gorz, autonomy is a sovereign act marking the limits to socialisation"[12]. The way in which both Habermas and Touraine understood modernity as a fundamentally emancipating process should not lead us to overlook this basic difference: The centrality of the "lived world" eclipses the fact that the social actors were a *subject* for the former, whereas this dimension was fundamental for the latter who, noted Gorz, acknowledged his Sartrean inspiration[13].

Although André Gorz was recognised as a social critic, he was *first and foremost* a philosopher rather than a sociologist. For him, as for Sartre, personal experience always went beyond social experience because he refused to reduce individuals to the sum of their social roles, particularly that of worker.

Of course, wage labour can always be a source of gratification, stimulation and identity, as well as one of social and therefore public existence, as opposed to the confinement of the private sphere. Indeed, Gorz recognised that in this sense capitalism had invented the figure of the modern individual, and that political identity and legal freedom were closely linked to the development of Marx's so-called "free" labour through which the individual alienates his labour power[14].

Nonetheless, our society – which continues to be organised around labour and therefore dooms an increasing proportion of the population to worthlessness – no longer *serves* individuals. Calling for an exodus from work, Gorz, like Touraine, stated that the criterion of functionality is obsolete. For this reason, he advocated moving beyond what he calls "a work-based society". The move towards a true "culture-based society" depends necessarily on those who identify the least with their wage-earner role and refuse to *function* primarily as cogs in the production-consumption system. These individuals potentially embody a new figure of the modern individual. They also come close to Touraine's concept of Subject, a Subject who opposes "the logic of social domination in the name of a logic of freedom and the free production of self"[15].

This presupposition of a discrepancy between subjects' identity as social beings on the one hand, and their unsocialisable individual existence on the other, forms the core of André

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[12] Finn BOWRING, "Habermas and Modernity", *Telos*, 106, winter 1996, p. 95.
[13] cf. *Misères du présent, richesse du possible,* Paris, Galilée, 1997, Digression 1. Translated into English as : *Reclaiming Work. Beyond the Wage-Based Society,* Polity, 1999.
[14] As Bernard PERRET mentions in "La politique sans l'économie ? À propos des *Métamorphoses du travail* d'André Gorz", *Esprit*, March-April 1990, p. 93-107.
[15] Alain Touraine, *Critique of Modernity,* Wiley-Blackwell, 1995.

Gorz's ethics and political thought: this was the basis on which André Gorz was part of an innovative left-wing trend that had understood that work and the proletariat had lost their centrality as a utopian source of energy (Habermas) to the benefit of a cultural transformation driven by the new social movements – primarily the environmental movement – based on an ethic of self, capable of understanding what is meant by caring for others.

An ecology of the lived world – Politics as a place of basic tension

Following the late publication of *Fondements pour une morale* in 1977, Gorz gave an explanation of the necessary and fundamental moral philosophy that should form the origin of political action: "This kind of research should be based on the most basic certainties that are always obliterated or concealed by our education or culture: the sensitive certainties, starting with those about the body"[16]. It is on the basis of these certainties that rebels who question cultural knowledge strive to lay the foundations of a new rationality. This confirmation of the rights of sensitivity "is by no means apolitical: the only way to do politics today is in the way of the environmental movements, dealing with the *prerequisites* of any true political activity"[17].

The sensitive and private experience of the world, which is denied by the exercise of instrumental reason, and the technological choices and socio-economic priorities imposed by a class of technocrats are precisely what drove environmentalists to take on the question of politics in order to challenge the systemic imperatives[18]. On the other hand, the purely scientific environmentalism that aims to establish limits that are ecologically tolerable for the development of industrialism without challenging the hegemony of its instrumental rationality "is part of a typically anti-political conception. It does away with the autonomy of politics in favour of expertocracy, establishing the State and State experts as the judges of the content of the general interest and the means of *subjecting* individuals to it. The universal is separate from the particular, the superior interest of humanity is separated from freedom and from individuals' capacity for autonomous judgment"[19]. This is the reason why, for Gorz, "defending nature" in fact means "defending the lived world", the world that is the result of the actions and intentions of individuals[20].

His conception of the exercise of democracy is based on the premise of irresolvable tensions between determinations of materiality and moral requirements. Gorz refers to the bipolar structure of politics highlighted by the American philosopher Dick Howard[21]. He defines it as the necessary and continuous public mediation between the rights of the

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[16] André Gorz, François Châtelet, "Et si la politique redécouvrait la morale..." (Interview by Gilles Anquetil), *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, n° 2583, 5 May 1977, p. 11.

[17] *idem.*

[18] It is the very existence of this sensitive subject that André Gorz defended so fervently in his last texts against the growing ideologies of post-humanism and trans-humanism, and established as one that contrasted with the cognitivist trend with which he shared numerous presuppositions. cf. *L'Immatériel*, Paris, Galilée, 2003, chapter IV. English Edition: *The Immaterial,* University of Chicago Press, 2010.

