e-flux Journal is a monthly art publication featuring essays and contributions by some of the most engaged artists and thinkers working today. The journal is available online, in PDF format, and in print through a network of distributors.

Editors

Editorial

The Gulf War did not take place, as Baudrillard notoriously put it. But now something else has taken place, and it did not happen in the doldrums of virtuality, but in the streets and squares of Tunis, Cairo, Benghazi, and elsewhere. It seems that the prospect of an all-encompassing condition of techno-saturated anorexia, perhaps appropriate for a time when communications networks and the tools for producing reality were situated in the hands of governments and telecommunications tycoons, has been inverted. No one could have foreseen the perseverance of reality over mass-deception, the weaponization of communications networks in the hands of ordinary people, and the discovery of commonality where it had surely been obliterated by systems far more oppressive than anything a camera or computer could ever devise.

How to even begin to describe the extraordinary release of energy, subjectivity, and potential witnessed in the Middle East over the past several weeks? After all, it is still going on. But at this point we can provisionally say, following Franco Berardi, that if cognitarians and knowledge workers have been searching for a body—for genuine social, physical, and socioeconomic connections in the midst of a loose field of cursory contact—this body has now manifested itself as more than a mere possibility, and it is a beautiful thing.

In this issue, **Suely Rolnik** recalls a singing lesson she took in Paris in 1978, when the act of singing a simple song allowed her to rediscover a desire for life. Until that moment, as she realized years later, this desire had been buried beneath a thick shell that had grown around her while living in exile in France after fleeing the military dictatorship in Brazil. Not only did the liberation of this voice mark the moment she decided to return to her home country, the moment was also a discovery of the power of one's own voice against a brutality that had wound itself inextricably into the workings of a private body and life, a brutality that Rolnik had carried with her regardless of having left the military regime behind.

In "Camels vs. Google: Revolutions Recreate the Center of the World," **Jon Rich** considers the recent revolutions in Cairo and the Middle East as still circulating within a network of fragile assumptions regarding the nature of modernity and democracy. Now supplemented by new regimes of image production and a shift in American cultural dominance from the sphere of consumers to a reign of the "user," can we really be so certain of the primacy of the pro-democracy protests in the Middle East?

Inspired by Tomas Saraceno's installation *Galaxies Forming along Filaments, Like Droplets along the Strands of a Spider's Web* (2008), **Bruno Latour** looks at the topology of the sphere as an alternative to that of the network. Whereas networks are able to articulate cursory and diffuse forms of connectivity in the midst of an infinite expanse, the sphere can be seen as pointing the advantages of networks to another technology by which

local, fragile, and complex "atmospheric conditions" can gain a form of resilience by way of a container within a broader network. How can we then apply the same logic to a means of "recomposing" disciplinary divides in a way that sustains a common vocabulary, yet overcomes established hierarchies?

Mona Mahall and Asli Serbest reflect on the life and work of Siegfried Giedion, a historian whose work pinpoints a sharp, but mobile border between nature and culture, between thinking and feeling—a border defined more by constant motion than by its actual dissolution. Key to the dynamism of this border for Giedion was a view of history as authorship (rather than progress), an understanding of the language of movement, of the cyclical nature of time, and of science and engineering as cultural production.

Peter Friedl observes Charles Willson Peale's famous self-portrait, *The Artist in His Museum*, to find the artist, naturalist, and American revolutionary having set aside his palette and brushes to invite the viewer into his collection of objects. The artist plays at being a historian, but in a concession to the highly ideological apparatus of the museum, such a figure attempting to present natural and cultural information as objective historical facts also renders himself a historical artifact.

In the second of his three-part series on "neo-materialism," **Joshua Simon** considers how the aura of symbolic value has eclipsed the materiality of objects, transcending concrete application to produce a phantasmic dimension in which commodities assume lifelike characteristics of their own, where shoes, for example, no longer need feet. This has been reflected in a number of works by artists who address this shift in the nature of the commodity with a revised view of objecthood as waste material, as negative capacity, as commodities waiting to be animated by a brand.

In her response to Paul Chan and Sven Lütticken's last issue of e-flux journal, *Idiot Wind*, **Lívia Páldi** reports on the situation in Hungary, where the incumbent Fidesz Party government has, together with the right-wing press, organized a smear campaign against a group of prominent philosophers. Seen as part of a broader push to withdraw support for public education and the arts, such moves presumably clear the way for the advancement of, in the words of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, a "fine, noble, and refined elite."

—Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, Anton Vidokle

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Julieta Aranda is an artist and an editor of *e-flux journal.*

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Peter Friedl

The Impossible Museum

He stands before us, large as life, the old artist in his museum. With his right arm he holds up the heavy, purple velvet curtain so that we can cast a first glance at the wonders of the carefully arranged collection in the long, light hall behind. On the left wall begin several rows of showcases: miniature dioramas, all the same size and shape. Exhibited within are stuffed birds of various provenances. Above them, reaching up to just under the ceiling and completing the wall, are a series of uniform format paintings; portraits, clearly of historic celebrities.

One can also see a few visitors. A father instructs his young son who is holding an open book in his hands (the museum guidebook?). A Quaker woman stands startled and fearful in front of a huge mastodon skeleton, the museum's half-covered showpiece; and in the far back is a man with his arms crossed. The serious-faced artist in the darkly lit proscenium invites us to enter the main space of his school of knowledge, set in the central perspective. He has laid aside the normal attributes—palette, paints, brushes. Discernible on the wooden floor around him, brought together as though a still life, are the corpse of a wild turkey (perhaps a souvenir from an excursion to the Rocky Mountains) and taxidermist instruments; on the right side of the picture, a phallic mammoth bone and a jaw.

[figure 88330f75aea1b12f0367f0eeeef02dce.jpg Charles Willson Peale, *The Artist in His Museum*, 1822. Oil on canvas. Courtesy Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.
]

The work in question is the infamous self-portrait, *The Artist in His Museum*, which 81-year-old Charles Willson Peale painted in 1822, five years before his death. It was commissioned by the board of trustees of the Philadelphia Museum Company in recognition of the artist's life accomplishment—the collection kept in the Pennsylvania State House that Peale, founder of the Philadelphia Museum Company, assembled and maintained as a family business from 1784 onward. For the most part, the decisions and activities of the newly created board of trustees were in response to the wishes of the founder, who, at the time, was also the only stockholder. The founding of a stock company had become necessary to maintain the collection for the city of Philadelphia. "All the national museums in the world ... were from beginnings of individuals," wrote the artist in 1790 in his first appeal, "To the Citizens of the United States of America," which was printed in several newspapers.[1] Yet Peale's greatest wish would remain unfulfilled: the transformation of his museum into a publicly-funded national museum. He donated his *Self-Portrait in the Character of a Painter* (1824) to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. This institution, too, was founded by Peale, together with other artists—including one of his sons, Rembrandt Peale—and several businessmen.

Peale switched from saddlery, the first trade he learned, to the more profitable field of painting. A true "son of liberty," he took part in the American Revolution and painted all of its heroes. For example, he immortalized George Washington a total of sixty times. Peale exhibited his portraits—or copies of them, if they had been sold—in his home studio gallery. That's how it all began. In 1785, an elderly Benjamin Franklin had returned after nearly ten years of service as US ambassador to France. Regarding the museum issue, he and the other friends of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia had gathered a few ideas and more detailed concepts from the Old World, including, for example, the venerable Ashmolean in Oxford ("Britain's first public museum"), which was preceded by the Musaeum Tradescantianum; and the British Museum, founded from the collection left behind by Sir Hans Sloane in 1753. Generally praised was also Sir Ashton Lever's collection of nature objects and curiosities, which had moved from Manchester to London. The one-person endeavor was called "Holophusikon." After the owner's bankruptcy, the collection was raffled off in a lottery (since neither the British Museum nor Russian Czar Catherine II wanted to buy it), and ultimately sold at auction. For Peale, who had purchased several of the objects, this was not a good sign.

[figure c0977dff515f38cf0b0f303494bf044d.jpg
Frontispiece illustration from *A Companion to the Museum (Late Sir Ashton Lever's)*, London, 1790. © UCLA Library, Los Angeles.
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Like Thomas Jefferson, with whom he maintained brisk exchanges throughout his entire life and who contributed numerous exhibits to his museum over the years, Peale was convinced that the study of nature would foster republican virtues. He was guided by Rousseau's pedagogical program. In his museum, above the entry of which was written: "School of Nature," the audience should experience "rational amusing." Just as there was a natural order, so, too, could a political order be postulated, and a firm connection between the two created. The rapidly growing collection followed the ordering principle of Linnaeus' "Systema naturae." The labels were written in Latin, English, and French "so that no visitor ought to expect any attendant to accompany them through the rooms."[2] The culmination was the two rows with portraits of figures from the Revolutionary War, all uniformly framed and in the same format, towering over the realm of carefully classified natural phenomena, guarding over the audience. They were the guarantee of a continuity that should carry on to the future.

Peale was not a philosopher but he proved to be a skillful taxonomist. And so he staged and presented the harmony of the world with its universalist claims until even the things themselves believed in their order. His museum was conceived to pass on useful knowledge to all social classes "in our country." It was meant to entertain and at the same time teach, and to do so entirely democratically for men and women of all ages. To finance all of that, "catchpenny shows" were also necessary at times.

Things are exhibited in order to guide the view of the beholder. By means of natural objects and artifacts it was possible to derive the New World in post-revolutionary America from a distant, pre-historical past and summarize it descriptively and clearly. The museum documented the conquest of the West, for example, by purchasing and displaying trophies brought back by the Lewis and Clark expedition. Jefferson has been credited with the first systematic excavation of a "Native American" burial mound. Peale exhumed the "American Incognitum," a mastodon skeleton on a farm in the Hudson River Valley.[3] As Mieke Bal described, referring to the example of the American Museum of Natural History (a later, grandiose, revenant of Peale's museum), nature was equipped "with that fundamental, defining feature of culture: history."[4] Indians as well as fossils became part of natural history. In one of the first anthropological breviaries, Joseph-Marie Degérando's *Considérations sur les diverses méthodes à suivre dans l'observation des peuples sauvages* (1800), a philosophical traveler sails to the end of the world, turning into a colonizing time traveler who traverses a century with every step—back to the past.[5] This was the birth of the comparative method, which would serve many more masters and interests. In the course of the nineteenth century, it would lead to Lieutenant General Pitt Rivers's typological exhibition displays and the ethnographic human parks of the World's Fairs.

[figure f33d8d1a522b5dd11ec95f8ce1cf92db.jpg
The Kwakwaka'wakw troupe at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893.

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But history could also be made in Peale's museum: on December 1, 1796, various tribesmen from the South and the Northwest Territory met there. The victorious Great Father, who had successfully shifted the borders further north once again, had invited them all to Philadelphia. Peale prepared life-size wax sculptures of Weyapiersenwah (or Blue Jacket), the Shawnee war chief, and his blood brother Muscquaconocah (Red Pole), both of whom had co-signed the treaty of Greenville. The paying public in Peale's panopticon could marvel at them alongside eight other wax figures modeled on real, existing figures from the Oonalaska Islands to the West African Gold Coast, Kamchatka to "Otaheite," and even a Chinese worker.

In May 1804, Alexander von Humboldt came for a visit. After five years of self-financed expeditions to South America, the baron from Prussia, who had reached celebrity status, had sailed on the *Concepción* with his companions Aimé Bonpland and Carlos Montúfar from Havana to Delaware Bay and continued on via New Castle

Charles Willson Peale, "Lizard" sketch from a specimen brought by Lewis and Clark, ca. 1806. Courtesy The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

to Philadelphia. Peale guided the guests through the museum and created silhouettes of Humboldt with the "Physiognotrace." They then traveled together via Baltimore to Washington, a city with 3,000 inhabitants and 700 slaves, to meet President Jefferson. Before Humboldt embarked on his return trip to Europe, he sat for three days so that Peale could paint a portrait of him in the usual standard format for his museum.[6]

Nothing in this world exists without reason. "The study of Natural History will aid us to escape from the prejudices of ignorance, and convince us that nothing was made in vain," noted Peale for one of his public lectures in 1823.[7] In his museum display of domesticated nature, a similar idea of order was realized in the US-American grid cities, or in the layout of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon prison, the prototype of modern disciplinary society. This same order, or chaotic rationality, is what inspires the capitalist market and organizes the production and consumption of goods and services. It appears just as neutral as it is natural.

[figure a536ad05394771aaf258621d6a371a60.jpg
1791 design for the Panopticon by Jeremy Bentham, Samuel Bentham, and the architect Willey Reveley. © UCL Library, London.

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Yet, in *The Artist in His Museum*, a few signs reveal that this world of appearances is not to be trusted blindly. The telltale theater metaphor turns the artist into more of an impresario and showman than natural scientist, and it is not such a great step from there to the allure of the ring, to the dreamy tide of bad taste. Or does the precious curtain possibly refer to an aristocratically-tinted unconscious? Did the rational Peale also harbor an irrational Peale? He found names for his children in Pilkington's *Dictionary of Painters*: Raphaelle, Rembrandt, Angelica Kauffman, Titian, Rubens, and Sophonisba. All would become painters, naturalists, photo pioneers, or museum people in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and elsewhere. Who knows what Peale would have said to the exhortation of the Marquis de Sade, one year his senior, "You know nothing, if you do not know everything." He certainly knew nothing of Goya's *Los Caprichos.* A pre-study for plate 43 of *Caprichos*, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, is entitled *Ydioma universal* (universal language). The purple curtain over which our enlightened master of ceremonies has control divides various spheres, for which the different lighting conditions are further evidence. The speaking *I*, whose voice, as we know, is removed and hidden from museum displays in order to not disturb and expose the fictions of the history told there, always leaves behind traces of some sort or another.[8] However, visitors and beholders often cannot decipher them at first glance. In the best case, one can call the result, analogous to certain artworks, a museum of the second order. When Peale painted his picture, the world of the American Enlightenment had already disappeared. It is not possible

to hold back time, not even in a museum. In his self-portrait, the museum founder transformed himself into an artifact from the past.

[figure partialpage 9329b4b2288213574eb704b4ae40da53.jpg Chinese pheasants from the royal aviary in Paris (with the Peale's Museum labels), 1787. Courtesy Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge.

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Georges Bataille wrote just a few lines about the history of the museum in his 1930 lemma for the "Dictionnaire" column in the Parisian magazine *Documents*:

> According to the *Grande Encyclopédie*, the first museum in the modern sense of the word (that is to say the first public collection) would seem to have been founded on 27 July 1793, in France, by the Convention. The origin of the modern museum would thus be linked to the development of the guillotine.[9]

On that same day in July, Robespierre joined the Committee of Public Safety. The opening of the Louvre (Muséum Français), which had been a royal project until the Revolution, took place on August 10, 1793, as part of the celebration for the first anniversary of the Republic organized by Jacques-Louis David. Several weeks earlier, the Muséum d'Histoire naturelle had also been created. Peale corresponded with the classification specialists Lamarck and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire who were employed there. Information and naturalia were exchanged. Bataille also mentions that the Ashmolean Museum, already founded in the late seventeenth century and associated with the University of Oxford, was open to the public. "Public" is relative, and that applies to the corporative state as well as to a post-democratic society. The Fridericianum in Kassel, completed in 1779, is the first building to be designated from the outset as a museum.

But Bataille's hint can be followed further in another direction. After the library and the museum, another institution surfaced: the archive. The first of its kind was the French National Archive, again through decree by the National Assembly. The museum, whose development outdid "even the most optimistic hopes of the founders," presents us with the "most grandiose spectacle of a humanity freed from material cares and dedicated to contemplation."[10] In retrospect, Bataille's slightly ironic description of the visitors streaming from the Louvre on a Sunday afternoon, visibly inspired by the longing "to be in all things at one with the celestial apparitions with which their eyes are still ravished," seems like a complementary counter image to the cinematographically preserved workers filmed by their boss as they left the Lumière

factory.[11] But that still does not turn a museum into a factory.

[figure fullpage
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Johann Zoffany, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*, 1772–78. Oil on canvas. Courtesy Royal Collection, Windsor Castle.

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In the brief description of Peale's optimistic dream museum we encounter a series of motifs that appear familiar even today. Those who look at his self-portrait realize immediately that it is about a museum—about a somewhat old-fashioned museum, not a delirious one. Marcel Broodthaers sends a far-flung greeting. It appears as though certain constants are written into the museum's concepts, which even the camouflage of contemporary architecture and design cannot really harm. Supporting evidence for that is easy to find. In Johann Zoffany's painting *The Tribuna of the Uffizi* (1772–78), one sees how the Medici art treasures are presented in the Wunderkammer of the Uffizi Gallery. A century earlier, David Teniers the Younger had also painted, in a similar way, the private gallery of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, in Brussels. Quite a few of the meticulously represented images were among the possessions of the English nobility driven out or executed under Cromwell. The new organization and cataloging of the imperial painting gallery at Belvedere in Vienna, for which the Basel engraver and art dealer Christian von Mechel was responsible from 1778, was one of the first to be carried out along the principle of national masters and schools. In the Parisian Musée des Monuments Français, Alexandre Lenoir arranged his collection following a strict chronology of a nationalistically tinged evolutionary saga. The historicizing poetics of the modern museum can mainly be traced back to the *galleria progressiva* and the period rooms.[12] What else is New York's Guggenheim Museum on Fifth Avenue if not an architectural parody of the *galleria progressiva*?[13] The same can be said of Le Corbusier's museum of unlimited growth. And, incidentally, just as old as the institution is criticism of it. While the new museums in Paris were filled with revolutionary war booty, the art critic and archeologist Antoine Quatremère de Quincey formulated in his anonymous *Lettres à Miranda sur le déplacement des monuments de l'art de l'Italie* (1796), the first fundamental critique of the de-contextualization of artworks. He lamented the loss of legibility they experienced from being aestheticized by the museum.

[figure 742b8677565982e130543fc78d88c691.jpg
Le Corbusier, *Museum of Unlimited Growth*, 1939.

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Peale's portrait is painted in the third person, as it were. The possessive pronoun in the title—the artist in *his*

museum—expresses self-confidence and tactical modesty. It is a rhetorical figure bearing vast possibilities. Also in the newspaper ads, which he signed as "thankful and humble servant," he spoke as "Mr. Peale," in the third person. But Peale's impossible museum was not a fake. That is the slight difference between it and Broodthaers's *Departement des Aigles* fictions or Khalil Rabah's *Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind*.

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Left: Khalil Rabah, *Palestine before Palestine*, from the Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind installation at the 9th Istanbul Biennale, 2005. Courtesy The Virtual Gallery, Birzeit University. Right: Marcel Broodthaers, *Musée d'art moderne, département des aigles, section XIXe siècle (bis)*, 1970, Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf.

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What does a museum speak of, if it speaks at all? The museum lies, said Le Corbusier, before he had built one. The nine muses, whose shrine it was originally, are the daughters of Mnemosyne, the personification of memory (Aby Warburg's favorite goddess). In his unswervingly anachronistic *Dialoghi con Leucò* (1945–47), Cesare Pavese brings together Mnemosyne and Hesiod, the poet of *Theogony,* for a talk. The subtext is what the new political order should look like after the Flood. In the introduction, the author admits that he takes no small risk, when he sees "a single deity behind the nine Muses of tradition—or Muses and Graces together, three by three, or only three, or even two," or the daughters in the mother "and vice versa."[14] The short dialogue ends with Mnemosyne's unforgettable advice about what is left to do in place of worship: "Try telling mortals the things you know."[15]

According to the "Code of Ethics for Museums" of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), a museum "is a non-profit-making permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education, and enjoyment, the tangible and intangible evidence of people and their environment."[16] Charles Willson Peale would be astonished that nature has disappeared, but otherwise, he would probably agree with this definition. Collecting, conserving, researching, exhibiting, and communicating: the ideology of saving has been part of the museum policy for time eternal. The fact that this initially peaceful-seeming activity can often be traced back to original crimes, such as colonialism, plundering, looted and trophy art, is common knowledge. Everything necessary for the restitution of so-called cultural goods can be found in the ICOM codex: "Museums should be prepared to initiate dialogues for the return of cultural property to a country or people of origin."[17] Not returning is not a neutral act. There are UN and UNESCO

resolutions on the matter, as well as ICOM red lists. Recent ideological revival of the universal museum shows how the most powerful of these institutions are capable of immunizing themselves when the protection of their treasures and corporative interests are at stake. The debates about Berlin's Humboldt Forum are another good example.

Collecting and conserving have led to a situation in which the depots are full and often eighty percent of the total collection inventory is withheld from audiences. There are collections without their own exhibition spaces, for example, the scientific collections of the Frobenius Institute in Frankfurt, and others, which are their own memorials, such as Tawfiq Canaan's collection of Palestinian amulets at Birzeit University, or the Museo Ettore Guatelli in Ozzano Taro.[18] Collecting and exhibiting mean that objects gain a different context. For the birds in Peale's museum and anti-vanitas painting, it meant death. Collecting has a dark side, where violence, control, and (self-)deception lurk. "For at the intersection of psychic and capitalist fetishism," it transforms into "a tale of social struggle."[19]

[figure 75c8fcf0d1103de62b1e46b865027098.jpg
Item from the Tawfiq Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. Courtesy Birzeit University.

