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Editors

Editorial

Americans against capitalism? Arab nations toppling autocrats through peaceful protests? 2011 has been a year of massive popular uprisings—on a completely unexpected scale and from populations that were thought to have been thoroughly subdued. Commentators have predicted that discontent in the Arab world would soon come to a head for so many years that it was beginning to seem unlikely, just as others had begun to dismiss the political potency of popular demonstrations in fiscalized Western democracies. For those who started to think that large-scale, radical optimism was naıve or nostalgic, the events of the past year should be sufficient to prove them wrong.

But as winter takes hold in many parts of the world, another kind of doubt begins to set in, with a tinge of disappointment that circumstances in many places that saw the most intense uprisings have not actually been significantly transformed for the better. The removal of dictators has only peeled back the top layer of societies with endemic problems that must be addressed by a renewed sense of civic society. The 99% remains at the mercy of the 1%. The military crackdown in Syria remains unbelievably bloody. An enormous swell of hope that was felt throughout the world earlier this year now seems like it could be orphaned by setbacks, by the scale of brutal realities that seemed as if they were starting to crack open.

The weight of these unforeseen challenges have produced a peculiar moment of social upheaval marked by a nagging sense of stasis—a feeling that, in spite of constant pushing, nothing is in fact moving, or that we are collectively going in circles. This makes it necessary to reluctantly face up to a choice that the current situation poses: whether to religiously believe in a general historical movement towards a change for the better, or resolve ourselves with the fact that things will always remain the same. But this is a false binary.

Perhaps emancipation should not only be considered a matter of reclaiming power and occupying spaces, but of occupying time (as the work of Philippe Parreno helps us to see). A temporal, durational occupation is not only a matter of good intentions and radical gestures, but of patience and persistence—an integration of one's demands into one's own circumstances, with the hopes that those demands will one day be inscribed into law. Could it be that the secret technology of leaderless movements and occupations without clear lists of demands is precisely that they do not build themselves upon a single telos, and cannot be easily dissolved? If so, the strategy would be modest in the short term, but resilient in the long term. A moment of stasis would not necessarily be a sign of failure, but part of a broader way of revolving with the revolutions, a way to occupy ourselves in the meantime and reclaim our own lives as we continue...

—Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, Anton Vidokle

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Franco “Bifo” Berardi

The Future After the End of the Economy

At the end of 2010, I finished writing a book about the cultural collapse of the most important mythology of capitalist modernity: that of “the future” and its associated myths of energy, expansion, and growth.1 While I was writing, I sensed a possibility that the economic crisis could be deepening. But what actually happened in the summer of 2011—the extraordinary crash of global financial capitalism and the beginning of the European insurrection that exploded in London, Athens, and Rome in December 2010 and then grew massive in England during the four nights of rage in August, and which I expect to spread everywhere in the coming months—this has pushed me to write something more. Alas, writing about the present is a dangerous thing when circumstances change so quickly. But I cannot deny the thrill of running alongside the disaster.

—Franco Berardi, August 19, 2011

1. Economics is Not a Science

It is the end of summer 2011 and the economic newspapers increasingly warn that there will be a double dip. Economists predict a new recession before there can be a recovery. I think they are wrong. There will be a recession—on that I agree—but there will be no more recoveries, no return to the process of constant economic growth.

To say this in public would be to invite accusations of being a traitor, a cynic, a doomsayer. Economists will condemn you as a villain. But economists are not people of wisdom, and I do not even consider them scientists. They are more like priests, denouncing the bad behavior of society, asking you to repent for your debts, threatening inflation and misery for your sins, worshipping the dogmas of growth and competition.

What is a science after all? Without embarking on epistemological definitions, I would simply say that science is a form of knowledge free of dogma, that can extrapolate general laws from the observation of empirical phenomena, and that can therefore predict something about what will happen next. It also a way of understanding the types of changes that Thomas Kuhn labeled paradigm shifts.

As far as I know, the discourse known as economics does not correspond to this description. First of all, economists are obsessed with dogmatic notions such as growth, competition, and gross national product. They profess social reality to be in crisis if it is does not conform to the dictates of these notions. Secondly, economists are

incapable of inferring laws from the observation of reality, as they prefer instead that reality harmonize with their own supposed laws. As a consequence, they cannot predict anything—and experience has shown this to be the case in the last three or four years. Finally, economists cannot recognize changes in the social paradigm, and they refuse to adjust their conceptual framework accordingly. They insist instead that reality must be changed to correspond to their outdated criteria.

In the schools of economics and in business schools they do not teach or learn about physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy—subjects that deserve to be called sciences, that conceptualize a specific field of reality. Rather, these schools teach and study a technology, a set of tools, procedures, and pragmatic protocols intended to twist social reality to serve practical purposes: profits, accumulation, power. Economic reality does not exist. It is the result of a process of technical modeling, of submission and exploitation.