[19] André Gorz, "L'écologie politique entre expertocratie et autolimitation" 1992, (English version : "Political Ecology : Expertocracy versus Self-Limitation", *New Left Review,* I/202, November-December 1993, p. 57) reproduced in the posthumous anthology *Ecologica*, Galilée, 2008. This article, which constitutes his ecological legacy, redevelops in a phenomenological sense the intuitions made in his famous 1977 essay "Écologie et liberté", in *Ecology as Politics*, Black Rose Books, 1980, (original French Edition: *Écologie et Politique*, Points/Seuil, 1978. He therefore occupied an entirely original position in the field of ecology; cf. Françoise Gollain 'André Gorz était-il un écologiste ? ', *Écologie et politique*, 44, March 2012, p. 77-92.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[21] Cf. "De la tentation de l'anti-politique à la politisation de la politique" and "Droit et démocratie : de Habermas à Kant" in Dick Howard, *Pour une critique du jugement politique*, Cerf, 1998.

individual and the interest of society as a whole, which establishes and conditions her/his own rights. Any attempt to do away with this polarity is nothing less than a negation of politics, a fantasy of a return to pre-modernity.

One Marx against the other

André Gorz stated repeatedly that it is the maintaining of this *dialectic model* that can save us from all totalitarianisms, be they capitalist, communist, technological or indeed anti-technological.

These different types of society are all characterised by an ideal of transparency and the requirement of a personalisation of the systemic constraints in which the realm of necessity is surpassed and governs community life. They presuppose a micro-society with a familial structure, but one that is "coextensive to humanity as a whole"[22], as found in Marx and in all the fantasies of absolute self-sufficiency and re-tribalisation. Gorz thus found theoretical instruments in certain Marxian texts that could oppose others that presented a communitarist conception of the community of freely "associated producers"[23]. These texts presuppose the possibility for the social being of incorporating all the dimensions of individual existence, which was at the root of the totalitarian collectivisms that did away with the subject of morality; the very concept of a socialist morality is therefore stripped of all meaning. In short, in opposition to these fantasies of doing away with the modern order, Gorz once again emphasised that the powers of an "inert social machinery" (Sartre), the "autonomised social powers" (Marx) can never be completely destroyed.

Given that alienation can never be completely eliminated, Gorz focused, on a philosophical level, on the asymptomatic nature of the pursuit of autonomy: it is a goal to aim for, an ethical value. Subjects produce themselves against the limits imposed on their autonomy; for example, having their identity reduced to their employability or a definition of their needs being established by technocrats[24].

This is also the reason why, in political terms, the Gorzian perspective did not define socialism according to other existing *models* but rather as a radical critique of certain forms of society: it "must not be conceived as a different economic and social *system*. Quite the contrary: it is the conscious practical project of abolishing everything that makes society a system, a megamachine, together with the expansion of self-regulated forms of sociability"[25].

Political norm of sufficiency, guaranteed income and departure from capitalism

This development of individualities, *regardless of their social utility*, links a project of radical transformation to the question of alienation through needs as well as through work (conditions, instability, lack). Gorz indeed showed that the invention of work in the modern

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[22] Gorz was referring here to Pierre Rosanvallon's analysis, *Le Capitalisme utopique. Histoire de l'idée de marché*, Le Seuil, 1979; coll. Points Politique, 1989 (entitled *Le Libéralisme économique*); new edition with the original title, Points Essais, 1999.

[23] Including those of the young Marx: *The Economic and Political Manuscripts of 1844* and *The German Ideology*. In line with Richard Sobel, one could say that Gorz's compass remained faithful to the requirement set out by Marx in book III of *Capital* and that he therefore "avoided the risk of moving towards the community model which threatens any thought of social emancipation" cf. Richard Sobel, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

[24] Interview with André Gorz, in Françoise Gollain, *Une critique du travail. Entre écologie et socialisme*, Paris, La Découverte, 2000, p. 231.

[25] *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology,* Verso, 1994, p. 40-41. Original edition: *Capitalisme, socialisme, écologie,* Paris, Galilée, 1991.

sense of the term is a consequence of individuals' incapacity to recognise what he called a "common norm of sufficiency". And yet, the traditions and cultural elements that support a reduction in work and consumption, and which have been eliminated by the development of capitalism, can be re-established *collectively*; "[this norm of sufficiency] has to be instituted; it is a matter of politics, more exactly of eco-politics and the eco-social project"[26] that aims to achieve greater autonomy and existential security for everyone.

To his mind, allocating a guaranteed income was an essential part of this existential security; nevertheless, it is important to highlight a significant development in his conception.