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A few numbers games from the present: in Germany, where the museum's tasks and functions are not regulated by law, 35 percent of the population never enters a museum, and a further 46 percent do so at most once a year. Whether attendance at events such as the "long museum night" is included is not evident from the data. The multitude of museum visitors proves to be, statistically, of above-average education: 80 percent have graduated from secondary school, and 45 percent are academics (in contrast to 10 percent in the total population). Art museums have the greatest share of regular visitors. Although art museums comprise only 10 percent of all museums, they offer 34 percent of all special exhibitions, which attract great numbers of guests. This type of museum, which also includes contemporary art, attracts roughly 20 percent of all beholders. According to the promotional material of the Goethe Institute, whose activities are funded by the foreign affairs office, no other country in the world has as many public museums for modern art as Germany. But no other country has such a great density of museums—in comparison to the number of inhabitants—as Switzerland. The Swiss go to a museum, on average, once a month—three times more than the French. In a city like Berlin, approximately 75 percent of the museum visitors are tourists; of those, 42 percent come from Germany and 30 percent from abroad. Among museum visitors, whose average age is rising steadily, there are meanwhile more women than men: for example, 60 percent in Berlin's Gemäldegalerie, 56

percent in the Tate Modern.[20]

In comparison, public libraries, with roughly 200 million users per year—a figure nearly double that of museum visits—are among the most frequented institutions in Germany. Yet in the rather sparse, and in international comparison under-financed, library network, which is increasingly thinning in the federal states and local councils due to budget cuts, only 41 percent fulfill the minimum standard, namely, having available two "media" (book, CD, DVD, MC, games, and videos) per inhabitant.[21]

In an attempt to grasp the institution "museum" in numbers, it seems obvious to recall Pierre Bourdieu's and Alain Darbel's now-classical study *The Love of Art* about "European art museums and their visitors." One finds therein: "Statistics show that access to cultural works is the privilege of the cultivated class; however, this privilege has all the outward appearances of legitimacy."[22] Many things have changed since then (that is, since the mid-1960s) but not everything. At approximately the same time that the Parisian sociologists distributed and evaluated their questionnaires, Sotheby's New York began auctioning off "contemporary art" on a larger scale.

A generation later, the new and rapidly changing front run of "global art" was added to the national competition of institutions, which is found mainly in the Western world. The erosion of the middle classes, and their inability to formulate workable answers to globalization, has also meanwhile infected their cultural potential. This insecurity goes much deeper than is assumed by announcements of spectacular new museum buildings and auction records. A new class of investors brings new money, but also another taste. That same new elite that advertises Saadiyat Island, the island of happiness, as the only place in the world where five different Pritzker Prize winners are building at the same time, has redefined the former periphery. How Western museums want to present art history in the future is entirely unclear and perhaps also unimportant. Today, like in Bourdieu's day a museum's success can be interpreted through the public's approval of the system of values represented and proclaimed within.

[figure 13eab4085384dd930a362df905529391.jpg
Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Museum (model) by Frank O. Gehry, Saadiyat Island, United Arab Emirates. © EPA.

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Do museums owe us any explanations? There is obviously a quixotic aspect to the battle against museums. But nowadays, no one fights them; the museum is omnipresent. Context is always a matter of negotiation: between what is visible and what is invisible. When it is not simply text, then it functions as aura after the aura. The museum is normally the site for staging this exchange under the sign of a neutralization of culture. That which is

visible there acquires its meaning through the fact that it guides our view to an invisible order. Here begins the game with multiple levels, where the issue is whether and how a view into the parallel world is returned. It is a play for emancipated visitors who want to find out exactly who history belongs to.

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Translated from the German by Lisa Rosenblatt.

Peter Friedl is an artist based in Berlin. He has participated in documenta X (1997) and documenta 12 (2007). Solo exhibitions include "luttesdesclasses," Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne (2002), "OUT OF THE SHADOWS: what is written cannot be unwritten," Witte de With, Rotterdam (2004), the retrospective survey "Work 1964–2006," Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Miami Art Central, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille (2006–07), "Working," Kunsthalle Basel (2008), "Blow Job," Extra City – Kunsthal Antwerpen, and "Peter Friedl," Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2010). Since the 1980s he has published numerous essays and book projects such as *Four or Five Roses* (2004), *Working at Copan* (2007), and *Playgrounds* (2008). *Secret Modernity: Selected Writings and Interviews 1981–2009* (Sternberg Press) was published in 2010.

1
Quoted from Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum. Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: Norton, 1980), 46. See also Charles Willson Peale, "To the Citizens of the United States of America," in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. Bettina Messias Carbonell (1792; Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 130. On biographical details, see also David C. Ward, *Charles Willson Peale: Art and Selfhood in the Early Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

2
Sellers, 159.

3
In Peale's narrative painting *The Exhumation of the Mastodon* (1806–08), an artistic reenactment of his 1801 scientific excavation, numerous family members and friends appear, although with all certainty, they were not present. The painting hung for a long time in Peale's Baltimore Museum (founded by Rembrandt Peale in 1814) and is currently part of the collections of the Maryland Historical Society.

4
Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in *A Mieke Bal Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 170.

5
Joseph-Marie Degérando, *The Observation of Savage Peoples*, trans. F.C.T. Moore (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 63. See also Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 194.

6
Alexander von Humboldt, *Amerikanische Reise: 1799–1804*, ed. Hanno Beck (Wiesbaden: Erdmann, 2009), 289–92.

7
Ward, *Charles Willson Peale*, 179–80.

8
Mieke Bal, "Telling, Showing, Showing Off," in *A Mieke Bal Reader* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 204.

9
Georges Bataille, "Museum," in *Encyclopedia Acephalica: Comprising the Critical Dictionary and Related Texts*, eds. Georges Bataille, Isabelle Waldberg, and Robert Lebel, trans. Iain White (London: Atlas Press, 1995), 64.

10
Ibid.

11
Ibid.

12
See Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 76.

13
Tiffany Sutton, *The Classification of Visual Art: A Philosophical Myth and Its History* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18–19.

14
Cesare Pavese, *Dialogues with Leucò*, trans. William Arrowsmith and D.S. Carne-Ross (Boston: Eridanos Press, 1989), 190.

15
Ibid., 196. In *Quei loro incontri* (2005), Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub filmed the dialogue.

16
ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums (Paris: International Council of Museums, 2006), 15.

17
Ibid., 9.

18
The Palestinian physician Tawfiq Canaan (1882–1964) collected and catalogued nearly 1,500 amulets and talismans until 1948. This collection has been at the Birzeit University in Ramallah since 1995; see href="http://virtualgallery.birzeit.edu">→. Canaan also put together a separate selection of 230 objects for Sir Henry Wellcome, who bequeathed them to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. Ettore Guatelli (1921–2000) was a collector of used objects from daily life. The Fondazione Museo Guatelli in Ozzano Taro near Parma has existed since 2003; see http://www.museoguatelli.it/.

19
A Mieke Bal Reader, 285.

20
The figures quoted are from various sources: *Statistische Gesamterhebung an den Museen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland für das Jahr 2009* (Berlin: Institute for Museum Research, 2009), href= "http://www.smb.museum/ifm/dokumente/materialien/mat64.pdf ">→; Nora Wegner, "Besucherforschung und Evaluation in Museen," in *Das Kulturpublikum: Fragestellungen und Befunde der empirischen Forschung*, eds. Patrick Glogner and Patrick S. Föhl (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010); Julia Voss, "Mensch, was suchst du bei der Kunst?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 20, 2007, 37.

21
Bericht zur Lage der Bibliotheken 2010 (Berlin: Deutscher Bibliotheksverband, 2010), 4.

22
Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public*, trans. Caroline Beattie and Nick Merriman (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 37.

The word "network" has become a ubiquitous designation for technical infrastructures, social relations, geopolitics, mafias, and, of course, our new life online.[1] But networks, in the way they are usually drawn, have the great visual defect of being "anemic" and "anorexic," in the words of philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, who has devised a philosophy of *spheres* and *envelopes*.[2] Unlike networks, spheres are not anemic, not just points and links, but complex ecosystems in which forms of life define their "immunity" by devising protective walls and inventing elaborate systems of air conditioning. Inside those artificial spheres of existence, through a process Sloterdijk calls "anthropotechnics," humans are born and raised. The two concepts of networks and spheres are clearly in contradistinction to one another: while networks are good at describing long-distance and unexpected connections starting from local points, spheres are useful for describing local, fragile, and complex "atmospheric conditions"—another of Sloterdijk's terms. Networks are good at stressing edges and movements; spheres at highlighting envelopes and wombs.

Of course, both notions are indispensable for registering the originality of what is called "globalization," an empty term that is unable to define from which localities, and through which connections, the "global" is assumed to act. Most people who enjoy speaking of the "global world" live in narrow, provincial confines with few connections to other equally provincial abodes in far away places. Academia is one case. So is Wall Street. One thing is certain: the globalized world has no "globe" inside which it could reside. As for Gaia, the goddess of the Earth, we seem to have great difficulty housing her inside our global view, and even more difficulty housing ourselves inside her complex cybernetic feedbacks. It is the globe that is most absent in the era of globalization. Bad luck: when we had a globe during the classical age of discoveries and empire, there was no globalization; and now that we have to absorb truly global problems...

[figure 7aca02f00fd0d0c7eb19bfaa5043fe81.jpg
Tomas Saraceno, *Galaxies Forming along Filaments, Like Droplets along the Strands of a Spider's Web*, 2009.
]

Bruno Latour

Some Experiments in Art and Politics

1. Saraceno's Galaxies Forming along Filaments

So how can we have both networks and spheres? How do we avoid the pitfalls of a globalization that has no real globe in which to place everything? In a work presented at the Venice Biennale in 2009, Tomas Saraceno provided a great, and no doubt unintended, metaphor for social theory. In an entire room inside the Biennale's main pavilion, *Galaxies Forming along Filaments, Like Droplets along the Strands of a Spider's Web* (2008) consisted of carefully mounted elastic connectors that produced the shape of networks *and* spheres. If you were to avoid the guards' attentive gaze and slightly shake the elastic

connectors—strictly forbidden—your action would reverberate quickly through the links and points of the network paths, but much more slowly through the spheres. This is not to say that spheres are made from different stuff, as if we must choose between habitation and connection, between local and global, or indeed between Sloterdijk and, let's say, actor-network theory. What Saraceno's work of art and engineering reveals is that multiplying the connections and assembling them closely enough will shift slowly from a network (which you can see through) to a sphere (difficult to see through). Beautifully simple and terribly efficient.

We should have known this all along: a cloth is nothing but a finely-woven network, with a clear transition between one thread and the next, depending on the density of the stitching. By deploying this "obvious" truth within the main exhibition space of the Italian Pavilion, Saraceno performed precisely the task of philosophy according to Sloterdijk, namely of *explicating* the material and artificial conditions for existence. The task is not to overthrow but to make explicit. As Deleuze and Guattari have shown, a *concept* is always closely related to a *percept*.[3] By modifying our percept, *Galaxies Forming along Filaments* allows those who try to redescribe the loose expression of globalization to explore new concepts. Instead of having to choose between networks and spheres, we can have our cake and eat it too. There is a principle of connection—a kind of movement overlooked by the concepts of networks and spheres alike—that is able to generate, in the hands of a clever artist, both networks and spheres; a certain topology of knots that may thread the two types of connectors in a seamless web.

More interesting still is the theory of envelopes—the concept implied by this percept. In this proposition, walls or quasi-walls are supported by both external and lateral linkages. Again, we all know, or should know, that identities—the walls—are made possible only through the double movement of connecting distant anchors and stitching together local nodes. If you believe that there are independent bubbles and spheres that can sustain themselves, you are clearly forgetting the whole technology of envelopes. But it is one thing to say it, for instance in political philosophy—that no identity exists without relations with the rest of the world—and it is quite another to be reminded *visually* and *experientially* of the way this could be done.

Standing in the middle of Saraceno's work, the experience is inescapable: the very possibility of having an envelope around a local habitat is given by the length, number, and solidity of the connectors that radiate out in all directions. I would have loved to see, when the exhibition was dismantled, how quickly the spherical patterns would have collapsed once a few of their outside links had been severed. A powerful lesson for ecology as well as for politics: the search for identity "inside" is directly linked to the quality of the "outside" connection—a useful reminder

at a time when so many groups clamor for a solid identity that would "resist globalization," as they say. As if being local and having an identity could possibly be severed from alterity and connection.

Another remarkable feature of Saraceno's work is that such a visual experience is not situated in any fixed ontological domain, nor at any given scale: you can take it, as I do, as a model for social theory, but you could just as well see it as a biological interpretation of the threads that hold the walls and components of a cell, or, more literally, as the weaving of some monstrously big spider, or the utopian projection of galactic cities in 3D virtual space. This is very important if you consider that all sorts of disciplines are now trying to cross the old boundary that has, until now, distinguished the common destiny of increasing numbers of humans and non-humans. No visual representation of humans as such, separated from the rest of their support systems, makes any sense today. This was the primary motive for Sloterdijk's notion of spheres, as well as for the development of actor-network theory; in both cases the idea was to simultaneously modify the scale and the range of phenomena to be represented so as to renew what was so badly packaged in the old nature/society divide. If we have to be connected with climate, bacteria, atoms, and DNA, it would be great to learn about how those connections could be represented.

The other remarkable feature of the work is that although there are many local orderings—including spheres within spheres—there is no attempt at nesting all relations within one hierarchical order. There are many local hierarchies, but they are linked into what appears visually as a heterarchy. Local nesting, yes; global hierarchy, no. For me, this is a potent attempt at shaping today's political ecology—by extending former natural forces to address the human political problem of forming livable communities. Too often, when ecologists—whether scientists or activists—appeal to nature, they speak as if it were the big global container *inside which* all other entities are arrayed in order of importance, from, let's say, the climate system to the earthworms and the bacteria, while humans meanwhile are situated somewhat in between. This gives a youthful image to the old image of the *scala naturae*, the great chain of being from the Renaissance.

But this is not the representation that Saraceno explores, as there is no overall container to his work. (Well, there is one, obviously, but it is only the physical quadrilateral of the Italian Pavilion's great hall. If you speak metaphorically, and to borrow another metaphor from Sloterdijk, this container must necessarily be the Crystal Palace of the international art market in which the artist's creation is "embedded.") In his work, every container or sphere is either inside another local one or "inside" the network of outside connections. But that's the point: networks have no inside, only radiating connectors. They are all edges.

They provide connections but no structure. One does not reside in a network, but rather moves to other points through the edges.

To think in these terms is to find a way to avoid modernism—in which case the hierarchy moves from bigger to smaller elements from a central point—but to also avoid, if I dare say, postmodernism—in which case there would be no local hierarchies and no *homogeneous* principle by which to establish the connections (in this case the elastic tensors that provide the language for the whole piece). For me, that is the beauty of Saraceno's work: it gives a sense of order, legibility, precision, and elegant engineering, and yet has no hierarchical structure. It is as if there were a vague possibility of retaining modernism's feeling of clarity and order, but freed from its ancient connection with hierarchy and verticality.

[figure 784e903a8e610f714f9d465f6e0d9666.jpg
Tomas Saraceno, *Galaxies Forming along Filaments, Like Droplets along the Strands of a Spider's Web*, 2009.
]

2. Who Owns Space and Time?

To explore the artistic, philosophical, and political questions raised by Saraceno's work, it might be useful to turn to another *locus classicus*—not the sphere versus network debate, but the debate over who owns the space in which we live collectively. There is no better way to frame this question than the bungled dialog (well, not really a "dialogue," but that's the point) between Henri Bergson and Albert Einstein in Paris in 1922. Bergson had carefully studied Einstein's theory of relativity and wrote a thick book about it, but Einstein had only a few dismissive comments about Bergson's argument.[4] After Bergson spoke for thirty minutes, Einstein made a terse two-minute remark, ending with this damning sentence: "Hence there is no philosopher's time; there is only a psychological time different from the time of the physicist." While Bergson had argued that his notion of space and time had a *cosmological* import that was to be carefully meshed within Einstein's remarkable discoveries, Einstein argued that there was only one time and space—that of physics—and that what Bergson was after was nothing more than *subjective* time—that of psychology. We recognize here the classical way for scientists to deal with philosophy, politics, and art: "What you say might be nice and interesting but it has no cosmological relevance because it only deals with the subjective elements, the lived world, not the real world." The funny thing is that everyone—including, in a way, Bergson—was convinced that he had lost, and that indeed the whole question was another episode in the gigantomachy of objective reality versus subjective illusion. To the scientists, the cosmos, and to the rest of us, the phenomenology of human intentionality. So the answer to the question "Which space do we live in?" is

clearly: we live in a subjective world with no reality for physics. Einstein: winner.

But this was the beginning of the twentieth century. Can we do better at the beginning of the twenty-first century? In other words, is it possible to give Bergson another chance to make his case that, no, he is not talking about subjective time and space, but is rather proposing an alternative to Einstein's cosmology? To explore such a possibility, I decided to rely on the fascinating genre of the reenactment. As many artists have shown, especially Rod Dickinson in the amazing staging of Milgram's experiment, reenactment is not a mere facsimile of the original but a second version, or a *second print* of the first instance, allowing for the exploration of its originality.[5] This is why, in a series of lectures at the Pompidou Center in June 2010, I invited, among many others, the artist Olafur Eliasson and two scholars, a historian of science, Jimena Canales, and a philosopher, Elie During, to reenact the famous debate by allowing the conclusion to shift somewhat, thus reopening a possibility that had been closed in the twentieth century.[6]

[figure 561b490ad7987e8ea1524073977a2f34.jpg
Bruno Latour, Olafur Eliasson, Elie During, Jimena Canales at *Selon Bruno Latour*, Centre Pompidou, 2010.

]

Who *owns* the concepts of space and time? Artists? Philosophers? Scientists? Do we live in the space-time of Einstein without realizing it, or, as Bergson vainly argued, does Einstein, the physicist, live in the time of what Bergson called *duration*? Those questions, it seemed to me, were just as important for physicists, historians, and philosophers as they are for an artist like Eliasson, who has populated museums and cities around the world by publicly demonstrating, through many artful connections between science, technology, and ecology, that there are many alternatives to the visual experience of common sense. The art form—or forum—that I chose consisted of asking the three of them to conjoin their forces in presenting films and photographs to set the stage for this famous debate, with Eliasson "refereeing" the debate through his own work.[7]

It may seem silly to ask an artist to adjudicate a debate between a philosopher and a physicist—especially a debate whose pecking order had been historically settled once and for all: the physicist speaks of the real world, and the philosopher "does not understand physics"; the artist is irrelevant here. But that was precisely the point, a point shared by Saraceno's heterarchy: that it is now possible to complicate the hierarchy of voices and make the conversation between disciplines move ahead in a way that is more representative of the twenty-first century than of the twentieth. No discipline is the final arbiter of any other.

That is exactly what Elie During did in a brilliant piece of philosophical fiction in which he entirely rewrote the 1922 dialogue as if Einstein had actually paid attention to what Bergson had told him. In the end, Zweistein—that is, the Einstein of 2010—was not, of course, convinced (that would have been a falsification, and no longer a fiction), but he had to admit that there might be more philosophy in his physics than he had claimed in 1922. Where Einstein had won, Zweistein had to settle for a draw.[8] So now we have a more balanced situation: the space and time in which we live—experientially, phenomenologically—might not be a mere mistake of our subjective self, but might have some relevance for what the world is really like. Instead of accepting the divide between physics and philosophy, this reenactment was a means of answering Alfred North Whitehead's famous question: "When red is found in nature, what else is found there also?"[9] Likewise, is it possible to imagine a world where scientific knowledge is able to *add* to the world instead of *dismissing* the experience of being in the world?

[figure 903d6ccbb6f1b2235dd691380a3df5d5.jpg
Rod Dickinson (in collaboration with Graeme Edler and Steve Rushton), *The Milgram Re-enactment*, 2002.
]

3. Composition?

One could object that such a reenactment, no matter how intriguing in its own right, does not have much to do with politics. The question has been asked many times by the public, especially when, during one of the keynote lectures I had organized to launch a new master's program in arts and politics, I invited Donna Haraway and Isabelle Stengers to present their understanding of "the political arts."[10] To the total dismay of many politically-minded French citizens, Haraway spoke mainly about learning how to behave politically anew from her dog.[11] "From her dog! What does this have to do with politics? Tell us more about domination, inequalities, power struggles, elections, and revolutions." And yet, as Isabelle Stengers quietly but forcefully explained, the new vocabulary of politics—what, for this reason, she calls "cosmopolitics" — will come precisely from a new attention to other species and other types of agencies.[12] Here again, art, philosophy, ecology, activism, and politics exchanged their repertoire in order to redefine the actors, the aims, the forums, and the emotions of political involvement.

I have come to use the word "composition" to regroup in one term those many bubbles, spheres, networks, and snippets of arts and science.[13] This concept plays the same role as Saraceno's percept of elastic tensors. It allows us to move from spheres to networks with enough of a common vocabulary, but without a settled hierarchy. It is my solution to the modern/postmodern divide. Composition may become a plausible alternative to modernization. What can no longer be modernized, what

has been postmodernized to bits and pieces, can still be composed.

X

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1
Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

2
Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären III – Schäume* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004) (partial translation: Peter Sloterdijk, *Terror from the Air,* trans. Amy Patton & Steve Corcoran (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009)); see also Peter Sloterdijk, "Foreword to the Theory of Spheres," in *Cosmograms* , ed. Melik Ohanian and Jean-Christophe Royoux (New York and Berlin: Lukas and Sternberg, 2005) 223–241, see http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/mui/marg/news/seminars/latour/COSMOGRAM-INTER-GB_Spheres.pdf .

3
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?,* trans. Janis Tomlinson and Graham Burchell III (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

4
Henri Bergson, *Durée et simultanéité. À propos de la théorie d'Einstein* (Paris: PUF, 2009).

5
See http://www.roddickinson.net/pages/index.php .

6
Jimena Canales, *A Tenth of a Second: A History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

7
This reenactment was pursued in February 2011 at Eliasson's *Institut für Raumexperimente* in Berlin and is still in progress.