The theoretical discourse that supports this economic technology can be defined as ideology, in the sense proposed by Marx—who was not an economist, but a critic of political economy. Ideology is in fact a theoretical technology aimed at advancing special political and social goals. And economic ideology, like all technologies, is not self-reflexive and therefore cannot develop a theoretical self-understanding. It cannot reframe itself in relation to a paradigm shift.

2. Financial Deterritorialization and Labor Precarity

The development of productive forces, as a global network of cognitive labor that Marx called the "general intellect," has provoked an enormous increase in the productive potency of labor. This potency can no longer be semiotized, organized, and contained by the social form of capitalism. Capitalism is no longer able to semiotize and organize the social potency of cognitive productivity, because value can no longer be defined in terms of average necessary work time. Therefore, the old forms of private property and salaried labor are no longer able to semiotize and organize the deterritorialized nature of capital and social labor.

The shift from the industrial form of production to the semiotic form of production—the shift from physical labor to cognitive labor—has propelled capitalism out of itself, out of its ideological self-conception. Economists are dazzled by this transformation, as knowledge that had previously been structured according to the paradigm of bourgeois capitalism: linear accumulation, measurability of value, private appropriation of surplus value. The bourgeoisie, which was a territorialized class (the class of the *bourg*, of the city), was able to manage physical property and a measurable relation between time and value. The total financialization of capital marks the end of the old bourgeoisie and opens the door to a deterritorialized and rhizomatic proliferation of economic power relations. Now the old bourgeoisie no longer has power. They have been replaced by a proliferating virtual class—a deterritorialized and pulverized social dust rather than a territorialized group of persons—usually referred to as the financial markets.

Labor undergoes a parallel process of pulverization and deterritorialization not only in the loss of a regular job and a stable income, but in the precarious relationships between worker and territory. Precarization is an effect of the fragmentation and pulverization of work. The cognitive worker, in fact, does not need to be linked to a place. His or her activity can be spread in non-physical territory. The old economic categories—salary, private property, linear growth—no longer make sense in this new situation. The productivity of the general intellect in terms of use value (i.e., the production of useful semiotic goods) has virtually no limits.

So how can semiotic labor be valued if its products are immaterial? How can the relationship between work and salary be determined? How can we measure value in terms of time if the productivity of cognitive work (creative, affective, linguistic) cannot be quantified and standardized?

3. The End of Growth

The notion of growth is crucial in the conceptual framework of economic technology. If social production does not comply with the economic expectations of growth, economists decree that society is sick. Trembling, they name the disease: recession. This diagnosis has nothing to do with the needs of the population because it does not refer to the use value of things and semiotic goods, but to abstract capitalist accumulation—accumulation of exchange value.

Growth, in the economic sense, is not about increasing social happiness and satisfying people's basic needs. It is about expanding the global volume of exchange value for the sake of profit. Gross national product, the main indicator of growth, is not a measure of social welfare and pleasure, but a monetary measure, while social happiness or unhappiness is generally not dependent on the amount of money circulating in the economy. It is dependent, rather, on the distribution of wealth and the balance between cultural expectations and the availability of physical and semiotic goods.

Growth is a cultural concept more than an economic criterion for the evaluation of social health and well-being. It is linked to the modern conception of the future as infinite expansion. For many reasons, infinite expansion

Hendrik Gerritsz Pot, Flora's mallewagen , c. 1640. Oil on panel. The painting is an allegory of the Tulip Mania, a first speculation bubble in 17th Century Holland. The goddess of flowers is riding a wagon headed to the sea, adorned by the most valuable tulip in the market. Weavers from Haarlem have thrown away their equipment and are following the car.

has become an impossible task for the social body. Since the Club of Rome published the book *The Limits to Growth* in 1972, we have understood that Earth's natural resources are limited and that social production has to be redefined according to this knowledge.[1] But the cognitive transformation of production and the creation of a semiocapitalist sphere opened up new possibilities for expansion. In the 1990s the overall economy expanded euphorically while the net economy was expected to usher in the prospect of infinite growth. This was a deception. Even if the general intellect is infinitely productive, the limits to growth are inscribed in the affective body of cognitive work: limits of attention, of psychic energy, of sensibility.

After the illusions of the new economy—spread by the wired neoliberal ideologists—and the deception of the dot-com crash, the beginning of the new century announced the coming collapse of the financial economy. Since September 2008 we know that, notwithstanding the financial virtualization of expansion, the end of capitalist growth is in sight. This will be a curse if social welfare is indeed dependent on the expansion of profits and if we are unable to redefine social needs and expectations. But it will be a blessing if we can distribute and share existing resources in an egalitarian way, and if we can shift our cultural expectations in a frugal direction, replacing the idea that pleasure depends on ever-growing consumption.