From the publication of his book *Les chemins du paradis*[27] in 1983, he defended the idea of establishing an "income for life" in the form of a "social income" unrelated to working time. He also specified that guaranteeing an income that is independent from the occupation of employment can only become emancipating if it opens up new spheres of individual and social activity, otherwise it would resemble a social salary for forced inactivity. Until the mid-1990s, Gorz maintained this position and established the general reduction of working time (he specified up to 20,000 hours over a lifetime) along with guaranteed income as his main arguments in favour of social transformation.

This conception of a decoupling between *time* worked and *level* of income pitted him against not only the liberals but also supporters of a complete decoupling between work and income in the form of a universal basic income. As we know, André Gorz had long since rejected this proposal because he saw it as an obstacle to his main idea: given that "heteronomous" work was a social necessity but that, at the same time, it limited the autonomy of those who performed it and therefore went against the good life, each individual might as well carry their share of the burden.

The year 1997 marked a real turning point in his thinking when he abandoned his previous idea in support of establishing a subsistence income that was unrelated to work, influenced by his dialogue with various supporters of unconditionality[28] as well as the encouragement he received from Jean-Marie Vincent in particular, who persuaded him to return to Marx's *Grundrisse* and his short but powerful passage on "general intellect". On this question, he then joined the theorists of cognitive capitalism[29], and from 2003-2004 his position became even more radical when he acknowledged a strong connection with the Marxist trend known as "the critique of value", represented by Moishe Postone in the United States[30], and in the German-speaking world by Robert Kurz and the *Krisis* then *Exit* groups, as well as by the *Streifzüge* magazine based in Vienna.

Profound changes in the nature of work caused Gorz to take the step towards full unconditionality of the basic income he wished to see established at a level that would be

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[26] André Gorz, "Political Ecology : Expertocracy versus Self-Limitation", *art. cit.,* p. 65.
[27] Paris, Galilée. English version: *Paths to Paradise. On the Liberation from Work,* Pluto Press, 1985.
[28] These included Philippe Van Parijs and Marie-Louise Duboin who continued the work of the abundance movement founded by Jacques Duboin (cf. their respective contributions in *André Gorz, un penseur pour le XXIème siècle, op. cit.),* as well as Alain Caillé and the Anti-Utilitarian Movement in the Social Sciences (MAUSS).
[29] Particularly Carlo Vercellone, to whom he felt closest within this school of thought; c.f. his contribution: *Sortir du capitalisme : le scenario Gorz*, edited by Alain Caillé and Christophe Fourel, Le Bord de l'Eau, November 2013.
[30] His seminal book is *Time, Labour and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Critical Theory,* Cambridge Univerty Press, 1996.

"sufficient" to allow people to live without depending on work: whereas the Taylorist model of the industrial period was based on controlling the workers' movements, autonomy was now a requirement for individuals. Performance was increasingly based not only on the level of formal knowledge and the exchange and management of information flows, but on informal knowledge and entirely personal qualities of individuals (ability to collaborate, imagination, etc.), and therefore on an immaterial dimension of "collective intelligence" rather than on the materiality of the productive act. As a result, it became increasingly difficult to envisage a homogenous reduction in working time by defining "a quantity of work that cannot be reduced, to be accomplished by each person during a determined period"[31]. Besides, this visible work time is minimal in comparison to the time needed to reproduce the very broad skills of the work force. Indeed, in a post-industrial economy that is now knowledge-based, it is no longer within companies but rather in society as a whole that most of the processes of knowledge and wealth creation take place, according to a logic of which the shining example is the cooperative and non-market model of free software and the "Wikieconomy". Gorz saw the subversive use of new information technologies as an opportunity to move towards a free economy, in other words a production of real wealth (rather than market goods) resulting from activities that fall outside of the wage system and the logic of profit; in short, a departure from capitalism. These activities would become globally dominant and would no longer be limited to a "sphere" of autonomy.

In conclusion, Gorz's claim differs from other similar positions in favour of this type of income by his rejection of a broader definition of work and his focus on the need to depart from the perspective and categories of economics: in his view, it was not a question of *paying* people for their various contributions to society (even outside of a company), but, on the contrary, of making the *unconditional development of individualities* (Marx) the main criterion for its allocation and thereby begin "the exodus from the society of work and commodities"[32]. This justification – philosophical rather than economic – can thus be understood in its radicalism as the result of a lifetime's effort to contemplate an end to alienation.

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[31] *Misères du présent …, op. cit.,* p. 144.

[32] Title of his article published in the French journal *Mouvements,* 50, June 2007, and doubtless the text most elaborate of those published in his final year. For a summary of the convergences and divergences with the cognitivist school, cf. Françoise Gollain, 'L'apport d'André Gorz au débat sur le capitalisme cognitif', *La Revue du MAUSS*, 35, 2010, p. 297-314.