8
Elie During, *Bergson et Einstein: la querelle du temps* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011).

9
Alfred North Whitehead, *Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920).

10
See http://web.archive.org/web/20110122004602/http://speap.sciences-po.fr/fr.php?item.1 , and https://www.centrepompidou.fr/fr/ressources/media/iyHvp61 .

11
See Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2007).

12
Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

13
Bruno Latour, "Steps Toward the Writing of a Compositionist Manifesto," *New Literary History* 41 (2010): 471–490.

Mona Mahall

Wolf and Vampire: The Border Between Technology and Culture

Today, common sense tells us that the border between technology (formerly known as nature) and culture is a fluid one. It is common to describe technology as a cultural practice, or culture as a fabric of interwoven material, intellectual, and social techniques. Of course, there is an obvious interrelation between culture and technology in terms of method, media, and material, and it is not difficult to identify the technical aspects of texts, or the cultural implications of communication technologies, and so forth. This interrelation of culture and technology, however, is actually based on their separation, a border that is—insofar as we can perceive it—fundamental to modernity. The separation has nothing to do with objects or disciplines, with established criteria or genera, with groups or institutions. Rather, it is sharp but unstable—it is mobile, flashing here and there between form and function, between architecture and building.

The latest attempts to reconcile culture and technology had been preceded—over the last 250 years—by antagonist attempts at playing them off: on the one hand, there was the pessimistic tragedy of culture in a technical world, and, on the other, the optimism of continuous scientific and technological progress. For some, this meant the antagonism of German culture and French civilization. Or, as the Swiss historian Siegfried Giedion put it, the split between feeling and thinking in modernity.[1]] Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).] Naturally, reunion attempts have been brought forward most seriously in the field of architecture. For Giedion, who trained as an engineer and an art historian, this was a life's work. Born in Bohemia in 1888, Giedion recognized modern architecture as the perfect field to start with; as a pupil of Heinrich Wölfflin, he immediately recognized that this work would revolutionize the visual culture of the industrial age.[2] He became familiar with the Weimar Bauhaus in 1923 and read Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture*, published that year. When he traveled to Paris in 1925, he was drawn to modern culture as it was reflected in the artistic and architectural avant-gardes. He wanted to be part of it: interpreting the developments in architecture in his own terms, Giedion became an ally—the spokesman and the historian of the modern movement, and even the first secretary-general of the famous Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM). Hans Magnus Enzensberger described his career as "extraordinary"—instead of giving lectures, he visited the Surrealists' ateliers; he was at once a researcher, entrepreneur, technician, journalist, organizer, historian, reporter, and archeologist. In general, his work might be offensive to contemporary professors.[3] And it actually is.

Thinking and Feeling

Giedion's theoretical work began with an observation of his time as being schizoid, divorcing technology and culture, or, more precisely, science and art. It is a time in
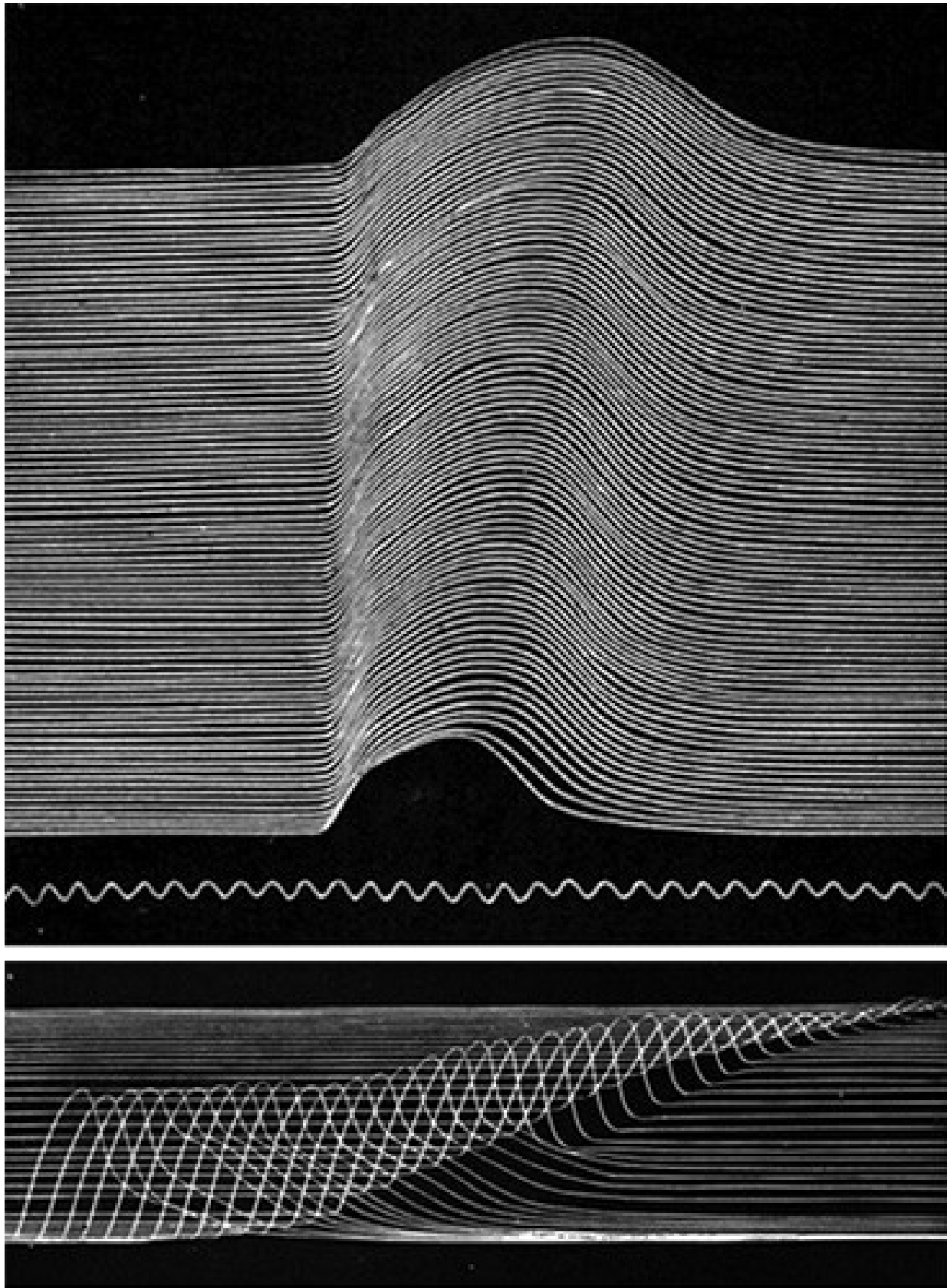
Etiennes-Jules Marey, Record of the Movement of a Muscle, as found in Giedion's Mechanization Takes Command. Above: Responses of the frog's leg to stimulation by an electric current.   Below: Coagulation of the muscle and gradual loss of function as the effect of rising temperature.

which thinking and feeling oppose each other, a time in which scientific discovery is of no significance. It is a time in which a physical theory does not have an artistic equivalent, in which scientists and artists have finally lost touch with each other—though they may share a contemporary language in their works, they cannot recognize it in a field other than their own. Giedion claims that a great physicist will not be able to understand a painting that equals his own ideas within a different form. Today's painter does not understand contemporary architecture, and the poet ignores the music of his day. For Giedion, the divorce of thinking and feeling is rooted in the unevenness of scientific and artistic progress in the early nineteenth century, when feeling could not compete with the pace of thinking, which was advancing rapidly, and scientific achievements were regarded as neutral in terms of their emotional meaning. Important achievements had no bearing on inner life, and mechanization took command.[4] The result of these developments is the "split personality" of the modern mind, which separates thinking and feeling. Even more scandalous than the divorce of culture and technology in the nineteenth century was a repression of artistic imagination, in which art assumed the form of eclecticism—separated from the creative power of the epoch and maneuvered into the grotesque "reign of the upholsterer."[5]

As a cultural critic, Giedion could have concluded his analysis at this point, but as an advocate for modern art and architecture, this only marked the beginning of an approach that appears to be a reunion attempt—at first glance. Here "movement" becomes a key word for a problem supposedly shared by both modern technology and culture, insofar as both are symbols of everlasting change, of the movement of history itself. Beginning with the Gothic cathedrals that marked the end of the ancient equilibrium, the "stream of movement" was actuated by the introduction of the mathematical variable by Descartes.

The most important step in representing movement and change was made by nineteenth-century scientists such as the French physiologist Etienne Jules Marey, who concentrated on the investigation of movements in all kind of forms: in the bloodstream, muscle, and gait, as well as the movements of birds, aquatic animals, salamanders, and insects. Giedion was fascinated by the strange forms drawn by Marey's recording apparatus, registering the quasi-automatic "language of the phenomena themselves."[6] He was inspired by the models Marey created to show the three-dimensional character of the gull's flight—a "sculpture that," according to Giedion, "would have delighted [Umberto] Boccioni, creator of the *Bottle Evolving in Space* (1912) and the *Marching Man* (1913)."[7] But it was only in the field of scientific management at the beginning of the twentieth century that images of pure movement could be recorded with full precision and perfection, and for Giedion the work of production engineer Frank B. Gilbreth suggested the

visualization of the invisible: an empire of new forms enabled by a technology that could detach human motion from its subject in order to visualize it, or, one could say, appropriate it.

Motion, the ever changing, is the key to modern thinking, and its place within the arena of feeling is of concern for modern art, which can show the effects of mobility or mechanization on the inner existence of humankind. But Giedion insists upon the reverse: mechanization itself has entered the modern artists' subconscious. Giorgio de Chirico dreamed that his father became one with the demonic power of the machine; Fernand Léger painted the city as signs, signals, and mechanical parts; and Marcel Duchamp rendered the most efficient machines as irrational, ironic objects in order to introduce a new aesthetic language. Giedion was certain that artists included machines, mechanical devices, and prefabricated objects in their work because these were the only real products of their time. Mechanization, for Giedion, represented the impulse of a general historical movement—as a synonym of movement, actually, and of the universal continuum of historical change.

Yet it was modern artists who first taught Giedion to study modernity's objects carefully. They taught him to observe the small things, the fragments, as they best exhibited the feelings and habits of an epoch. He acknowledged the artists' lesson as he learned to consider small things on a large scale, or, we might say: to turn anonymous things into authored ones, or to turn an anonymous history into a tradition. This is the manner in which Giedion considered the overall paradigm of movement in both modern culture and technology, paralleling the hammock with Alexander Calder's mobiles to expose the unifying principle that holds them together.[8] Both originate in the American environment, though Calder, like Giedion, gained aspects of his formal vocabulary from the European avant-garde. Still, Calder's originality is rooted in American life, which has always been influenced by technical invention. To Giedion, however, this spirit of invention was silent in terms of feeling, as it had not been interpreted artistically. Only in 1931, with his kinetic "mobiles," did Calder merge the typical American relation to the machine with a modern means of expression that achieved a "sensitivity to states of equilibrium." Giedion's achievement was in observing this process, for he was the first to recognize the interdisciplinary signs of an evolutionary history of movement. Or, more precisely (and also more trivially), he recognized objects that move as representations of a history that also moves on its own accord. The mobile thereby became the model of the existential equilibrium between technology and culture, between thinking and feeling, that Giedion set out to restore.
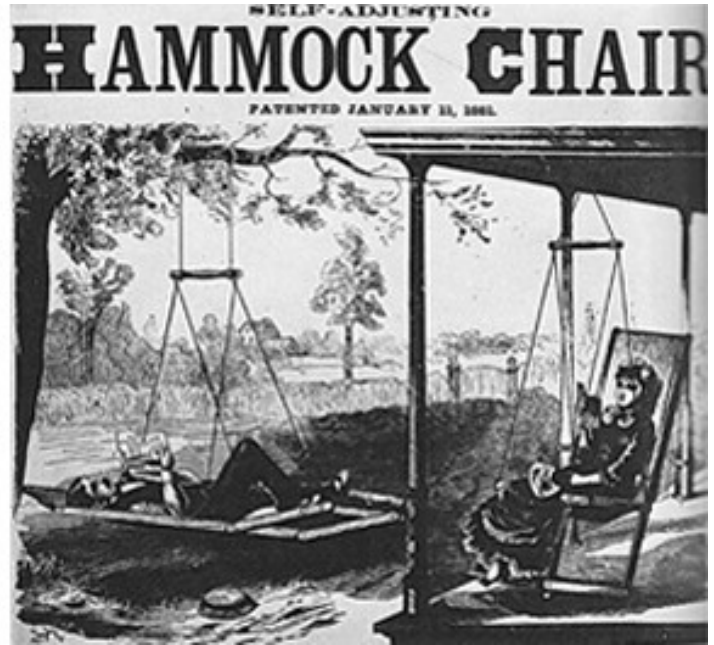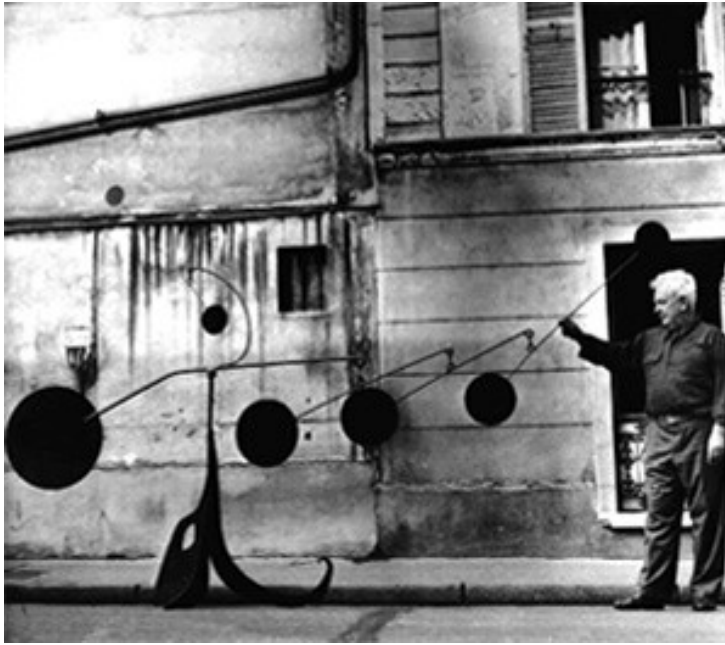
Right: Alexander Calder, Myxomatose, 1953. Left: The Hammock and Covertibility: Hammock Chair, 1881. Image found in Giedion's Mechanization takes Command.

Anonymous and Author

The figure of the equilibrium not only manifests the separation of culture and technology, but also shows its center of gravity—the border between culture and technology—as dynamic or mobile, depending on its counterweights. Giedion shifted these weights easily, moving between culture and technology from one sentence to the next. And he was totally aware of his role: unlike historians, who cannot create a notion of the continuity of history, he recognized his authorial role by taking a creative approach towards a past that always projects into the future.

For Giedion, history is dynamic: no generation is able to fully comprehend an artwork, so every new generation discovers new aspects of it. Yet in order to reveal these aspects, the historian must be as courageous as the artist. Historians, according to Giedion, usually mistrust contemporary methods, as they must necessarily guard the independence and scope of their observations. But in doing so, they neglect the importance of being of their time, of knowing which questions must be put to the past in order to resonate with the present, instead producing a "wilderness of unrelated facts" that replace mediation with chronology and specialization.[9] Going further, Giedion stated that the historian cannot be distinguished from the stream of the present, and that the ideal historian, divorced from his or her own time, is no more than a fiction. In this sense, history is itself a continuous process that includes life, and any view into history must necessarily alter the past according to the nature of the viewer. To observe something means to turn it into

something else.

When Giedion then speaks of an "anonymous history," he looks to the tools of mechanization, turning them into objects of historical observation—an observation that uses movement to turn technology into a cultural vision. And Giedion is its author. It is not a sort of "history from the bottom up"—if something like this exists at all—nor is it a research into a material world, or a history that ignores names. Nor is it a history that gives names to the anonymous. Rather, it is a history linked to one single name: Giedion. It is not a kind of interdisciplinary bridging or balancing, but an "authorization," an operation along a sharp frontier that converts anonymous to authored, history to tradition. In this sense, he acts more as an engineer or builder than a historian or scientist. The most important aspect of Giedion's work is not that he acknowledged artists and scientists to be unconsciously working on parallel tracks and pursuing similar goals, but that he was the one to reveal the unconscious parallelism; to analyze the way in which matter, space, and time intermingle; to observe the contributions of modern art to these topics; and to observe that the "cosmos is beginning to resemble more one great thought than a big machine."[10]]," *Technology and Culture*, vol. 43, no. 2 (April 2002): 381.]

In this sense, Giedion's prelude to *Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete* can be seen as stage direction for the ensuing play.[11] It introduces a new approach to images within the book, which are treated as a separate narrative, concerned with forming "a new optical language." Applying the strategies of the avant-garde in order to establish history as an "eternal

present," his publications are all adventurously alienated historical speculations by an author who wanted to exhibit the novelty of his construction.[12] In his earlier works, Giedion is influenced by Dada and Surrealist collage and montage techniques, and he wanted to visualize his thoughts in a way that would allow him the liberty to focus on singular phenomena and specific meaningful fragments, while putting others aside. In his later works, he even took up Duchamp's readymade strategy, in which "an ordinary object [is] elevated to the dignity of a work of art by the mere choice of an artist."[13] He showed technical sketches, models, and designs, the documents found in the patent office and the company archives as incunabulum of an unrecognized art. In this sense, he was as courageous as the modern artists.

In fact, Giedion was a modern artist. Modern artists recognized that the impact of mechanization was not in the introduction of mobility to formerly immobile objects, or in the "objectification" of what had been perceived as the movement of history—that is, progress. To them, mechanization suggested a mobility that made it possible (and necessary) to pull away from the history of progress altogether. The result of mechanization, for these artists, was then a movement from a pre-modern role as producers to a modern role as authors. As (technical) producers, modern artists would have had to face the machine—the camera, for example—as an opponent. As (cultural) authors, they could use anonymous technology to produce their work, stick to manual work, or introduce readymades. They could do everything or they could do nothing, insofar as their claim to authorship was successful. Of course, this claim exists only as a cultural claim, just as culture exists only as an authorial claim. In other words: technology implies modern culture insofar as production and authorship are no longer the same.

Mobility then becomes the primary means of separating the producer from the author, since authorship is gained through a continuous process that employs production, and vice versa. For Giedion, this process consisted of reconfiguring the border between culture and technology, a border he recognized as dynamic, with the understanding that modern culture means to claim and to imply authorship of anything. Of course, this kind of authorship is not restricted to areas outside of culture, which are later incorporated. It is also a continuous operation within culture itself. Not by chance, Erich Mendelsohn deliberately perceived Giedion's attempt to incorporate Einstein's theory of relativity into his works as an invasion of his authorial territory: Mendelsohn had himself made a similar attempt in his Einstein Tower observatory in Potsdam. And even Einstein dismissed Giedion's *Space, Time, and Architecture* with the following rhyme:

It's never hard some new thought to declare
If any nonsense one will dare

But rarely do you find that novel babble
Is at the same time reasonable.[14]

The art historian Niklaus Pevsner commented on the same work: "This changeover from telling historical truth—the whole truth—to blasting a trumpet, be it ever so rousing a trumpet, is a sin to a historian."[15] Arguably, the problem was not that Giedion's selection of works was too subjective, or that he perverted the truth. Rather, Pevsner, whose work actually faced the same criticism, recognized Giedion's anonymous history as the direct opposition to his heroic history *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (1936).

Wolf and Vampire

Giedion's own "heroes" were phantoms, mostly anonymous dead nobodies, whose work could simply be appropriated. To put it more radically, Giedion is the "ideal" modern author, a kind of parasite who subsists on another—"one who eats at the table of another and repays him with flattery and buffoonery."[16] Giedion literally becomes an author by turning the works of others into his own, not unlike Voltaire's vampire in his *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764)—a metaphor for the predatory nature of businessmen and stock market traders in Paris and London who suck the blood of the common people. Voltaire also named the clergy, and above all monks, as the true vampires, who sustain themselves at the cost of kings and commoners. Later on, Karl Marx took up the vampire as a metaphor for the capitalist and for capital itself, with its desire for endless accumulation. It is in this tradition that we call Giedion a kind of vampire, one who provoked a pack of ill-humored wolves: Pevsner, Mendelsohn, and so forth.[17] He was not the vampire of the modern economy, but of modern culture, though the figure of the vampire itself may date back to prehistoric times.[18] It was Lord Byron who recognized the vampire as being a complex and conflicted, lonely and monstrous (anti-)hero: an aristocrat with an aura of the secret and the supernatural who remains "deeply initiated into what is called the world."[19] Having begun as a relative of the Devil, as a pure representation of evil, the vampire has become the author of his own deeds—with magical abilities, charismatic and sophisticated, undead and spectacular, a Prometheus and cormorant in a single figure.[20] The vampire is the modern author caught between life and death by a society that euphemistically calls it a star, knowing this title to be no more than an ambiguous error. The vampire is part of an elitist implication of society: part of a secret society that avoids daylight in order to perform at night, when the spotlights shine like stars.

The vampire is a figure of culture—or better yet, it is a figure that is culture—that, in the field of technology, is
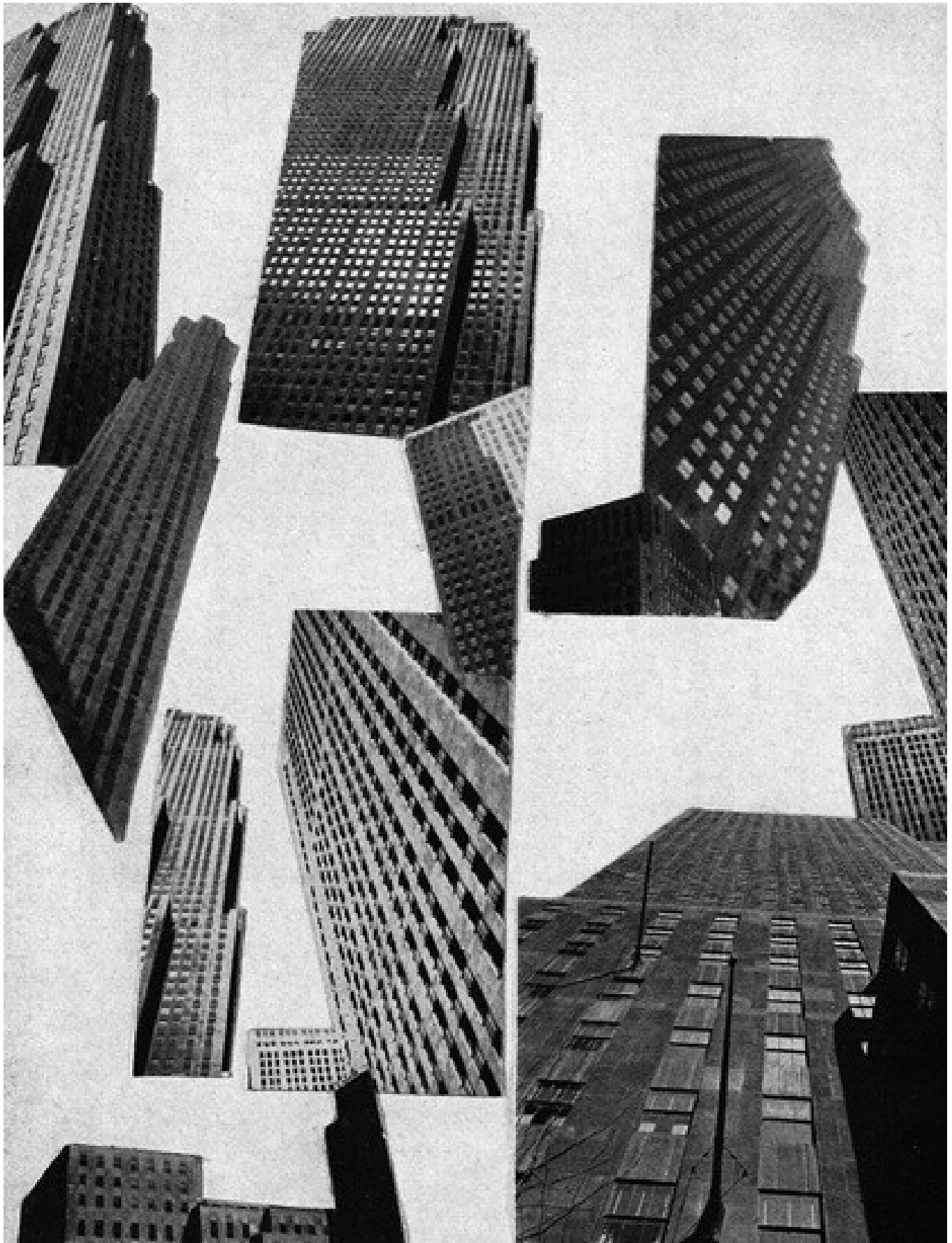
Sigfried Giedion, Photomontage of Rockefeller Center, illustration from Raum, Zeit, Architektur, 1941.

always an anachronistic joke or a special effect. The vampire is a figure that does not care about progress, its mode of time is the "eternal present," to use Giedion's term again. It is a sovereign that is always regarded with simultaneous skepticism and admiration. A vampire, as Sartre mentioned, is not a figure that can actually legitimately say "I," or "I did this or that," because it depends on the affirmation or allocation of others. It was Sartre who recognized the vampire as unstable or mobile in itself, insofar as its self-identification was of a temporary nature.[21] There is, in this sense, not only an obligation to claim the vampire, but also an obligation for it to be claimed by others. That these others may even kill a vampire from time to time, by beheading and impaling its heart (to ensure the end!), shows the vampire to be a true Giedionian figure of thinking and feeling—a borderline.

Today, the figure of the vampire should not be reduced to the romantic notion of the artist. Rather, it is used to explain the radical difference between authorship and anonymity, between culture and technology (nature) in modernity. It is not the egocentric, passionate, and sensitive Byronic hero that interests us here, although this characterization captures quite well the psychological condition of a vampire. Rather, we recognize in the vampire a metaphor for describing a premise of modern culture: an authorial figure that marks a difference, that embodies the unstable border between night and day, between culture and technology. Both vampire and author are suspected of not existing. Both are claims and declarations. Both are somehow undead—and spectacular.

By shifting the border between technology/culture and "culturalized" technology to become an author, Giedion aimed at turning modern building into architecture and technology into culture. His attempts to unify culture and technology turned out to be a powerful reconstitution of a separation integral to modern culture. Turning technical progress into cultural historicism, Giedion's cyclical mode of time resembles that of vampires, who do not grow old, but simply change their clothes according to fashion.[22]

All that is successfully associated with the claim of an author becomes culture, whether a painting or a machine. All that enters culture by way of authorship has already left technology. The opposite process, naturalization or anonymization, remains excluded from institutional archives. Still, the border is sharp, and yet, mobile.

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Lívia Páldi

Back to the Future: Report from Hungary

At present, the descriptive term "Left-liberal" has been dislocated from its complex meaning rooted in a profound European historical tradition and imbued with highly negative connotations. In Hungary, the term now functions as a synonym for those believed to have benefitted under the former Socialist-Liberal coalition of the MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party) and SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats / Hungarian Liberal Party) parties.

On January 8, an editorial in *Magyar Nemzet* (Hungarian Nation)—a newspaper intimately connected to the present Fidesz Party government under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán—accused a number of prominent philosophers of having taken, "in a morally and legally questionable way," 1.85 million Euros in grant money under the Socialist-Liberal coalition government in 2004–2005. The allegation focused on a group of academics that included philosopher Agnes Heller (professor emerita at the New School for Social Research), Mihály Vajda, Sándor Radnóti, and others, in order to question the legitimacy of properly distributed research funding. The philosophers were also accused of being "by self-definition and according to public consensus 'liberals,' who have not settled for staying in the ivory tower and who wish to share their views and thoughts with a wider public beyond the academic arena."[1]

The editorial highlighted six projects (all in the fields of aesthetics and philosophy) out of a total of 35 funded projects, describing them as "not even on familiar terms" with the initial purpose of the grants, which were allocated from the National Office for Research and Technology (now the National Innovation Office) in order to enhance research in social sciences. The accused intellectuals, many of whom served as unpaid project leaders, have mostly been referred to as "the Hellers" (after Agnes Heller) or "the liberal clique." Though they clearly share liberal principles, their individual scientific and political approaches differ in many ways.

Two days after the editorial appeared, the government's Accountability and Anti-Corruption Commissioner launched an extensive investigation into the "suspicious" projects, and the case was soon handed over to the police, who investigated probable malpractice and the fraudulent misuse of funds. Under the pretext of alleged financial crime, the scandal-mongering media campaign soon expanded to become a full-fledged political battle.

The right-wing press not only insulted the integrity of the intellectuals in question, but also made openly propagandistic accusations, denying readers of an accurate report on the situation by providing an arbitrary selection of documentation and by eliminating almost all voices critical of the investigation. The press also incorporated practical issues—such as the lack of funding for both scientific research and the current application system, the lack of proper evaluation of scientific work, or the much-needed structural reforms within academic

institutions—into their criticism in a way that encouraged division among academic professionals. With a few notable exceptions, most academics either remained silent or quietly expressed support for their colleagues.

Those who criticized the campaign against the philosophers, both in Hungary and abroad, pointed at the personal nature of the attacks and the political motivations behind the libels.[2] Many drew attention to the resurgence of nationalism and classical conservatism, as well as the increasing threats to the principles of liberal democracy, including freedom of speech and freedom of the press.[3]

A prime example indicating the absurdity of the accusations made by the right-wing press against the philosophers is a photograph, taken from index.hu and reproduced by *Magyar Nemzet,* showing Agnes Heller and Jürgen Habermas engaged in conversation during a 2009 conference, which was reprinted with the title "Heller and Habermas attacking the [Hungarian] government together."[4]

[figure partialpage
93c4c02cea76bc0fb53d3b8628a5f7dc.jpg
Agnes Heller and Jurgen Habermas. Photograph taken from the website index.hu. Photo: Francis Kalmandy

]

The media campaign against the philosophers was not a positive contribution to the start of Hungary's EU presidency. The campaign, as well as its anti-Semitic undertones, generated an international outcry, compounding earlier criticisms of—amongst other subjects—the media law and the planned overhaul of the Hungarian constitution. The right-wing media adopted a combative stance towards all international criticism and described it as either an insult to the nation or merely a "fuss." As a result, some of the philosophers targeted in the campaign were even accused of displaying attitudes that were "unpatriotic" and "cosmopolitan"—a frequently-used coded term to denote Jewishness.

The "philosophers' case" was preceded by the similarly controversial attempt to restructure the Institute of Philosophy at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, an effort that had distinct political overtones. The top-down appointment of the new director, and directives to "rejuvenate" the staff in order to "enhance" scientific work allowed the staff to be "pre-qualified" according to undisclosed criteria. Out of a total of 23 staff members, the process found 13 to be inadequate, some of whom had been working at the Institute since 1978. The escalation of the restructuring effort led to a number of court cases and endangered the future existence and intellectual autonomy of the Institute, which includes the Georg Lukács Archives.[5]

Since last year, public foundations established under the

previous government have been placed under scrutiny and are to be consolidated under the auspices of "financial efficiency." This is highly problematic as the plan consists of merging institutions whose research topics and methodological and historical approaches differ significantly. Among the institutions under threat is the Institute of the History of the 1956 Revolution, whose aim to produce a genuine account of the events in Hungary in and around 1956 plays a crucial role in Hungary's historical memory.[6] Furthermore, the professional committees that award the prestigious Kossuth and Széchenyi prizes have been dissolved, with political functionaries replacing prominent former jurors.

Clearly, what is at stake here is the practice of non-ideological, pluralistic thinking, and the autonomy and democratic existence of academic and artistic work. Nothing illustrates this better than the next wave of "re-examinations" that followed those of the "philosophers' case." Under the pretext of uncovering the "frittering away" of taxpayers' money, the government's Accountability and Anti-Corruption Commissioner began investigating what are referred to as "1% Projects"—an allowance within design and construction budgets for public art projects realized as public-private partnerships.[7]

Also part of the wave of re-examinations was the suspension of the Contemporary Art and Applied Art Grant of the Hungarian University program. Modeled on French and German practices, the program has "since its founding, been almost the only source of funding available to artists in order to realize public art projects, and which has reconfigured the relationship between art and architecture," according to József Mélyi, art critic and the president of AICA-Hungary. Mélyi also emphasized that the (aesthetic) rhetoric applied to halt the grant application process also "unconsciously conjured up the anti-abstraction campaigns of the 1950s in Eastern Europe, and the *Entartete Kunst* exhibitions of the 1930s, where reference was almost always made to the working people and their collective tax contributions."[8]

One can find the reasoning behind the current investigations in earlier Fidesz programs, such as their 2007 handbook, *Strong Hungary*, and in particular, Orbán's September 2009 program speech held in Kötcse. Among the initiatives is the drive to create a new cultural equilibrium by means of a tabula rasa, a "central power sphere" that would dissolve the dual power structure and the debate over values in favor of creating a (new) "fine, noble, and refined elite" within a new right-wing culture.[9]

The contemporary marginalization of pluralistic and critical thinking and dissenting voices from the public sphere calls to mind not the realization of a vision of "twenty-first century Hungarian culture that occupies a significant place in world culture," but rather, the cultural policy strategies of the decades preceding post-communist transition.[10]

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The article was based on reports published before
February 19, 2011. Since then, two of the accused project
leaders, Sándor Radnóti and János Weiss, have been
acquitted. More recently, a new French organization
called Chercheurs sans Frontières – Free Science has
provided financial and legal assistance to researchers who
may be physically or morally threatened, expressing
solidarity with the incriminated Hungarian philosophers.

Lívia Páldi, born in Budapest, has been chief curator at the
Műcsarnok / Kunsthalle Budapest since 2007. She has
organized numerous exhibitions, including "Other Voices,
Other Rooms—Attempt(s) at Reconstruction. 50 Years of
the Balázs Béla Studio," Műcsarnok / Kunsthalle Budapest
(2009); "Robert Capa," Ludwig Museum–Museum of
Contemporary Art, Budapest (2009); "The Producers,"
Ernst Museum–Műcsarnok / Kunsthalle Budapest (2008);
"Mircea Cantor: Future Gifts," Műcsarnok / Kunsthalle
Budapest (2008); "Deimantas Narkevičius: History
Continued," Műcsarnok / Kunsthalle Budapest (2007);
"!REVOLUTION?" (with Ulrike Kremeier), Collegium
Hungaricum, Berlin (2006); and "Dreamlands Burn,"
Nordic Art Show 2006 (with Edit Molnár), Műcsarnok
/Kunsthalle Budapest (2006). She is currently working on
the English edition of a Balázs Béla Studio reader. Páldi
has edited several exhibition catalogues, and was a
contributing editor of East Art Map. She participated in the
Curatorial Training Programme at De Appel in Amsterstam
and is currently a doctoral candidate in the Institute for Art
Theory and Media Studies at Eötvös Loránd University,
Budapest. She is currently a curatorial agent of
dOCUMENTA (13).

1
Beside *Magyar Nemzet,* other the government-tied newspapers and news channels (MTV, Hír TV, and Echo TV) were involved in the campaign. If not stated otherwise, all quotes are from the editorials of *Hungarian Nation* starting January 8, 2011. About the grant results see https://web.archive.or g/web/20110720234902/http:// nih.gov.hu/palyazatok-eredmenye k/archivum/archivum-080519 .

2
Both Heller and Radnóti publicly expressed strong condemnation of the politics and decision-making practices of Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz Party.

3
Beside an appeal signed by the President of the German Society for Philosophy, Julian Nida-Rümelin, and honorary member Jürgen Habermas, there have been press releases (Hannah Arendt-Zentrum der Universität Oldenburg) and protest letters (e.g.: The New School for Social Research in New York) in defense of the accused philosophers; see http:// www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/auf ruf-von-habermas-und-nida-ruem elin-schuetzt-die-philosophen-1.1 050449 , http://web.archive.org/ web/20111007090839/https://p olitikaetc.info/2011/01/ataque-fil osofos-hungaros.html , http://ww w.newappsblog.com/2011/02/ap a-open-letter-on-the-situation-of-p hilosophers-in-hungary.html?cid= 6a00d8341ef41d53ef0147e2b3b 18e970b , and http://web.archive. org/web/20120515060907/https: //www.boell.de/downloads/TXT_ 2011-01-27_Pressemitteilung_Un garn.pdf . Laszlo Tengelyi, Professor of philosophy at Wuppertal University, reflected on both affairs. His open letter was forwarded to some German papers (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*) and scientific societies; see http:/ /pusztaranger.wordpress.com/20 11/01/22/1370/ .

4
Magyar Nemzet , January 26, 2011. The photograph was taken at the University of Pecs by Ferenc Kálmándy in 2009.

5
György Vári.

6
See http://www.rev.hu/portal/pa ge/portal/rev/ .

7
Magyar Nemzet , Saturday, February 5, 2011.

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József Mélyi, see http://web.archi ve.org/web/20110221201801/htt ps://www.es.hu/2011-02-09_a-ko zter-elszamoltatasa .

9
Viktor Orbán, "To Preserve the Hungarian Quality of Being," speech given at the sixth "Civic Picnic" at Kotcse (Hungary) in September, 2009.

10

Jon Rich

Camels vs. Google: Revolutions Recreate the Center of the World

When Google enabled access to Twitter services through landlines in Egypt, the American administration erred on the side of caution. Google is the crown jewel of the American empire, but whereas the American administration manages ideas, Google deals in instruments and communication interfaces. During the revolution in Egypt, such tools proved their ability to animate the global public, while politics reasoned by ideas remains, as of yet, incapable of responding to chronic problems. We may then say that this revolution was led by Google and its rivals—there is no doubt America has dominated this new century since the beginning.

The American administration reads a political situation in a particular country through an assessment of its active political and social structures. The protesters in Tunisia and Egypt did not register on the agenda of American diplomacy. Nor did they register on the official agendas of Tunisia or Egypt. CNN, one of the most involved networks, broadcast a talk show labeling events in Egypt a "revolution without leadership," yet the absence of leadership did not prevent it from leading the headlines. Presumably journalistic instinct allowed CNN to infer that the revolution in Egypt would soon alter the course of history.

The Egyptian regime came to this conclusion as well. They knew from the beginning that they would have to come up with new techniques to halt the revolution. Someone ingeniously thought to invent a touristic form of repression: camels and horses running over the bodies of protesters equipped with the latest communication technology. The obscenity was beyond expectations; barbarians trying to trample over modernity—camels vs. Google. What an astonishing difference between the apple of Adam and that of Macintosh!

This revolution was instrumented in ways that rendered it impossible to disarm. Protesters came from a privileged social class: young, educated, multilingual—and they were peaceful. How could one expect even the most repressive regime to succeed in stopping them? A great deal of praise has been invested in technological progress and modernization, even from the most radical and authoritarian regimes. Now the users of these technologies have begun to revolt. It appears the authorities did not have enough time to shelve their previous discourse and build a new one condemning technology and constricting its use. Somewhat regrettably for the Egyptian authorities, they only realized this at their moment of reckoning. They tried to sever the communication networks, but it was already too late.

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Protesters at Tahrir Square after rigging a lamppost to charge cellphones.
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Who Are the Rebels of Today?

There is general agreement that the organizers of today's revolutions and the group that articulates their demands are primarily young and from the middle classes of their societies. They possess the most effective tools of communication and generally share a number of ideals: democracy, gender equality, racial equality, gay rights, the rejection of domestic violence, and so forth.

Perhaps more importantly, they show a remarkable enthusiasm for discussing their views and sharing experiences and knowledge with each other. We may say that they exhibit their existence through Twitter, Facebook, and other social media outlets that compel people to constantly express themselves. A person in this world dies when he or she stops speaking. Hence, they always have something to say, a clear example being the inducing call to comment on Facebook's status bar, "What's on your mind?" The urgency to make statements or comment on images, now more closely linked to political events, is in some respect endeavoring to acquire what Hannah Arendt termed opinionated citizenship.[1] However, the obligation to self-expression does not itself imply a well-structured political discourse. Despite the fact that social media and political discussions urge people to think, adequate solutions to chronic problems are yet to be put forward. A diversity of opinions does not reflect a revolutionary spirit but rather a tendency towards peace and tolerance. And we could argue here that it was the peaceful and tolerant nature of the protesters that made the Egyptian and Tunisian authorities as confused as ever. For bare violence is inexpedient, or at least ineffective, when it comes to repressing a peaceful movement.

What could be concluded in due course is that when the finer layers of society revolt, authority has to respond to their demands, even those that may have seemed unrealistic the day before. Otherwise, what would compel these revolutions to ask for nothing less than the head of the king? In traditional political struggles, one side would never demand the departure of the leader of the opponent side. For example, in a political struggle between Al Wafd Party and the ruling National Democratic Party, the former having rallied a significant part of the Egyptian society, they would never ask Mubarak to step down during negotiations. It is precisely Mubarak who could give them the concessions they would be asking for. The protesters demanded the president's resignation and the opposition parties conformed to their demand. Still, no one knows for sure whether the protesters are fond of the current leader of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The demand for Mubarak to step down was not political in its nature as much as it was symbolic; the protesters wanted to ascertain their power in the new social order they were about to create, therefore making what sounded like an unreasonable demand. On the grounds that the president unconstitutionally renewed his mandate, the protesters' own unconstitutional demand was not a cautious move, from the point of view of those who wish to abide by the rule of law. Accusing a small group, even if it is the president and his inner circle, of being responsible for all the country's problems is not fair. Yet this transgression was necessary to make it clear to both authority and opposition that the last word from now on would not be theirs. Anyhow, the opposition's hesitance in declaring its own demands, and the subsequent attempts to catch up with the spontaneous demands of the protesters, was both ridiculous and comic. Any future coalition government in Egypt or Tunisia will know very well where the real power lies.

Neither the revolution's demands nor its symbolic transgressions were complete madness. From the beginning, the rebels in Tunisia and Egypt chose to be on the side of the army and against the regime, its police, and its corrupt business class. Accordingly, it is possible to come to the following conclusion: using common sense and sound political intuition, the protesters chose to preserve the coherence of the system. Instead of a confident step into the unknown, there was a critical adjustment to the balance of power, a natural and legitimate consequence of a prior change on the social level. The revolution has established a discourse defined by the notion that the legitimacy of authority is no longer acquired through the ruling group but rather through the group demonstrating the best organizational skill and the most indispensible resources. In this sense, the call for the president to step down in Tunisia and Egypt was reasonable. These revolutions made it clear that when the time comes to choose between the peaceful group leading the revolution and a president who responds with violence, the local and international community will unequivocally support the former. From the outset, Google implicitly favored one side. Yet it took the American administration some time to admit that there were no other options.

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Why Egypt?

A revolution is an exception in terms of social pattern, in the course of which societies are armed with hope for change. However, every group in these societies has its own specific issues and priorities. What usually makes up the general picture of revolutions is the sum of disparate demands and claims, most of which are unrealistic or unachievable. Nonetheless, all groups converge around their disapproval of the existing authority hoping that change will bring about what they aspire for. Revolutions are equally generators of hope and frustration, and the one witnessed in Egypt was not the first of its kind. We may recall four previous instances: Lebanon in 2005, the

United States in 2008, Iran in 2010, and Tunisia in early 2011.

Let's start with the outsider: Obama's revolution in the United States. Naturally, no one called it a revolution. Even in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Iran, or Lebanon, many were hesitant to give these various forms of civil unrest the same label. Yet all they share what we can regard as the most important element of revolution as defined by Arendt: all gave birth to local councils, where ideas are formulated and debated in the process of protesting and contesting others.[2]

The Americans did not conduct their revolution in the streets, nor did it come without warning. To be precise, the revolution's leader belonged to the traditional political structure. And, as with earlier and later revolutions, it paid special attention to symbolism. Barack Obama and his electoral team invested a great deal of effort in mobilizing the social media networks that supported him; this in turn revolutionized the industry of public opinion–making. When journalist Fareed Zakaria published an article in the *New York Times*, he received thousands of comments from those who wished to express an opinion. Arguably, Zakaria has more readers than commentators. Yet, the fact that there were thousands of people actively participating indicates that many were looking for a venue for their views. In other words, they wanted to transform personal opinions into public opinions.

Obama's electoral campaign outlined a substantial framework in which online chatting was reshaped into public debate by turning cybernetic forums into local councils. Any revolution in the course of its formation is founded upon such councils formed by locals. As forums of discussion established on the level of a neighborhood, factory, or town, where people debate matters of concern, form opinions, and defend them, the councils activated by Obama's campaign are still operational at this very moment. If we follow Arendt's argument to its logical conclusion, we would infer that unless these local councils are dismantled, the revolutions would not wither away to be replaced by authoritarian regimes, as happened with Robespierre and Saint-Just, and later with Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. The cybernetic councils of the American revolution are still flourishing, which is to say that they could at any moment recreate the tour de force of the 2008 elections and urge future candidates to conform to conditions that were not previously part of the electoral game. It has become extremely difficult, almost impossible, to bring down local councils, which remain independent, self-governed, and boast an established web presence using social media groups and other online resources. With the total absence of tools with which to halt their profusion or limit their repercussions, authorities have fallen short of demonstrating the means to silence these revolutionary councils, which have now become established social institutions.

Online forums in Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Iran preceded and outlasted the revolutions. In Lebanon, the emphasis was placed on text messaging and effective coordination with broadcasters. In Iran, smartphones exhibited their full potential. In Tunisia, despite the restrictions on social media, the youth communicated through chat forums and text messages. The authorities in Egypt saw what happened and decided to cut off the air that these groups breathe: they shut down the cellular phone networks, harassed reporters and broadcasters, and blocked access to the internet. But it was already too late. Some of these revolutions were more successful than others, but none have fallen prey to a Saint-Just or Robespierre that would turn their councils into ruins; in cyberspace, the councils prevailed, fueled by the intensity of the protesters' hope and the ardency. These were facets that the American revolution shared with the other four. Yet, what was achieved by the former was not possible in the latter cases without street demonstrations. This is because the emerging, socially-networked political groups in Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Iran were not fully articulated—unlike their counterparts in the United States. In other words, the number of internet users and bloggers in Egypt does not by itself indicate anything, and will not help us make predictions or jump to conclusions about the future.

The situation in Egypt, and the Middle East in general, is more complicated than that of the United States for several reasons. Let's begin with the technical reason. As described by Tocqueville, and by Arendt in her account of the American Revolution, the US is a society of immigrants.[3] It is among the world's most socially, naturally, and economically adaptable populations. Americans see their industrial and commercial institutions as beings that are born, grow old, and die. Every decade or two, a crucial economic sector crumbles under the weight of foreign competition, but Americans press for the development of a new sector and invest heavily in it. Before long, this sector becomes the main contributor to the economic and cultural image of the US. We do not need to dwell on the fervor with which America builds its economy and image, but we can nevertheless say that, in a society that evolves according to a secular and modern rhythm, the prevailing industry, its clients and consumers, occupy a vital and central share in the country's public image. And the manufacturer of this image nowadays is communication—from Google to the iPhone. This can only be expected from a society obsessed with displacing its own agora from the public square to cyberspace.

In Egypt and Lebanon, the digital crowd urgently needed to provide a physical presence in the street. If it had remained in virtual space, neither the authorities nor the rest of society would have noticed. It needed to go out looking for the attention of CNN. Societies in this part of the world still read their present and future from the screens of CNN and ABC. This explains why the claims were similar in all four revolutions. The young protester

wanted to see his or her image on screen in real time to prove to be the victim of an oppressive regime, and simultaneously the hero and redeemer of his or her own destiny. But in reality, all these roles are hypothetical. The authorities cannot suppress the group that is the most privileged and peaceful, as they do with the working class or other small communities—craftsmen, ethnic or religious minorities, and so forth. Nor is the protester a typical victim of a repressive authority. The protester's appearance on television does not automatically imply victimhood, but rather a state of being halfway between two conditions: the protester is the victor announcing a failure of the authority, while declaring at the same time that he or she is the victim of an irrevocable act of repression.

The practice of American sovereignty in this century is quite different from that of the second half of the past century, when the country was focused on resisting communist expansion. While Marxism's failure as a practice and way of governing is commonly considered to have been an American achievement, I contend that the main factor leading to the fall of socialist societies under the grip of the Americans since the 1960s is still under-acknowledged. In the 60s, America saw the pillars of its capitalist economy begin to crumble, with heavy competition from Europe and Japan. But America had added a third element to Adam Smith's equation (later reiterated by Marx) that an economy is built on two foundations: the means of production and productive forces. These two foundations guide every aspect of life—individual taste, self-expression, and the image we choose to promote. The American economy took these two elements, and with the opening of the American market to the consumption of products, the American citizen, as a productive force, gained a second attribute: that of the consumer. Before long, and around the world, the consumer claimed authority. And the socialist system was not equipped to deal with precisely this consumer culture; for while it is fathomable that a taxi driver needs to wear jeans and sneakers given the nature of his job, the socialist system could not comprehend this worker or taxi driver's insistence upon wearing Adidas shoes or Levi's jeans in particular. More confusing still was that an engineer or bank manager would want to wear one specific brand of shoes and not the other.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the consumer became the world citizen. No longer exclusively American, the consumer now lives among Saudis, Russians, Indians, and Japanese. And, yet again, America found itself incapable of competing in the sphere of inventing human needs. Then came the communication revolution—a revolution led by America to invent the need for the consumable communication around the world, with the internet as a pressing demand linking the world around its services. A new social group was thus formed to inherit and exceed the role of the consumer, echoing the historic birth of the working class. This group could be referred to

as the "users." Being highly proficient in communication technologies, the issue for the group is not whether one carries an iPhone or a BlackBerry, but how one uses its features and services. The specific brand is no longer an issue, as the difference between owning an HP or a Toshiba laptop matters little. What matters is to have a Google email account linked to Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, connecting one to the expanding world of bloggers. As a social group, the users comprise a global industry, yet this industry emerged and flourished under American sponsorship. The search engines are still based there, as they have always been. The phenomenon that produced Google transformed us from consumers to users, and it is precisely these users that organized the new revolutions in America and elsewhere.

[figure 2696bab4c611918376274d8e7c720187.jpg
Protests at Tahrir Square.
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The Fragility of Democracy

Perhaps the greatest paradox has been that in the era of the hegemony and overabundance of images, we found ourselves once again at the mercy of words. The revolutions in Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Iran happened before the lenses of cameras broadcasting live around the world, turning the image into an actual event—stripping it of its qualities as image. The excess of words used to describe these revolutions became a foil for the very limited number of images available. Televisions endlessly looped what few images of the violence were available, which is not to say that other images were hard to find. Yet the images depicting the Egyptian revolution were scarce in comparison to the comments, speeches, and conferences by officials around the world. Drawing a quick comparison with past televised events, the 2006 war in Lebanon or the Gaza war in 2008, saw images of death multiplying relentlessly for weeks. The political discourse from both sides of the war was like the monotonous sound of weeping: generalized death and blood flowing like rivers, the repetitive rhetoric of hate and contempt. On the other hand, the four revolutions in question, and especially the Egyptian one, were not as generous in images as they were in words. The amount of bloodshed in these revolutions was less than the discourse, and bare violence was less harsh than the language of its denunciation. A lot has changed since the first Gulf War; today one can say that these revolutions happened precisely because we saw them on TV, not the other way around. These images that cannot lie, as CNN likes to put it, can no longer recur without making us turn our eyes away. It used to take a small number of victims to trigger our sympathy, but we now find ourselves overwhelmed with countless deaths, barely remembering how to weep or compose elegies.

Since the Gulf War, the image that cannot lie has become irrefutable evidence. We can no longer produce images

erratically, because the image is no longer an immortalization of a transient event as much as it is event in and of itself. In other words, the repression in Egypt was nothing like what used to happen in the times of Stalin or Hitler, or what happened in the Syrian city of Hama during the early 80s when Hafez el Assad bombarded it with heavy artillery. Even today, we don't have an approximate number of victims claimed by El Assad's army, though the most conservative estimates figure it to be no less than ten thousand. Today, such actions could not be without consequences. This has to do with politics, but also with the fact that the image is no longer a mere commentary. Every image, no matter how bad, is broadcast repeatedly. The protester no longer goes out on the street without making sure to document each event with his mobile phone or digital camera to then send it to the world to watch. We can say that the number of images available was so few because the events themselves were negligible in comparison with their consequences.

That is why words once again had to serve the function of commenting on the events. The assumption is that words, which are said to be in black and white, outweighed the full color image—and this by itself is a significant event. On one hand, speech, in spite of the platitudes of political discourse in each of the revolutions, was much more abundant than the images. And on the other hand, partiality was obvious at all times. No one would question whether the demand to overthrow Bin Ali and chase him and his relatives from the country was a just and fair demand considering the nature of the crimes committed. In the Lebanese case, the matter was even clearer: the Lebanese took over the streets and demanded a change of authority, a demand that sounded reasonable and legitimate given that a foreign army and security force had installed that authority. However, what followed was no more than the total collapse of the system and the rise of religious groups to the forefront of the political scene. What remained following the collapse of the pro-Syrian regime were the structures that predate the logic of the state and of modernity altogether. In Egypt, Tunisia, and Iran, the protesters demanded the overthrow of a specific group within the established regime. From the outset, they decided to favor one side of the regime and fight the other. They were defeated in Iran but were successful in Egypt and Tunisia. Yet neither one attempted a radical change in the system, and thus the risk of falling into the quagmire of Lebanese uncertainties was avoided.

The assumption is that these revolutions' hesitance in demanding radical change was due to the scarcity of ideas that motivated them. They aspired to shift the status quo to a more dynamic state but failed to reach beyond this formal demand to a deeper and more meaningful one. What does it really mean to want free elections in Egypt while asserting the army's role in maintaining order and determining the country's future? It is most likely an attempt to provoke a political and social dynamic on the surface of a stagnant sociopolitical order that maintains

army's hold over security. These changes can be looked at from the perspective of two givens: First is the fragility of democracy and its limited ability to deal with unforeseeable crises, which led these revolutions to ferociously invoke the American model of a democracy. The second given has to do with the weight and nature of the questions facing the region in view of the hegemony of modernity as the unique credible model.

[figure 1e584189ae910b8ffd40c999c8fda8d4.jpg

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In the first given, we can note that the American democracy is the only one in the world capable of defending itself with real force, and is often assigned the responsibility of defending other democracies in Europe and the rest of the world. Perhaps the reason is that the American democracy is built on two levels: one level that represents all American citizens living in quasi-independent states, without a real voice regarding defense, foreign policy, or the general economy, and another level that represents the employees of the federal government and national and multinational corporations. The democracies of California, Virginia, or New Jersey resemble those of France, Germany, or Spain. The federal government, however, has little in common with European democracies. Becoming a part of the federal government necessitates fulfilling certain qualification requirements, which includes a list of negating conditions regarding criminal, political, and ideological history. The US federal government doesn't look after a population the way modern governments typically do. This is the responsibility of quasi-independent states. Accordingly, we have the federal government on one side and its people and employees on the other. Furthermore, the federal government builds its institutions on rented property. The only city owned by the government is Washington, a city where most of the population changes with the various administrations. In other words, only a fraction of the population lives there under conditions of permanence. With respect to military bases, army camps, and intelligence centers, they are all built in the middle of the ocean or on land owned either by the American states or a foreign country. It is almost impossible to oppose, much less defeat, a country with no definite borders, or for that matter a country without citizens, whose subjects are employees with job contracts instead of the rights associated with citizenship. Finally, the national and transnational companies are entities in perpetual motion. The United States is a nation on wheels that can't be dealt a lethal blow in any single spot. Copying its democracy in Egypt would mean separating a group of the society from their rights to citizenship and pushing them to play the vital role of defending the nation's borders from both the inside and outside, which is precisely the role of armies.

Egypt, Tunisia, Iran, and Lebanon are states that fell prey to the charms of Western modernities towards the end of

the nineteenth century. In these counties, the national dress was replaced with Western dress—something that did not happen in India, Pakistan, or the Gulf States, for example. Accordingly, the elites in these countries saw their ideal in European democracy, but over the last century these democracies proved their inability to protect their achievements. The conclusion of this model as weak and unfit was inevitable, and thus it came to be replaced, in the period between the 1950s and the 1970s, by the Soviet model and Marxist thinking. Later, the American model became the bridge between this troubled world and modernity.

The second given has to do with the urgency of the questions posed by these societies and the difficulty of finding answers for them. And this is, very probably, the real reason why these modern revolutions are taking place in this part of the world. Western modernities were founded on absolute and flat homogeneity. European democracies left no place whatsoever for differences in religion or ethnicity. All their revolutions took place in response to the Catholic Church, either in favor or in opposition to it. The relation to the Church left them unequipped to deal with the issues of minorities, which later resulted in the emigration, both politically and legally, of European Jews to Israel. The result was an exportation of conflicts to the Middle East, which has been the garbage dump of Western modernity since its inception.

Nowadays, Western democracies border on countless problems of different types and origins, with the major one being unquestionably located in the Middle East. There, the social elites are expected to come up with democratic solutions to protect religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. The development or aggravation of problems threatens to send the whole region back to the Dark Ages. Does it not sound like Bin Laden when he said that resisting American hegemony begins with Muslims returning to the caves and leaving modernity once and for all? There is no doubt that New York's Chinatown is indicative of the inability of American democracy to integrate its immigrants, and the same could be said of Algerians in Paris, Indians in London, or Iranians in Los Angeles. But these problems do not pose serious threats to the city. The real threats are elsewhere in the world.

This is why revolutions happen in this part of the world. And it is why these revolutions find themselves without ideas. It is an extremely heavy burden to bear on the shoulders of the group that now holds the tools to allow it to lead. Abstract ideas are worthless in this regard.

Young Lebanese gathered on the same street because they wanted a chance to learn about each other after a civil war had separated them. And in Egypt, the revolution began just after the incident of the Alexandria church bombing, which looked to be the beginning of another round of violence between Copts and Muslims. And it was an obvious decision—despite the claims and wishes of

Iran's Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei—for the rebels in Egypt to not attack the Israeli embassy or assault foreigners. Wasn't it the Iranian revolution that held up the slogan, "Stop the support of Hezbollah in Lebanon"?

X

Translated by Ali Chams Eddine and Bechara Malkoun. Edited by Rebecca Lazar.

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1
Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

2
Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

3
Ibid.

Suely Rolnik

Deleuze, Schizoanalyst

First scene: 1973.[1] I begin a friendship with Gilles Deleuze, whose seminars I have been attending over the past two years or so. With his mischievous humor, he insists on saying that he, and not Félix Guattari (with whom I am undergoing analysis at the time) is my schizoanalyst. He proposes that we work together, offering me a gift and a theme: an LP with Alban Berg's opera *Lulu* and a suggestion to compare the death cries of Lulu, its lead character, with those of Maria, a character in *Wozzeck*, another opera by the same composer.

Berg's *Lulu*—already impregnated by the image of Louise Brooks, who played the protagonist in G.W. Pabst's beautiful film—is an exuberant and seductive woman whose attraction to many kinds of worlds sets her off on a life of experimental drift. On one such adventure, her vitality suffers the impact of reactive forces that cause her to leave her country. In the miserable cold of a Christmas night in her town of exile, Lulu hits the streets to make some money. In the anonymity of hustling, she meets none other than Jack the Ripper, who inevitably attempts to kill her. Foreseeing her death in the image of her face reflected on the blade pointed in her direction, she lets out a piercing cry. The timbre of her voice has a strange force that startles the Ripper to the point that, for a few seconds, he hesitates. We too are hit by this strange force, transported by it—the pain of a vigorous life that does not want to be taken resonates in our bodies. On the other hand, Maria, the woman from Berg's opera *Wozzeck*, is the gray wife of a soldier. Her death cry is almost inaudible, it blurs with the aural landscape. The timbre of her voice conveys the pale pain of an inane life, as if to die were the same as to live. Lulu's cry vitalizes us, despite, and paradoxically because of, the intensity of her pain. Maria's cry drags us into a kind of melancholy that tinges the world with monotonous dullness.

[figure fdd985dc8c1af090aa146724a74af7cc.jpg 1964 poster for *Wozzeck* designed by Jan Lenica.
]

Second scene: 1978. The setting is one of the Saturday afternoon singing lessons I have been taking along with two friends. The teacher is Tamia, whose repertoire is contemporary music and free jazz, an effervescent current within the Parisian 1970s. On this particular day, to our surprise, she asks each of us to choose a song to work with.

The song that occurs to me is one of the many Tropicalismo songs I learned in Brazil.[2] As musical expressions of the intense movement of cultural and existential creation Brazil had seen at the end of the 1960s, the movement marked a period whose brutal interruption by the military regime had been the reason for my exile in Paris.[3] "Cantar como um passarinho…" as Gal Costa sang it, with the soft and tender timbre of her interpretations.[4]

As I sing, a similar vibration takes over my own voice; hesitant at first, the timbre slowly builds up and gains body, becoming more and more crystalline. I am overcome by a feeling of estrangement: a sensation that this timbre has always belonged to me, as if it had never ceased to exist in the corporeal memory of my voice, even if silenced for so long. Soft as it is, its vibration steadily perforates a tiny point in my body and takes over the space of the room. The act of perforation makes me discover, on the white surface of the T-shirt and overalls I am wearing, a compact skin that covers my body like a thick layer of plaster; what is more, it seems to me that this envelope has been there for a long time, without my ever noticing it. The curious thing is that the body reveals its petrification at the same moment when the delicate stream of voice punctures it, as if skin and voice were somehow interlocked. Could it be that my body had become rigid just as that timbre had disappeared? Whatever the answer, the plaster became a constraint: it was urgent to get rid of that carapace. I decide, there and then, to return to Brazil, even if I had never considered leaving Paris until then. I went back, and never for a moment doubted the wisdom of that decision.

It took me a few years to understand what had happened in that singing lesson, and then a few more to realize how that could, in turn, be related to the work that Deleuze had proposed to me. What the singing announced that Saturday afternoon through the reawakened memory of my body was that the the military dictatorship had caused a wound in desire, and that wound had healed enough for me to return to Brazil, if I so wished.

But what is it that I am referring to when I say "desire"? In a few words, I refer to three processes. First: the impulse of attraction, which draws us towards certain universes, and the impulse of repulsion, which pushes us away from others without us knowing exactly why, blindly guided by the affects that each of these encounters generates in our body. Second: the forms of expression that we create in order to bring into the visible and utterable the sensible states that such connections and disconnections progressively produce in our subjectivity. Third: the metamorphoses of ourselves and of our territories of existence, which are fabricated in this process.

After all, totalitarian regimes do not impinge only upon concrete reality, but also upon this intangible reality of desire. It is an invisible, but no less relentless, violence. From the micropolitical point of view, regimes of this kind tend to establish themselves in the life of a society when the connections with new universes in the general alchemy of subjectivities multiply beyond a threshold, causing veritable convulsions. These are privileged moments in which the movement of individual and collective creation becomes intensified, but which also harbor the risk of unleashing microfascisms once a certain threshold of destabilization is crossed. When the boundaries of a certain stability are broken there is a danger that baser subjectivities tied to common sense will

infer the risk of an irreversible collapse, and will begin to panic. Due to a weak will to power that limits their force of creation, subjectivities of this kind consider themselves to be constituted once and for all, and have no means of understanding such ruptures as inherent to the delineation of their own limits, which are always being redrawn as the function of a desire for new connections. It is common to explain those ruptures as works of evil and, in the name of safety and stability, to confine them to the unknown universes that have entered the existential landscape. The solution is easy to deduce: these universes, personified by their bearers, must be eliminated. Such elimination can go from the pure and simple disqualification of these inconvenient others, weakening them through humiliation, to their concrete, physical destruction. One expects that this will relieve, at least for some time, the unease produced by the process of differentiation unleashed by the living presence of others.

The proliferation of this kind of politics of desire develops a fertile ground for forms of leadership that embody it and provide a focal point for it: this is when totalitarian regimes of all kinds rear their heads. Although microfascisms do not take place only in totalitarian contexts, such contexts are the main support for this kind of regime within the realm of the subject. Anything that deviates from common sense is considered a mistake, irresponsible, or worse, an act of treason. As common sense blurs into the very idea of the nation, to differ is to betray the motherland.

It is in these moments that the conservative forces of common sense triumph over the forces of invention. Thought is intimidated and retreats from the threat of punishment, which can fall upon the social image of oneself in the form of a stigma, or upon one's body, with varying degrees of brutality ranging from prison and torture to death. Humiliated and disowned, desire's creative dynamic becomes paralyzed by fear, often combined with guilt; even if this interruption is welcomed in the name of life, the experience of it can become similar to death. The trauma of these experiences leaves behind the poisonous stain of disaffection with life and the impossibility of thought—a wound in desire that can contaminate everything, halting movements of connection and the invention that they mobilize.

One of the strategies for protecting from this poison consists of anesthetizing the marks of trauma in the affective circuit. By isolating them under the cover of forgetfulness, one prevents their poison from spreading, making it possible to keep on living. But the syndrome of forgetfulness tends to encompass much more than just these wounds; the affective circuit is not a fixed map but a continuously made and remade cartography upon which individual points can be associated with any other at any moment. A large part of the body's capacity to resonate is then anesthetized. One of the darkest effects of this narcosis is a separation between speech and the

sensible—its corporeal reality, the site of a living relation to the world that nurtures its poetic density. My exile in Paris had this sense of protecting me from the seismic shock that the experience of the dictatorship and imprisonment had inflicted. It was not only an objective and concrete protection, given my geographic displacement, but also, and above all, a subjective and desiring protection, given the linguistic displacement. I entirely disinvested Portuguese, and with it the poisonous marks of the fear that froze my movements of desire. To avoid contact with that language I avoided Brazilians entirely. I settled into French as my adoptive tongue, accentless to such a degree that people would often take me for a native speaker. French became like a plaster that both contained and cohered an agonizing affective body: a clandestine shelter where the wounded pieces of my corporeal memory found refuge, allowing me to make new connections and to experiment certain affects that had become frightening in my mother tongue. In that singing lesson, nine years after my arrival in Paris, something in me realized, before I myself did, that the poison had sufficiently receded for there to be no more risk of contamination. The soft timbre of a joy of living resurfaced and brought me back to Portuguese, less frightened than before. But what actually happened on that day?

[figure 22f658f48e89c92bf8d8414b2be21669.jpg Hélio Oiticica, *B14 Box Bólide 11*, 1962. Oil with polyvinyl acetate emulsion on plywood and nylon mesh, plastic sheeting.
]

The plaster that had until then been the guarantee of my survival, to the point where it could be mistaken for my own skin, lost its purpose the moment the soft, tender timbre recovered the courage to manifest itself. What had been a remedy for wounded desire began, paradoxically, to have the effect of arresting that desire. It is probably because of this shift that, during that particular class, everything happened at once—the return of the timbre, the discovery of the hard shell that had been covering me, and the feeling of asphyxiation it had come to give me. Like every defensive strategy, the plaster made of the French language—which had functioned as the territory within which, for a time, my life was able to expand—had also produced the side effect of being a limitation. But the restrictive vector could only be problematized when defense became unnecessary; the various connections that I had already made in my adoptive tongue had reactivated the experimental process of desire, creating conditions for it to be resumed in the wounded tongue. I was cured, not of the marks of pain left by the fury of despotism, as these are indelible, but of their toxic effects. It is in singing—as an expression of the body of language, of the reserve of affective memory—that the metabolization of the trauma's effects expressed itself. And with it, the syndrome of forgetfulness that I had developed in order not to die, dissolved.

What does this have to do with Deleuze's *Lulu*? I arrived in Paris carrying a sort of collapsed desire in my body, branded by the Brazilian dictatorship, dragging a corresponding collapse of the will to live and of the creative gesture—which has that will as its origin and primary condition of existence. Listening to Deleuze in his seminars had, in and of itself, the mysterious power of moving me further away from Brazil. This did not necessarily depend on the content of his speech—since, in the beginning, I hardly spoke any French—but on the poetic quality of his presence and particularly his voice. His timbre conveyed the wealth of sensible states that populated his body; the words and the rhythm of cadences seemed to emerge from such states, delicately sculpted by the movements of desire. An imperceptible transmission that contaminated whoever listened to him.

Deleuze's proposal that I should investigate the death cries of the two women in Berg's operas sprang from this. The strange force communicated by Lulu's cry is that of an energetic reaction to death. This is the potency we feel resonating in our body, and her cry vitalizes it, in spite and because of the intensity of her pain. Maria's cry, on the other hand, transmits a melancholy resignation that saddens and devitalizes its listeners. Arising from this comparison are distinct degrees of the affirmation of life, even and above all in the face of death. It is a recognition that, even in the most adverse situations, it is possible to resist the terrorism against life, against its desiring and inventive potency, and to stubbornly go on living. Together, Lulu's and Maria's cries convey this lesson and contaminate us.

Of course, I could not arrive at any of this when Deleuze made his suggestion to me. Perhaps it was because his figure intimidated the fragility of my twenty-four years, even if nothing in his attitude justified any kind of reverence or inhibition. It is probably more likely that my wound was too fresh for me to let go of the defense strategy I had created to protect me from the intoxication of desire caused by the dictatorship's cruelty. However, the direction he had pointed me in with Lulu and Maria installed itself imperceptibly in my body and operated in silence, slowly oxygenating the fibers of desire, reactivating their drifts and the vital work of thought that normally accompanies them. Six years later, my Tropicalist birdsong announced that Lulu's affirmative timbre against brutality had, over and against Maria's negative timbre, returned to my voice. I could once more reconnect my body and speak through the singing of its sensible stages in voice, song, and speech. By launching a liberating movement through a sung cry, Deleuze had, in fact, been my schizoanalyst—even if such movement would only bear fruit years later.

A few months after Guattari's death, I wrote a letter to Deleuze evoking the time he called himself my schizoanalyst, and telling him where those opera cries had led. He replied immediately, with his habitual generosity

and elegant writing in which there are neither too many nor too few words to say the unsayable and nothing more. Among other things, he commented on the void that Guattari's passing away had left in him, and ended the letter saying, "Never lose your grace, that is, the power of a song."

What he was certainly saying between these words was that, in order to resurrect the will to live and the pleasure of thinking, it is always possible to bring desire back after it breaks down. And, what is more, that this gift appears where one least expects it—in a simple pop song. However, if we want to sense the situations that carry such powers, it becomes necessary to remove the hierarchy of cultural values in the established imaginary cartography and, above all, to tune our hearing to the effects that each encounter mobilizes—these effects should be the privileged criterion for orienting our choices. This "allowing oneself to be contaminated by the mysterious power of regeneration of the vital force, wherever it is"—is it not what Deleuze would have called "grace"?

In any case, here is the unexpected figure of the schizoanalyst Deleuze. Although he is personally present in this small tale, the potency distilled from this narrative for combatting the intolerable transcends his person and, obviously, the hangover of the military regime. It belongs to his thought and pulsates invisibly throughout his oeuvre, offering itself to whoever may wish to take it.

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Translated from the Portuguese by Rodrigo Nunes

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1
This text was written on the occasion of Deleuze's death in 1995.

2
Tropicalism was a cultural movement of the late 1960s, which revolutionized popular Brazilian music, then dominated by the aesthetics of Bossa Nova, by making use of derision, irreverence, and improvisation. Spearheaded by musicians such as Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil (the current Minister of Culture in Lula's government), Tropicalism reactivated the ideas found in Oswald de Andrade's "Anthropophagic Manifesto"—particularly the way in which elements of foreign culture are included and fused with Brazilian culture, mixing fragments of erudite, popular, and mass culture, without any reverence for dominant hierarchies. Tropicalism manifested itself in other artistic realms as well, such as the Oficina Theatre, directed by José Celso Martinez Corrêa, which staged Oswald de Andrade's play *O Rei da Vela* (1967), among others. Indeed the very name of the movement comes from visual artist Hélio Oiticica's 1965 installation *Tropicália*. The movement was brutally interrupted in December 1968, when the Fifth Institutional Act (AI-5) was decreed by Brazil's military dictatorship, allowing for any action or attitude considered subversive to be punished with imprisonment without recourse to habeas corpus. Caetano and Gil were sent to prison and subsequently freed only on the condition that they leave the country. They went into exile in England in 1969.

3
A dictatorship came to power in Brazil in 1964 by means of a military coup. The regime became much more rigid and violent from 1968 onwards. A succession of generals remained in power until 1985, and the first direct presidential elections were held in 1989.

4
Tuzé de Abreu, "Passarinho," recorded by Gal Costa in India (Phonogram, 1973). The lyrics are "Cantar como um passarinho de manhã cedinho... lá na galha do arvoredo, na beira do rio ... abre as asas passarinho que eu quero voar ... me leva na janela da menina que eu quero cantar..." ("To sing like a little bird early in the morning ... up in the branches of the trees by the river bank ... open your wings, little bird, 'cause I want to fly ... take me to the girl's window, 'cause I want to sing ...."). The Brazilian singer Gal Costa was part of a group of friends from Santo Amaro (Bahia, in the Northeast of Brazil) that included Caetano Veloso and Maria Bethânia. In the 1960s, they formed an important element of the Tropicalist movement's driving forces.

Continued from "Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part I" in issue 21.

PART TWO: CREATIVITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Culture is the commodity that sells all the others.
—Situationist slogan

Martha Rosler

Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part II

Soon after the collapse of the millennial New Economy that was supposed to raise all boats, Richard Florida, in his best-selling book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), instituted a way of talking about the "creative class"—the same class put center stage by Sharon Zukin, David Brooks, and Paul Fussell—in a way that framed it as a target group and a living blueprint for urban planners.

Florida may see this class, and its needs and choices, as the savior of cities, but he harbors no apparent interest in its potential for human liberation. When Robert Bruininks, the president of the University of Minnesota, asked him in an onstage interview, "What do you see as the political role of the creative class—will they help lead society in a better, fairer direction?" Florida was, according to faculty member Ann Markusen, completely at a loss for a reply.[1] Some who frame the notion of a powerful class of creative people—a class dubbed the "cultural creatives" by Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson in their book of that name published in 2000—see this group as progressive, socially engaged, and spiritual, if generally without religious affiliation, and thus as active in movements for political and social change. In general, however, most observers of "creatives" concentrate on taste classes and lifestyle matters, and are evasive with respect to the creatives' relation to social organization and control.

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Richard Lloyd, in *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*, in contrast to Ray and Anderson, finds not only that artists and hipsters[2] are complicit with capital in the realm of consumption but, further, that in their role as casual labor ("useful labor," in Lloyd's terms), whether as service workers or as freelance designers, they also serve capital quite well.[3] The Situationists, of course, were insistent on tying cultural regimes to urban change and the organization and regulation of labor. Sharon Zukin, in her ground-breaking book *Loft Living,* provided a sociological analysis of the role of artists in urban settings, their customary habitat.[4] But urban affairs,

sociological and cultural analysis, and the frameworks of judgment have changed and expanded since Zukin's work of 1982. In his book *The Expediency of Culture* (2001), George Yúdice leads us to consider the broad issue of the "culturalization" of politics and the uses and counter-uses of culture.[5] Concentrating especially on the United States and Latin America, Yúdice's concern is with explicating how culture has been transformed into a resource, available both to governmental entities and to population groups. He cites Fredric Jameson's work on "the cultural turn" from the early 1990s, which claims that the cultural has exploded "throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life—from economic value and state power to social and political practices and the very structure of the psyche itself—can be said to have become 'cultural.'"[6] Yúdice invokes Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality, namely, the management of populations, or "the conduct of conduct," as the matrix for the shift of services under neoliberalism from state to cultural sectors. Foucault's theories of internalization of authority (as well as those of Lefebvre and Freud) are surely useful in discussing the apparent passivity of knowledge workers and the educated classes in general. Yúdice privileges theories of performativity, particularly those of Judith Butler and Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick, over the Situationists' "society of the spectacle," describing how identities, including identities of "difference," are performed on the stage set by various mediating institutions.[7] Indeed, he positions the postwar marketing model—"the engineering of consent," in Edward Bernays's potent, widely quoted phrase—at the heart of contemporary politics and invokes the aestheticization of politics (shades of Walter Benjamin!) that has been fully apparent in the US since the Reagan administration.[8] As I have suggested, this channels much political contestation in advanced societies to consumer realms, from buying appropriate items from firms that advance political activism and send money to NGOs,[9] to the corporate tactic of appealing to identity-based markets, such as gay, female, or Latino publics; but also to the corporate need to foster such identities in hiring practices in the name of social responsibility.

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Judith Butler

]

In considering the role of culture in contemporary societies, it may be helpful to look at the lineage and derivation of the creative-class concept, beginning with observations about the growing economic and social importance of information production and manipulation. The importance of the group of workers variously known as knowledge workers, symbolic analysts, or, latterly, creatives, was recognized by the late 1950s or early 1960s. Peter Drucker, the much-lionized management "guru," is credited with coining the term "knowledge worker" in

1959, while the later term "symbolic analysts" comes from economist Robert Reich.[10]

Clark Kerr, a former labor economist, became president of the University of California, in the mid-1960s. This state university system, which has a masterplan for aggressive growth stretching to the turn of the twenty-first century and beyond, was the flagship of US public universities and established the benchmarks for public educational institutions in the US and elsewhere; it was indended as the incubator of the rank-and file middle class and the elites of a modern superpower among nations in a politically divided world. Kerr's transformative educational vision was based on the production of knowledge workers. Kerr – the man against whom was directed much of the energy of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement, derisively invoked by David Brooks – coined the term the "multiversity" in a series of lectures he gave at Harvard in 1963.[11] It was Kerr's belief that the university was a "prime instrument of national purpose." In his influential book *The Uses of the University*, Kerr wrote,

> What the railroads did for the second half of the last century and the automobile for the first half of this century may be done for the second half of this century by the knowledge industry.[12]

Sociologist Daniel Bell, in his books *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973), and *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976), set the terms of the discourse on the organization of productive labor (although the visionary educational reformer Ivan Illich apparently used the term "post-industrial" earlier); Richard Florida claims Bell as a powerful influence.[13] The term post-Fordism, which primarily describes changes in command and control in the organization of the production process, is a preferred term of art for the present organization of labor in advanced economies, retaining the sense of continuity with earlier phases of capitalist organization rather than suggesting a radical break resulting from the rise of information economies and changes in the mode of conducting and managing the labor process.[14]

Theories of post-Fordism fall into different schools, which I cannot explore here, but they generally include an emphasis on the rise of knowledge industries, on the one hand, and service industries on the other; on consumption and consumers as well as on productive workers; on the fragmentation of mass production and the mass market into production aimed at more specialized consumer groups, especially those with higher-level demands; and on a decline in the role of the state and the rise of global corporations and markets. Work performed under post-Fordist conditions in the so-called knowledge industries and creative fields has been characterized as "immaterial labor," a (somewhat contested) term put

forward by Italian autonomist philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato. Within or overlapping with the broad category of immaterial labor are types of labor deemed "affective labor" (Hardt and Negri); these include not only advertising and public relations—and, many artists would argue, art—but all levels of labor in which the worker faces the public, which include many service industries, and eventually permeates society at large.[15] In "Strategies of the Political Entrepreneur," Lazzarato writes:

> If the factory can no longer be seen, this is not because it has disappeared but because it has been socialized, and in this sense it has become immaterial: an immateriality that nevertheless continues to produce social relations, values, and profits.[16]

These categories look very different from Florida's.

Andrew Ross writes that the creative-class concept derives from Prime Minister Paul Keating's Australia in early 1990s, under the rubric "cultural industries."[17] Tony Blair's New Labour government used the term "creative industries" in 1997 in the rebranding of the UK as Cool Britannia. The Department of National Heritage was renamed the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and promoted technological optimism, a youth cult, and, in Ross's words, "self-directed innovation in the arts and knowledge sectors." Both Ross and the social psychologist Alan Blum refer to the centrality of the idea of constant reinvention—of the firm and of the person—as a hallmark of the ideal conditions of the creative class. Ross points to the allure of the "creative industries" idea for a wide array of nations, large and small, of which he names Canada, the US, and Russia and China—we should add the Netherlands to this list—long before Florida's particular configuration shifted emphasis away from the industries and to the very person of their denizens, and to biopolitics.

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]

In describing the "creative class," Florida credits Paul Fussell and gives David Brooks a brief nod.[18] Despite building on writers like David Harvey and perhaps other, unnamed theorists on the left, Florida offers the prospect of a category of "human resources" who will, all unbidden, and at virtually no cost to anyone but themselves, remake your city quite to your liking. Rather than portraying the right to the city, as Harvey had termed it, as the outcome of struggle, Florida's path to action is predicated on the inevitability of social change, in which the working class and the poor have already lost. I will say more about that a bit later, but first, I'll consider the creative class itself.

What Florida has called the rise of the creative class Sharon Zukin called, in *Loft Living,* the artistic mode of production.[19] Zukin, who never quite explains her phrase, describes the production of value and of space itself, interpretable in Lefebvre's terms. Whereas Zukin traced the entire process from its inception to its present outcome, teasing out the structural elements necessary to bring about urban change and demonstrating how such change affects residents and interested classes, in Florida's account the process disappears in a welter of statistical number-crunching and empirical markers by which to index the success of the creative class. Crucial to Zukin's analysis is the eventual displacement of artists, a development not addressed by Florida, whose creative class encompasses high earners in industries extending far beyond artists, the vast number of whom do not command big incomes.

Zukin had already shown that integral to the artistic mode of production is the gradual expansion of the "artistic class," suggesting how the definition of "artist" expanded and how the epistemology of art changed to fit the sensibilities of the rising middle class. Zukin—writing in 1982—asserts:

> The new view of art as "a way of doing" rather than a distinctive "way of seeing" also affects the way art is taught. On the one hand, the "tremendous production emphasis" that [modernist critic] Harold Rosenberg decries gave rise to a generation of practitioners rather than visionaries, of imitators instead of innovators. As professional artists became facile in pulling out visual techniques from their aesthetic and social context, they glibly defended themselves with talk of concepts and methodology. On the other hand, the teaching of art as "doing" made art seem less elitist.... Anyone, anywhere can legitimately expect to be an artist ... making art both more "professionalized" and more "democratized."... This opened art as a career.[20]

Zukin offers a sour observation made in 1979 by Ronald Berman, former chairman of the US National Endowment for the Humanities:

> Art is anything with creative intentions, where the word "creative" has ... been removed from the realm of achievement and applied to another realm entirely. What it means now is an attitude toward the self; and it belongs not to aesthetics but to pop psychology.[21]

I cannot address the changes in the understanding of art here, or the way its models of teaching changed through

the postwar period—a subject of perpetual scrutiny and contestation both within the academy and outside it. A central point, however, is that the numbers of people calling themselves artists has vastly increased since the 1960s as the parameters of this identity have changed.

Florida enters at a pivot point in this process, where what is essential for cities is no longer art, or the people who make it, but the appearance of its being made somewhere nearby. As a policy academic, Florida repeatedly pays lip service to the economic, not lifestyle, grounding of class groupings, as he must, since his definition of "creative class" is based on modes of economically productive activity. Economic data, however, turn out not to be particularly integral to his analyses, while the use to which he puts this category depends heavily on lifestyle and consumer choices, and Florida includes in the creative class the subcategory of gay people as well as categories of "difference," which are both racial/ethnic and include other identity-related groupings independent of employment or economic activity. This does not contradict the fact that we are talking about class and income. Although the tolerance of "difference" that figures in Florida's scenario must certainly include of people of color working in low-level service categories who appear in significant concentrations in urban locales (even if they go home to some other locale), the creative class are not low-wage, low-level service-sector employees, and artists, certainly, are still disproportionately white.

Florida's schema is influenced by basic American economic and sociological texts—including Erik Olin Wright's powerful description of the new professional-managerial class (sometimes called the new petite bourgeoisie to differentiate it from the "old petite bourgeoisie," a class of small shopkeepers and the like whose declining fortunes and traditionalist world view have left them disaffected or enraged).[22] But Florida's categories are more directly derived from the US government's Standard Occupational Classification, or SOC, codes. His creative-class grouping includes "a broad group of creative professionals in business and finance, law, health care and related fields," who "engage in complex problem solving that involves a great deal of independent judgment and requires high levels of education or human capital."[23] Within it is a "super-creative core [of] people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music, and entertainment ... [whose] job is to create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content."

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Doug Henwood, in a critique from the left, notes that Florida's creative class constitutes about 30 percent of the workforce, and the "super creative core" about 12 percent. Examining one category of super-creatives, "those in all

computer and mathematical occupations," Henwood remarks that some of these jobs "can only be tendentiously classed as super creative."[24] SOC categories put both call-center tech-support workers and computer programmers in the IT category, but call-center workers would surely not experience their jobs as creative but "more likely as monotonous and even deskilled." What is striking in Florida's picture is, first, not just the insistence on winners and losers, on the creatives and the uncreatives—recalling the social divisions within Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel *Brave New World*—but on the implicit conviction that job categories finally do provide the only source of real agency regardless of their content. Second, the value of the noncreatives is that they are nature to the creatives' culture, female to their male, operating as backdrop and raw material, and finally as necessary support, as service workers. Stressing the utility of random conversations in the street, à la Jane Jacobs, Florida treats the little people of the streets as a potent source of ideas, a touchingly modern[ist] point of view.

In an online consideration of Florida's thesis, Harvard Economist Edward Glaeser, a right-leaning mainstream critic, expresses admiration for Florida's book as an engagingly written popularization of the generally accepted urbanist maxim that human capital drives growth, but he fails to find any value added from looking at creative capital as a separate category. Glaeser writes:

> [T]he presence of skills in the metropolitan area may increase new idea production and the growth rate of city-specific productivity levels, but if Florida wants to argue that there is an [effect] of bohemian, creative types, over and above the effect of human capital, then presumably that should show up in the data.[25]

Glaeser ran statistical regressions on the population-growth data on four measures: (1) the share of local workers in the "super creative core"; (2) patents per capita in 1990; (3) the Gay Index, or the number of coupled gay people in the area relative to the total population; and (4) the Bohemian Index—the number of artistic types relative to the overall population.

Glaeser concludes that in all the regressions the primary effects on city growth result from education level rather than any of Florida's measures and that in fact in all but two cities, "the gay population has a negative impact." He concludes:

> I would certainly not interpret this as suggesting that gays are bad for growth, but I would be awfully suspicious of suggesting to mayors that the right way to fuel economic development is to attract a larger gay population. There are many good reasons to be

tolerant, without spinning an unfounded story about how Bohemianism helps urban development.[26]

Further:

There is no evidence to suggest that there is anything to this diversity or Bohemianism, once you control for human capital. As such, mayors are better served by focusing on the basic commodities desired by those with skills, than by thinking that there is a quick fix involved in creating a funky, hip, Bohemian downtown.[27]

Max Nathan, an English urbanist at the Centre for Cities, an independent research institute in London, observes that "there's not much evidence for a single creative class in the US or the UK. And although knowledge, creativity, and human capital are becoming more important in today's economy, more than 20 years of endogenous growth theory already tells us this." He concludes, "Creativity and cool are the icing, not the cake." [28]

American sociologist Ann Markusen, left-leaning but agreeing with Glaeser, further cautions that "human creativity cannot be conflated with years of schooling."[29] Some of the occupations included in Florida's sample do not call upon creative thinking, while many manual tasks do just that; furthermore, it hardly needs to be noted that human qualities and attributes are not themselves merely produced by schooling.

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]

Florida's use of the US government's SOC categories, lumping together artists and bohemians with all kinds of IT workers and others not remotely interested in art or bohemia, has been identified by many other observers—perhaps especially those involved in the art world—as a glaring fault. Florida fails to note the divergent interests of employees and managers, or younger and older workers, in choices about where to live: it seems, for example, that the young move into the city while somewhat older workers move out to the suburbs, where managers tend to cluster. But Florida's book found its ready audience not among political economists but in some subset of municipal policy makers and rainmakers for government grants, and in business groups.

As Alan Blum suggests, Florida's work is directed at "second tier" cities pursuing "an 'identity' (as if merchandise) that is to be fashioned from the materials of the present."[30] Second tier cities tend to glorify the accumulation of amenities as a means of salvation from an undistinguished history, a chance to develop and

establish flexibility. Blum's critique emphasizes the platitudinous banality of Florida's city vision, its undialectical quality and its erasure of difference in favor of tranquility and predictability as it instantiates as policy the infantile dream of perpetually creating oneself anew. In my estimation, Scandinavian societies seem to have faced the postwar world by effacing history and re-presenting themselves as factories of design; visiting Copenhagen's design museum, I was amazed that a large wall inscription in the exhibition of the great designer Arne Jacobsen emphasized both his complete lack of "interest in Utopia" and his fondness for white tennis flannels. One can think of many cities, regions, and nations that would prefer to transcend an earlier mode of economic organization, whether agricultural or Fordist, in favor of a bright new picture of postindustrial viability. The collective failure of imagination can be extended to entire peoples, through the selective re-creation, or frank erasure, of historical memory. The entire cast of the creative-class thesis is centered on the implicit management of populations, through internalized controls: in essence, Foucault's governmentality.

Florida was teaching at Carnegie Mellon in the Rust Belt city of Pittsburgh when he formulated his thesis, but subsequently moved to the University of Toronto, where he now heads the Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School of Management, and is Professor of Business and Creativity. His website tags him as "author and thought-leader." Florida has developed a robust career as a pundit and as a management consultant to entities more inclusive than individual firms or industries. Management consulting is a highly lucrative field that centers on the identification of structures of work organization and methods of organizing workers in a manner persuasive to management. Management theory, however, even in the industrializing 1920s, has often claimed that creativity and interpersonal relations would transform management, leading to an end to top-down hierarchies and a harmonizing of interests of workers and management.

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Maslow chart based on Abraham Maslow's theories of human self-actualization.

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Speaking personally, in the early 1970s I worked in a small, Peter Drucker–advised publishing company in Southern California to which Drucker, the management idol then riding the crest of his fame, made regular visits. We were schooled to regard the management tool called Group Y, widely used by Japanese companies, as the new gospel of employee-management relations. As a concept, Group Y is traceable to Douglas McGregor, a professor at MIT's school of management. Influenced by the social psychologist Abraham Maslow's then widely popular

theories of human self-actualization, McGregor promoted the idea of employees and workers as human resources. In *The Human Side of Enterprise* (1960), McGregor developed his highly influential paradigm of employee management and motivation in which management is characterized by one of two opposed models, Theory X and Theory Y.[31] In Theory X, people are seen as work-averse and risk-averse, uninterested in organizational goals, and requiring strong leadership and monetary incentives. Theory Y, in contrast, sees work as enjoyable and people as naturally creative and self-directed if committed to work objectives. (McGregor, unrealistically, hoped his book would be used as a self-diagnostic tool for managers rather than as a rigid prescription.) Building on McGregor's theory, and long after I left my bliss-seeking editorial shop, William G. Ouchi invoked Theory Z to call attention to Japanese management style.[32]

[figure d1367f0bdb95132b21fc50e2ce39cea9.jpg Douglas McGregor's diagrams for Theories X and Y identifying different attitudes in the workplace.

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Starting in the early 1960s, Japanese management made extensive use of "quality circles," which were inspired by the postwar lectures of American statisticians W. Edwards Deming and J. M. Juran, who recommended inverting the US proportion of responsibility for quality control given to line managers and engineers, which stood at 85 percent for managers and 15 percent for workers.[33] As the *Business Encyclopedia* explains, Japanese quality circles meet weekly, often on the workers' own time and often led by foremen. "Quality circles provide a means for workers to participate in company affairs and for management to benefit from worker suggestions. ... [E]mployee suggestions reportedly create billions of dollars' worth of benefits for companies." Now, however, according to the *New York Times,* Japanese business organization is fast approaching the norms and practices prevailing in the US.[34]

Management is always looking for a new edge; after all, managers' advancement and compensation depend on the appearance of innovation. A few years ago, in an amusing "exposé" in the *Atlantic* magazine, Matthew Stewart, a former partner in a consulting firm, characterized management theory as a jumped-up and highly profitable philosophy of human society rather than an informed scientific view of the social relations of productive activities, which is how it advertises itself.[35] Stewart compares the dominant theory of production known as Taylorism with that of Elton Mayo.[36] Taylorism, named for the turn-of-the-twentieth-century consultant Frederick Taylor, was a method (that of motion study, which was soon married to the marginally more humanistic time study of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth) for analyzing the labor process so as to get more work out of

workers.[37] Mayo's management theory, formulated somewhat later, is based on fostering workers' cooperation. Characterizing the first as the rationalist and the second as the humanist strain of management philosophy, Stewart claims that they simply continue in these two age-old camps. Anthropologist David Graeber writes that fields like politics, religion, and art depend not on externally derived values and data but upon group consensus.[38] Like many bold ideas in economics and politics, empirical inadequacy and faulty predictive power are no barriers to success. A new narrative is always a powerful means of stirring things up; as the twentieth-century Austrian psychologist Hans Vaihinger termed it in his book *Philosophie des Als Ob* ("Philosophy of As If"), a person needs a ruling story, regardless of its relationship to reality, and so, it seems, does any other entity or organization, especially when it requires persuasive power to obtain resources from others.[39] Since the advent of neoliberalism in the 1980s, for example, those newly hired corporate heads who immediately fire about 20 percent of the workforce have been shown to do best for themselves regardless of outcome, despite the fact that this strategy has long been proven to damage a distressed company's profitability, since it destroys corporate knowledge and working culture, if nothing else. Psychological studies are constantly being adduced to prove that many consumers are uninterested in the disproof of claims, whether for miracle cures, better material goods, political nostrums, and so on; sociologists from Merton to Adorno long ago commented in some frustration about people's belief in luck (as in the lottery) or astrology in the face of reason. Ideology offers a powerful sieve through which to strain truth claims.

[figure a7fd92ec2d2034c622ea351bb256a0d1.jpg Quotation from Frederick Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*.

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What matters, then, is not whether Florida's bohemian index is good or bad for urban growth but that the gospel of creativity offers something for mayors and urban planners to hang onto—a new episteme, if you will. But Florida's thesis also finds enthusiastic support in management sectors in the art world that seek support from municipal and foundation sources while pretending that the creative class refers to the arts.

European art critics and theorists, however, were far more likely to be reading Boltanski and Chiapello's *New Spirit of Capitalism*, which provides an exhaustive analysis of the new knowledge-based classes (or class fractions) and the way in which the language of liberation, as well as the new insistence on less authoritarian and hierarchical working conditions, has been repurposed.[40] Here is a précis, by Chantal Mouffe, addressing an American art audience in the pages of *Artforum*:

As Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello persuasively demonstrated in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (1999/2005), the managerial class successfully co-opted the various demands for autonomy of social movements that arose in the 1960s, harnessing them only to secure the conditions required by the new, postindustrial mode of capitalist regulation. Capital was able, they showed, to neutralize the subversive potential of the aesthetic strategies and ethos of the counterculture—the search for authenticity, the ideal of self-management, and the antihierarchical imperative—transforming them from instruments of liberation into new forms of control that would ultimately replace the disciplinary framework of the Fordist period.[41]

This brings us to the question of authenticity and the creative class.

In the words of the American vaudevillian turned radio personality and actor, George Burns, "The secret of acting is sincerity. If you can fake that, you've got it made."

In *Loft Living*, Sharon Zukin had already put her finger on an unanswerable paradox, namely, the simulacral effect of neatening everything up, of the desired pacification of the city, which, as I have explained, will conveniently replace difficult, unruly populations with artists, who can generally (though not uniformly) be counted on to be relatively docile.

Zukin writes:

> Seeking inspiration in loft living, the new strategy of urban revitalization aims for a less problematic sort of integration than cities have recently known. It aspires to a synthesis of art and industry, or culture and capital, in which diversity is acknowledged, controlled, and even harnessed. [But] first, the apparent reconquest of the urban core for the middle class actually reconquers it for upper-class users. Second, the downtowns become simulacra, through gussied up preservation venues. ... Third, the revitalization projects that claim distinctiveness—because of specific historic or aesthetic traits—become a parody of the unique.[42]

The search among artists, creatives, and so forth, for a way of life that does not pave over older neighborhoods but infiltrates them with coffee shops, hipster bars, and clothing shops catering to their tastes, is a sad echo of the tourist paradigm centering on the indigenous authenticity of the place they have colonized. The authenticity of these urban neighborhoods, with their largely working-class populations, is characterized not by bars and bodegas so much as by what the press calls grit, signifying the lack of bourgeois polish, and a kind of remainder of incommensurable nature in the midst of the city's unnatural state. The arrival in numbers of artists, hipsters, and those who follow—no surprise here!—brings about the eradication of this initial appeal. And, as detailed in *Loft Living*, the artists and hipsters are in due course driven out by wealthier folk, by the abundant vacant lofts converted to luxury dwellings or the new construction in the evacuated manufacturing zones. Unfortunately, many artists who see themselves evicted in this process fail to see, or persist in ignoring, the role that artists have played in occupying these formerly "alien" precincts.

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Zukin's recent book, *The Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (2010), is aimed squarely at the lifestyle arguments typified by Florida's work. It traces the trajectory of the idea and content of urban cool, with their repeated emphasis on those two terms, authenticity and grit.[43] As she has done throughout her career, Zukin addresses the efforts of the powers-that-be to hang onto working-class cachet while simultaneously benefiting from its erasure. Zukin's book focuses on three New York neighborhoods—the Lower East Side, or East Village; Harlem; and Brooklyn's Williamsburg, the present epicenter of cool, walking us painfully through regional history and transformation.

Zukin also considers Manhattan's venerable Union Square, which—with its history of parades, marches, soap-box oratory, and expressions of urban unrest and decay—has been the focus of twenty years of efforts to tame it. Zukin quotes the promotional slogan of the Union Square Partnership, a "public-private partnership": "Eat. Shop. Visit. Union Square."[44]

The Square is part of the "archipelago of enclaves" described by Dutch urbanists Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijdorp[45] as typical of new public spaces, providing, in Zukin's words,

> Special events in pleasant surroundings ... re-creating urban life as a civilized ideal ... [with] both explicit and subtle strategies to encourage docility of a public that by now is used to paying for a quality experience.[46]

Furthermore,

> [T]hese places break with the past not just by passively relying on city dwellers' civic inattention

when they calmly ignore the stranger sitting on the next bench, but by actively enabling them to avoid strangers whom they think of as "aliens": the homeless, psychologically disoriented, borderline criminal, and merely loud and annoying .[47]

I note in passing that Zukin persistently faults Jane Jacobs, otherwise treated in the field as the Mother Teresa of the Neighborhood, for her own inattention to the needs and preferences of people other than the middle classes.

The disenfranchisement of those outside the groups who benefit from life in the newly renovated city is replicated in the split between the developed and less developed world; just as the paradigm of urbanism has subsumed all others, so has the globalized knowledge economy done so, and those who are not part of it are nevertheless forced to take a position in relation to it.

[figure partialpage
493e4df310eca69db795a219c031388d.jpg
Guy Debord, *Naked City*, 1957.

]

The postindustrial shift in Western economies from a welfare-state model to a neoliberal one has resulted in the erosion of the classical working-class base that had provided a political counterpoint during the so-called golden age of capital (1945–1970). The resulting "cultural turn," in which conflicting claims are played out in the cultural arena—mediated through institutions that include the state, the media, and the market—represents a relocation of political antagonism to the only realm that remains mutually recognizable. In less developed economies, the global reach of aggressive consumer capitalism and the internationalization of (neo-imperialist) corporate control have provided significant challenges to the efforts of grassroots movements to secure first-world rights through political contestation. George Yúdice describes local organizing efforts of poor youth, such as Rio Funk, begun in Brazil in the 90s, and others; but he cites Brazilian commentator Antonio Muniz Sodré and Nestor García Canclini in noting that reliance on grassroots self-empowerment movements to bring about change absolves the states of responsibility and puts the burdens on the subordinated themselves.[48]

In considering the social presence of creative-class members in general and artists in particular, I have focused on the tendency toward passivity and complicity in questions of the differential power of others. But a significant number of artists do not fit this categorization. There is a divide, perhaps, between those whose practices are well-recognized by the art world and those whose efforts are treated as beyond the pale. I want to focus my attention here on the former group. Yúdice, concerned

with the power/wealth divide, assembles an array of critical arguments, drawing on Grant Kester's critique of the artist as service provider, always positioned from a higher to a lower cultural level, as well as Hal Foster's 1990s critique of the artist as ethnographer.[49] The problems of artists' working in poor urban neighborhoods lie partly in the possibility, however undesired, of exploitation, and partly in a divergence in the art world audience's understanding of the project and that of the local community, as a result of the different life worlds each inhabit. A number of artists he quotes insist that they are not "social workers" but rather seek to expand the frame of art. This suggests that intended readings must occur at least partly in terms of an aesthetic and symbolic dimension. This sits well with commentators such as Claire Bishop, who in a much-noted article winds up favoring the rather vicious projects of Santiago Sierra and those of Thomas Hirschhorn above more benign and perhaps socially useful, "service" efforts.[50] Suspicious of the possible use and meaning of socially invested works, Bishop seems to regard positively the fact that the lack of social effect in Sierra's heavily symbolic works, and the appeal to philosophical and other models in Hirschhorn's, make them legible primarily to their "proper" art world observers. As relational aesthetics seems to be carried out on the terrain of service, it is worth noting that these works remove judgment from universal categories or the individually located faculty of taste to the uncertain and presumably unrepeatable reception by a particular audience or group (shades of Allan Kaprow!).

[figure partialpage
ede4503e2ff1e10f17eccb7b8da6d58e.jpg
Installation view of Thomas Hirschhorn exhibition *Stand-alone* at Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, 2008.

]

Yúdice joins other commentators in pointing out that art-as-service is the end of the avant-garde, removing as it does the artists' actions from the realm of critique to melioration. In a section that has garnered some comment, Yúdice outlines how artists, even those who have looked beyond institutions and markets, have been placed in a position to perform as agents of the state. This reinterpretation of the vanguardist desire for "blurring of the boundaries of art and everyday life," for "reality" over critique, exposes the conversion of art into a funnel or regulator for governmentalized "managed diversity." Worse, an imperative to *effectiveness* has derived from arts administrators. A 1997 report for the US National Endowment for the Arts titled *American Canvas* insists that for the arts to survive (presumably, after the assaults of the then-newly instigated, now newly revived, right-wing driven assault on US art and culture known as the "culture wars") they must take a new pragmatic approach, "translating the value of the arts into more general civic, social, and educational terms" that would be convincing to the public and elected officials alike:

...suffused throughout the civic structure—finding a home in a variety of community service and economic development activities—from youth programs and crime prevention to job training and race relations—far afield from the traditional aesthetic functions of the arts. This extended role for culture can also be seen in the many new partners that arts organizations have taken on in recent years, with school districts, parks and recreation departments, convention and visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, and a host of social welfare agencies all serving to highlight the utilitarian aspects of the arts in contemporary society.[51]

Combine this with the aim of funding museums specifically to end elitism. In the 1990s, the federal funding agency the National Endowment for the Arts increased its commitment to "diversity" while museums, pressed by such powerful funders as the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford foundations and the Reader's Digest Fund, tried to achieve wider public "access."[52] The operative term was "community"; art was to serve the interests of "communities"—by which we must understand poor, excluded, and non-elite, non-creative-class communities—rather than promote the universalist values of modernist doctrine, which many thought simply supported the elite-driven status quo. This leaves artists interested in audiences beyond the gallery with something of a dilemma: serve instrumental needs of states and governments or eschew art-world visibility entirely.

To close this section of Culture Class, let me put into play two further quotations. From the introduction to *American Canvas*:

> The closing years of the 20th century present an opportunity … for speculation on the formation of a new support system [of the nonprofit arts]: *one based less on traditional charitable practices and more on the exchange of goods and services*. American artists and arts organizations can make valuable contributions—from addressing social issues to enhancing education to providing "content" for the new information superhighway—to American society.[53]

And from Ann Markusen:

> Artists may enjoy limited and direct patronage from elites, but as a group, they are far more progressive than most other occupational groups Florida labels as creative. While elites tend to be conservative politically, artists are the polar opposite. Artists vote in high numbers and heavily for left and democratic

candidates. They are often active in political campaigns, using their visual, performance, and writing talents to carry the banner. Many sociologists and social theorists argue that artists serve as the conscience of the society, the most likely source of merciless critique and support for unpopular issues like peace, the environment, tolerance and freedom of expression.[54]

X

Continued in Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part III: In the Service of Experience(s) in issue 25.

Martha Rosler is an artist who works with multiple media, including photography, sculpture, video, and installation. Her interests are centered on the public sphere and landscapes of everyday life—actual and virtual—especially as they affect women. Related projects focus on housing, on the one hand, and systems of transportation, on the other. She has long produced works on war and the "national security climate," connecting everyday experiences at home with the conduct of war abroad. Other works, from bus tours to sculptural recreations of architectural details, are excavations of history.

1
Markusen had in fact been asked to frame political questions by the university president himself. Markusen's paper is centered on a critique of Florida's creative-class thesis; see Ann Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from the Study of Artists," *Environment and Planning A* , Vol. 38, Issue 10, 2006. See https://www.academia .edu/48241612/Urban_developm ent_and_the_politics_of_a_creati ve_class_evidence_from_a_study _of_artists .

2
I use this term here to signify ironical posers and lifestyle, particularly sartorial, devotees.

3
Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Lloyd's estimation of the work role of the creatives is counter to the generally benign role accorded them not only by Ray and Anderson but also by such varied commentators as Markusen and all the centrist and right-wing observers.

4
Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (New Br unswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982).

5
George Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

6
Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 48.

7
Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

8
Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 217—252.

9
I am thinking of such US-based companies such as the phone company CREDO, which has increasingly positioned itself as a left-wing, "social justice"-oriented advocacy group that happens to sell you phone services, but also of the Fair Trade Coffee "movement" and even mainstream groups as AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) and the nonprofit magazine *Consumer Reports,* which sell services but also run advocacy and lobbying organizations. And then there is the religious sector, which maintains tax exemption while deeply implicated in politics.

10
Peter Drucker, *Landmarks of Tomorrow: A Report on the New "Post-Modern" World* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1959); Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism* (New York: Vintage, 1991).

11
Clark Kerr, Godkin Lectures, given at Harvard University, 1963. The Free Speech Movement recognized the blueprint for the new technocratic, pragmatic, and politically disciplined and hegemonic nation, for what it was and erupted accordingly.

12
Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), based on his Harvard lectures, 66.

13
Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

14
This note is simply to acknowledge that—no surprise here—not all labor theorists accept the term post-Fordism and its periodization of capitalist production processes, or the notion of "immaterial labor," explored below, although they are much favored in the European art world.

15
Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 103–115.

16
Lazzarato, "Strategies of the Political Entrepreneur," *SubStance* 112, vol. 36, no. 1 (2007): 89–90.

17
Andrew Ross, "Nice Work If You Can Get It: The Mercurial Career of Creative Industries Policy," in Geert Lovink and Ned Rossiter, eds. *My Creativity Reader* (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2007), 19.

18
Paul Fussell, *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System* (New York: Ballantine, 1983); David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). On his website, http://creativecla ss.com/ , Florida engages in excoriations of Brooks and presents himself as the good observer while Brooks is the bad.

19
Zukin, *Loft Living*, op. cit. See note 4. To my knowledge, the concept of the artistic mode of production was first articulated by Fredric Jameson in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* , published in 1981, which develops the thesis of the historical grounding of narrative frameworks.

20
Ibid., 98.

21
Ibid., citing Ronald Berman, "Art vs. the Arts," *Commentary*, November 1979: 48.

22
See, for example, Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

23
Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 8.

24
Doug Henwood, *After the New Economy* (New York: The New Press, 2003).

25
Edward Glaeser, "Review of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* ," 3. See https://sc holar.harvard.edu/files/glaeser/fil es/book_review_of_richard_florid as_the_rise_of_the_creative_clas s.pdf .

26
Ibid., 4.

27
Ibid., 5.

28
Max Nathan, "The Wrong Stuff? Creative Class Theory and Economic Performance in UK Cities." See https://mpra.ub.uni- muenchen.de/29486/1/MPRA_p aper_29486.pdf .

29
Ann Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from the Study of Artists," op. cit. See http: //pdf.e-flux-systems.com/href= .

30
Alan Blum, "The Imaginary of Self-Satisfaction: Reflections on the Platitude of the "Creative City," in Alexandra Boutros and Will Straw, eds., *Circulation and the City: Essays on Urban Culture* (Montreal and Kingston, London, and Ithaca, NY: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

31
Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960).

32
William G. Ouchi, *Theory Z* (New York: Avon Books, 1982).

33
W. Edwards Deming and J. M. Juran, *Quality Control Handbook* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951).

34
Hiroko Tabuchi, "Japanese Playing a New Video Game: Catch-Up," *New York Times,* September 20, 2010, http://www. nytimes.com/2010/09/20/techno logy/20game.html .

35
Matthew Stewart, "The Management Myth," *The Atlantic*, June 2006. See https://www.thea tlantic.com/magazine/archive/20 06/06/the-management-myth/30 4883/ .

36
Elton Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933).

37
Frederick Taylor *, Principles of Scientific Management* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1911); Frank Gilbreth, *Motion Study* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1911).

38
David Graeber, *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion and Desire* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2007).

49

39
Hans Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of 'As If': A System of the Theoretical, Practical and Religious Fictions of Mankind* (London: Routledge, 1924).

40
Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *New Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006). This book is handy for laying out and following statistically what should be readily apparent to observers.

41
Chantal Mouffe, "The Museum Revisited," *Artforum*, vol. 48, no. 10 (Summer 2010): 326–330. See https://www.artforum.com/print /201006/chantal-mouffe-25710 .

42
Zukin, *Loft Living*, 190.

43
Sharon Zukin, *The Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

44
Ibid., 142.

45
Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain* (Rotterdam: NAi, 2001).

46
Zukin, *Naked City*, 142.

47
Ibid., 142–143.

48
Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture* ; Antonio Muniz Sodré, *O social irradiado: Violencia urbana, neogrotesco e midia* (Sao Paolo: Cortez Editora, 1992); Nestor García Canclini, *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

49
Grant Kester, "Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Art," *Afterimage* 22:6 (January 1995), 5–11; Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?" *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995). See https://mo noskop.org/images/8/87/Foster_ Hal_1995_The_Artist_as_Ethnogr apher.pdf .

50
Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (Fall 2004), 51–79.

51
Jane Alexander and Gary O. Larson, *American Canvas: An Arts Legacy for Our Communities* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 1997). How easily that term "utilitarian" slides into discussions of a dimension that during the Cold War was always explicitly denied https://web.archive.org/web/201 00528082819/https://www.nea.g ov/pub/AmCan/AmericanCanvas .pdf .

52
Yúdice, op. cit., 245.

53
Alexander and Larson, *American Canvas* . Emphasis in the original.

54
Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class," op. cit., 22—23. In this paper, Markusen acknowledges artists' role in gentrification, remarking they are "sometimes caught up in gentrification," but she sees their role in most cities as not different from that of other middle- and working-class people migrating into working-class neighborhoods and on this account criticizes both Zukin, with whom she otherwise generally agrees, and Rosalyn Deutsche.

Continued from "Neo-Materialism, Part I: The Commodity and the Exhibition" in issue 20.

Readymade and Unreadymade

Traditionally, by employing a series of strategies incorporating appropriation, composition, abstraction, re-contextualization, and de-contextualization of different commodities, modern art tried to see an entity beyond the ever-present commodity. In an art context, the commodity, this omnipresent "other entity" with which we are engaged in a network of intimacies (we eat, drink, wear, sit on, sleep in, and touch it), has been central to Dada, the Surrealists, the Constructivists, and Pop. Investigations into the commodity on both linguistic and conceptual grounds had already begun with the shift from Picasso's *objets trouvés*, which he incorporated in his paintings and sculptures, to Duchamp's readymades.[1] The examination of the relationships between humans in the world of commodities has likewise been focused upon in cinema—in romantic comedies, for example, where humans struggle to couple through different rituals of consumption.[2]

[figure partialpage 7ed0542752120df0fce62a18b80e174f.jpg Efrat Kedem, *Herzel & Frankel St. corner*, 2007, cardboard, table and door handle.
]

One could argue that some commodities are art objects, but all art objects are commodities. The commodity precedes the artwork. It is the material that inhabits all materials. It is the basic technique of every technique, the fundamental medium of all mediums. Even if, as has been the case for the past 150 years, the paint tubes, canvas, color pigment, wooden frame, and image (even that of an abstract painting) are all commodities, then an examination of the commodity as a pre-existing presence that precedes also the commodification of artworks in the art market, is long overdue. Thierry de Duve describes Duchamp's readymades as having emerged from the industrial paint tube of the American portrait painter and paint manufacturer John Rand, quoting Duchamp:

> Since the tubes of paint used by the artists are manufactured and ready-made products we must conclude that all paintings in the world are "readymades aided" and also works of assemblage.[3]

Joshua Simon
Neo-Materialism, Part II: The Unreadymade

De Duve later quotes Duchamp saying:

> A readymade is a work of art without an artist to make it, if I may simplify the definition. A tube of paint that an artist uses is not made by the artist; it is made by the manufacturer that makes paints. So the painter really is making a readymade when he paints with a manufactured object that is called paints.[4]

The readymade emphasized the artist's ability to select an object and identify it as an artwork. That way, we accept that Duchamp's urinal relates more to Botticelli or Titian than to a bathtub. With the notion of the readymade, Duchamp was able to render the validity of this claim. But when Brussels-based Mexican artist Gabriel Kuri shows a waterproof roofing roll folded under the weight of two 10-liter cans of olives (*Vacío Olivia*, 2007) or when Gedi Sibony shows the leftovers of a wall-to-wall carpet hung on the wall (*Untitled*, 2007), can we still call these readymades?

In a world overburdened with stuff, these objects give an object's account of what it means to be in the world. They suggest an understanding on the part of the commodity, rather than of humans, as a historical subject. This is no longer an object that the artist renders as art (i.e. readymade), but rather it is the exhibition format—as both the narrative display of artifacts and the institutional contract of that which is called art—that allows us to see these commodities as they truly are.[5]

On the one hand, this may seem like a kind of hipster, lazy art. I mean, what can be more resigned than an assemblage of a few bought or found consumer products? But insofar as every artwork starts with some mode of consumption, every art object begins with shopping, whether by the artist or by someone else. In an admiring and detailed description dating from 1965, Robert Smithson recalled Donald Judd shopping before a new work:

> He may go to Long Island City and have the Bernstein Brothers, Tinsmiths put "Pittsburgh" seams into some (Bethcon) iron boxes, or he might go to Allied Plastics in Lower Manhattan and have cut-to-size some Rohm-Haas "glowing" pink plexiglas. Judd is always on the lookout for new finishes, like Lavax Wrinkle Finish, which a company pamphlet says, "combines beauty and great durability." … Or maybe he will travel to Hackensack, New Jersey to investigate a lead he got on a new kind of zinc based paint called Galvanox, which is comparable to "hot-dip" galvanizing.[6]

Both Smithson and Judd, however, show an interest in materials and finishes, but without much concern for their history or for materialist analysis. As artists, they obtain their authority through picking and choosing.

Meanwhile, art is doing something else today: packing, shelving, and customs bureaucracy. It is essentially the work of import/export businesses, whether dealing in commodities in general or those of the art world. Here a notion of the "unreadymade" could prove useful for distinguishing from the readymade by focusing on display rather than discourse, on commodities that are actualized through display. Sven Lütticken has used the term "altered readymades," writing:

> These would be inverted ready-mades that are no longer content to create artistic surplus-value, but rather investigate the con-ditions for a different type of thing, one that is no longer taken as a quasi-natural "matter of fact," but as a political "matter of concern"—to use terms by Bruno Latour that are rather closer to Marxism than their author likes to acknowledge.[7]

France-based Italian-American artist Francesco Finizio's work has been focusing on the relations between humans in a world of commodities. Finizio's installation *Contact Club* (2004–2008) presents twenty-four images documenting himself in a room in his house designed especially for an experiment: with the help of a number of purchased aids (sweetened juices, teddy bears, funnels, buckets, masks, tape, and aluminum foil), he relieves himself into a bucket while watching a television playing footage of various horrors and disasters, such as the September 11 attacks and an atomic mushroom. The experiment includes an attempt to "read" his excrement as an expression of an interaction with the images of disasters. The project concludes with a series of photographs of babies in diapers holding remote controls, posted on the internet by proud parents. Finizio's experiment, which up to that moment seemed ridiculous, was actually a reenactment of the daily experiences of babies around the world, who interact and communicate with commodities as they constitute their consciousness.[8] In late 2008, just before the collapse of Lehman Brothers, Finizio produced a project entitled *In & Out of Business*, in which he held a weeklong performance at ACDC Gallery in Bordeaux, opening and closing ten different businesses in the gallery space: a café, a funeral home, a hotel, a peepshow, a mini-golf course, a reading hall, a skateboard parking lot, a prayer hall, a laundromat, and an art gallery. For all these different settings, Finizio used and reused the same objects, and when the exhibition opened to the public, the documentation of the weeklong performance was screened in the gallery space, with the objects—plastic boxes, blankets, newspapers, mugs,

boards, and rocks, which became a cross, grave, table, bench, bed, and art—leaning on the walls of the gallery. The setting of the art gallery might be the most telling one of all—as part of the performance, Finizio installed an art gallery within an exhibition in an art gallery. The remains of that gallery-in-a-gallery were blankets hung on the walls.

[figure 9838ca32c04286f2ec6add09aff312e8.jpg
Francesco Finizio, *In & Out of Business*, 2008, installation view.

]

The undoing of the readymade in Finizio's work actualizes the commodity by using objects as collaborators. Finizio's strategy of the unreadymade provides us with tools for rethinking the relations between commodities—that is, between people. The idea is not to leave the exhibition with a gaze that can see art in everything, but to use the exhibition to see commodities as they are, as imbued with their own language, interests, and will. When we think of Jeff Koons, Haim Steinbach, or Jessica Stockholder, for example, we accept their authorship over the different found objects they have assembled. They own their piece through linguistic, psychological, or cultural positioning and deliberation. Yet, unlike the appropriative drive of the readymade, the unreadymade is a form of dispossession—it can take many different approaches, yet all recognize, on some level, the inability to master the object. By actualizing its birth as a commodity and its unruly subjectivity, the unreadymade functions as a split-object shifting between subjugation and subjectification.[9]

In this respect, the artist appears to be a hunter-gatherer roaming a much more advanced civilization of commodities. According to Francesco Finizio, in our relations with objects, we are actually in medieval times, with our households resembling those of serfs.[10] The fact that we live under the regime of a neo-feudal debt economy of credit cards and mortgages, along with our domestic practices, renders our daily lives all the more similar to those of medieval sharecroppers. Our modem, phone, blow-dryer, television set, laptop, and boiler—the different appliances by which we make our living in the post-Fordist economy—are the equivalent of the sheep, donkey, goat, chicken, and hog in the Middle Ages. And like the tenant farmer and his domestic animals, our lives are dependent on them to the extent that they become part of the household and the family. Like the vassal, Finizio says, we need to care for these appliances and see that they are healthy and well.

[figure 8cc03b06b113a65efae5e500622aaf23.jpg
Elisheva Levy, *Moon Walking*, 2008, fabric and Acrilan.
]

Neo-Materialism

Lucy Lippard's book *Six Years*, which promoted the idea of dematerialization in the New York art scene of the late sixties and early seventies, was first published in 1973, corresponding with the Nixon Shock, a culmination of a series of measures that unilaterally canceled the direct convertibility of the US dollar to gold.[11] At the time, this was perceived as a way of liberating foreign currency exchange rates from the 1944 Bretton Woods Agreement, which tied them to the value of gold. In this reality of unfixed exchange rates, it was claimed that capital itself was dematerialized. Yet, in fact, through the annulment of the Bretton Woods system, a symbol (money) itself became the material. And thus, from dematerialization we actually moved to a materialization of a symbol, arriving at neo-materialism. In an art context, an evident example can be found in the 2007–2008 retrospective of Lawrence Weiner at the Whitney Museum, where next to each of the artist's sentences and slogans one could find a light-colored label with the name of the collector who allowed the work (the art object) to be shown.[12]

Following the insights of Noam Yuran, we see that the neo-materialistic economy is one in which symbols behave like materials (for Yuran, brands are actually commodities made of money). This helps us to understand how brands and labels are regarded as material objects (the criteria of "real" and "fake" in brands, for example) or how labor has shifted from production to consumption (tourism, shopping, entertainment, watching television, advertisements, and social networks). In addition, the role of price has changed in many sectors from one that depicts our social relations through commodities (supply and demand) to become an inherent characteristic of the commodity ("it is expensive because it is expensive" as opposed to "it is expensive because it is valuable"). We are faced with the materiality of the symbol. As Yuran notes, the Nike is first and foremost a Nike and only later a shoe, with the symbol on the shoe becoming the material substance from which it is actually made. In artist Elisheva Levy's *Moon Walking* (2008)—a shoe-pillow made from fabric and Acrilan—first, we recognize the three stripes of Adidas and only after a second look we realize it is actually a shoe. This work, along with others by Levy, attempts to address commodity fetishism while suspending it without it being burdened by use value. This white Adidas cloud is without a pair of shoes to make it usable. Despite the fact that it is a shoe, it does not need a foot.

[figure fullpage 14f06d11ec4459ff928168a2c9de6ed2.jpg
Michael Edward Smith, *Untitled*, 2008, cellphone, glass jar and painted styrofoam. Courtesy Koch Oberhuber Wolff and the artist. Photo: Michael E. Smith
]

The Death of the Object and the Birth of Commodity

The collapse of the Soviet Bloc saw the fall of the economy of productive labor and the rise of asset and commodity markets. The "trickle-down" economy promised by Reagan, Bush, and later Clinton, did not result in renewed investment in production, but rather in assets: the stock exchange, real estate, and the art markets booms.[13] From Berlin to Baghdad, from Perestroika to the New World Order, it seemed that there was only one way of life available in the unipolar world forged by the events of 1989–1991, and it circles around the commodity as its axis.

As cultural theorist Sylvère Lotringer put it, art has finally fulfilled the program of Dada "with a vengeance," embedding art into life. "Today," he said in an interview for *frieze* magazine, "it is difficult to imagine anything that could be excluded from art."[14] Its field has expanded exponentially to include the entire society. Along the way, it grabbed anything that could be used for its own purpose—recycling garbage, forging communities, investigating political issues, tampering with biology, and so forth—simultaneously appearing and disappearing with an ambiguous promiscuity. This process took place while the market and scene for contemporary art was spreading to more varied geographies and assimilating what was once referred to as the periphery of the art world (i.e. the former Soviet Bloc, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East). Under these inclusive conditions, neo-materialistic sensibilities came to enable a reevaluation of our relations with things and objects, with the realm of art-making in the world of commodities transformed into a mode of being in uncertainties, of negative capacity.[15]

As a result, an increasing number of artists today exhibit the commodity as it is, in forms of waste and garbage—recent examples of this new objecthood could be seen in the 2007/2008 inaugural exhibition of the reopened New Museum in New York, "Unmonumental: The Object in the Twenty First Century," which included objects, collages, and sound works. The density of works in the exhibition returned all of its exhibits, graceful as they may have been, to their basic form: trash. Of course, I say this not to be derogatory, but rather as an attempt at finding meaning in this form of clutter-as-display. As a survey show concerned with the move away from installations in the twenty-first century, returning to an interest in sculpture-objects, "Unmonumental" became a exhibition-cum-document of this new objecthood.[16]

[figure 87f38a4737b754e4356c9e94c743b894.jpg
Shay-Lee Uziel, *High Heels*, 2004, vinyl and glue.

]

The artist Lior Waterman has described the need for this kind of sensibility in his "The Object Manifesto," characterizing the relations between art and trash, particularly with regard to the variety of objects made in

China and sold at 99-cent stores:

> We all know plastic is a byproduct of oil(the thick bubbling blood of the world drained from the earth, a shaman would say). We all know also that oil is a precious raw material over which wars are fought. And yet the plastics industry manages to become ever more efficient and cut prices to a minimum. How is it done? If oil utilization for the plastic industry yields so cheap a raw material,it would follow that plastic in effect contains a *minuscule* amount of real matter. Like a spoon of sugar blown into a cloud of cotton candy, a single drop of oil can be blown into shelves upon shelves of plastic artifacts.[17]

X

To be continued in "Neo-Materialism, Part Three: The Language of Commodities."

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1
See Thierry de Duve, "The Readymade and the Tube of Paint," in *Kant After Duchamp* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 147–196.

2
Parallel to the "simple truth" television advertisements present us with by making commodities their main characters (notice the screen time humans receive versus objects in TV ads), contemporary romantic comedies focus on humans' struggle to couple in a world of commodities, in which courting has transformed into a ritual of consumption structured by dating, status symbols, and lifestyle accessories.

3
Thierry de Duve, "The Readymade and the Tube of Paint," 163.

4
Ibid.

5
The comparative display of cars in an automobile fair is an exhibition, too, and yet it is full of use- and exchange-value unlike that of the art exhibition. In the automobile fair, the commodity does not reveal itself as in an art exhibit. I thank Julia Moritz for stressing this point.

6
Robert Smithson, "Donald Judd," in Robert Smithson, *Collected Writings* , ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 4–7.

7
Sven Lütticken, "Attending to Abstract Things," *New Left Review* 54
 (November–December 2008): 120.

8
Following Freud's speculation on the psychic equivalence of money with feces, Noam Yuran has made a beautiful and useful elaboration of this comparison with the help of Karl Marx, Thorstein Veblen, and Sándor Ferenczi. In a conference titled "Money and Soul" at the Freud Museum in Vienna in October 2010, Yuran addressed the notion of money as repression, using psychoanalysis and heterodox economics. While feces are the first social object, according to Freud, the money object embodies the social as absent from the sphere of experience, Yuran says. "The infant gives shit

to his parents because of his love. With socialization we give money to people to make them strangers," he concludes. Adding to Yuran, in the traditional psychoanalytic structure of ontogenetic and philogenesis, one can say that today the child moves from shit through an evolution of objects, but not to coins as Ferenczi suggested, but rather beyond them to a new baby accessory called Taggies—a blanket with labels that can be rubbed. The texture of the Taggies is the texture of brands; see http://www.taggies.com/ho me_us.html .

9
Andrea Philips, Julia Moritz and Luigi Fassi helped develop these notions in their presentations at "The Language of Things," a discussion organized by Caterina Riva and FormContent at The Showroom in London (December 4, 2010). I thank them for their insights, and also Grant Watson for his remarks during the discussion.

10
From a conversation with the artist.

11
Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

12
Joe Scanlan describes Weiner's strategies in: Joe Scanlan, "Modest Proposals" *Artforum*, vol. 46 no. 8 (April 2008): 312–319; see https://web.archive.org/web/ 20110828065339/http://www.thi ngsthatfall.com/zencapitalism.ph p . In his text, Scanlan quotes Lucy Lippard reevaluating the notion of dematerialization in the 1978 MoMA exhibition of Sol Lewitt: "Some of the blame for this situation must fall on those who, like myself, had exaggerated illusions about the ability of a 'dematerialization of the art object' to subvert the commodity status and political uses to which successful American art has been subjected since the late 1950s. It has become obvious over the last few years that temporary, cheap, invisible or reproducible art has made little difference in the way art and artists are economically and ideologically exploited and that it can hardly be distinguished in that sense from Corten steel sculptures and twenty-foot canvases."

13
See David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crisis of Capitalism* (London: Profile Books, 2010), 21.

14
"Intelligence Agency: Sylvère Lotringer interviewed byNina Power," *frieze* 125 (September 2009): 104–107.

15
One can suggest a taxonomy of strategies, for example, the new objecthood and unreadymades of Rashawn Griffin, Mitzi Pederson, Ruri O'Cconnell, Gabriel Kuri, Gedi Sibony, and Michael Edward Smith; One can add the living (and dead) artist as an agent of commodification in the works of Rainer Ganahl, Christopher Williams, Roee Rosen, Francesco Finizio, and Josephine Meckseper; the site of work and labor in art in the works of Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Hito Steyerl and David Hammons; IKEA art and IKEA-hacking by artists as diverse as Maayan Strauss, Andrea Zittel, Jason Rhoades, Clay Ketter, Guy Ben Ner, and Joe Scanlan; ventriloquism and questions of authentic experience in the work of Keren Cytter, Trisha Donnelly, Tino Seghal, and Ohad Meromi; autism and the encounter with commodities as living forms in the works of Igor Krenz and Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys.

16
David Harvey remarks in relation to the built environment: "Even in the shanty towns of self-built housing, the corrugated iron, the packing boxes and the tarpaulins were first produced as commodities." David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crisis of Capitalism* , 147.

17
See Lior Waterman, "The Object Manifesto," in *The New & Bad Art Magazine* (Winter 2010–2011): 56-59 (in Hebrew). For an earlier English version see "One Dollar Store," in *The End of Cordova*, exh. cat. (Tel Aviv-Jaffa: CCA, September–November 2006), no pagination. In this context it is worth mentioning the cinematic link between oil and dinosaurs, for example in the *Jurassic Park* series (Steven Spielberg, 1993, 1997), which came out following the First Gulf War, with the assertion of a new world order based on direct American control over fossil fuels in the Middle East, when American dinosaur obsession grew to

unprecedented proportions (after all, the history of America is the pre-history of its nature).