4. Recession and Financial Impersonal Dictatorship

Modern culture has equated economic expansion with the future, so that for economists, it is impossible to consider the future independently of economic growth. But this identification has to be abandoned and the concept of the future rethought. The economic mind cannot make the

The psychology of fear in the stock market. Still from the CBS Evening News story.

jump to this new dimension, it cannot understand this paradigm shift. This is why the economy is in crisis and why economic wisdom cannot cope with the new reality. The financial semiotization of the economy is a war machine that daily destroys social resources and intellectual skills.

Look at what is happening in Europe. After centuries of industrial production the European continent is rich, with millions of technicians, poets, doctors, inventors, specialized factory workers, nuclear engineers, and so forth. So how did we suddenly become so poor? Something very simple happened. The entirety of the wealth that workers produced was poured into the strongboxes of a minuscule minority of exploiters and speculators. The whole mechanism of the European financial crisis is oriented towards the most extraordinary displacement of wealth in history: from society towards the financial class, towards financial capitalism.

The wealth produced by the collective intelligence has been siphoned off and expropriated, leading to the impoverishment of the richest places in the world and the creation of a financial machine that destroys use value and displaces monetary wealth. Recession is the economic way of semiotizing the present contradiction between the productive potency of the general intellect and its financial constraints.

Finance is an effect of the virtualization of reality acting on the psycho-cognitive sphere of the economy. But at the same time, finance is an effect of the deterritorialization of wealth. It is not easy to identify financial capitalists as individual persons, just as finance is not the monetary counterpart of a certain number of physical goods. Rather, it is an effect of language. It is the transversal function of immaterialization and the performative action of indexicality—statistics, figures, indexes, fears, and expectations are not linguistic representations of some economic referent that can be found somewhere in the physical world, as signifiers referring to a signified. They are performative acts of speech producing immediate effects in the very instant of their enunciation.

Stock image for business and finance themes.

This is why, when you try to seek out the financial class, you cannot talk with someone, negotiate, or fight against an enemy. There are no enemies, no persons with whom to negotiate. There are only mathematical implications, automatic social concatenations that one cannot dismantle, or even avoid.

Finance seems inhumane and pitiless because it is not human and therefore has no pity. It can be defined as a mathematical cancer traversing a large part of society. Those who are involved in the financial game are far more numerous than the personal owners of the old bourgeoisie. Often unwittingly and unwillingly, people have been dragged into investing their money and their future in the financial game. Those who have invested their pensions in private funds, those who have signed mortgages half-consciously, those who have fallen into the trap of easy credit have become part of the transversal function of finance. They are poor people, workers, and pensioners whose futures depend on the fluctuations of a stock market they do not control or fully understand.

5. Future Exhaustion and Happy Frugality

Only if we are able to disentangle the future (the perception of the future, the concept of the future, and the very production of the future) from the traps of growth and investment will we find a way out of the vicious subjugation of life, wealth, and pleasure to the financial abstraction of semiocapital. The key to this disentanglement can be found in a new form of wisdom: harmonizing with exhaustion.

Exhaustion is a cursed word in the frame of modern

Concept design project by Mac Funamizu for future mobile internet search, 2008.

culture, which is based on the cult of energy and the cult of male aggressiveness. But energy is fading in the postmodern world for many reasons that are easy to detect. Demographic trends reveal that, as life expectancy increases and birth rate decreases, mankind as a whole is growing old. This process of general aging produces a sense of exhaustion, and what was once considered a blessing—increased life expectancy—may become a misfortune if the myth of energy is not restrained and replaced with a myth of solidarity and compassion.

Energy is fading also because basic physical resources such as oil are doomed to extinction or dramatic depletion. And energy is fading because competition is stupid in the age of the general intellect. The general intellect is not based on juvenile impulse and male aggressiveness, on fighting, winning, and appropriation. It is based on cooperation and sharing.

This is why the future is over. We are living in a space that is beyond the future. If we come to terms with this post-futuristic condition, we can renounce accumulation and growth and be happy sharing the wealth that comes from past industrial labor and present collective intelligence.

If we cannot do this, we are doomed to live in a century of violence, misery, and war.

X

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1
Franco Berardi (Bifo), *After the Future* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2011).

Hito Steyerl

Art as Occupation: Claims for an Autonomy of Life

I want you to take out your mobile phone. Open the video. Record whatever you see for a couple of seconds. No cuts. You are allowed to move around, to pan and zoom. Use effects only if they are built in. Keep doing this for one month, every day. Now stop. Listen.

Lets start with a simple proposition: what used to be work has increasingly been turned into occupation.[1]

This change in terminology may look trivial. In fact, almost everything changes on the way from work to occupation. The economic framework, but also its implications for space and temporality.

If we think of work as labor, it implies a beginning, a producer, and eventually a result. Work is primarily seen as a means to an end: a product, a reward, or a wage. It is an instrumental relation. It also produces a subject by means of alienation.

An occupation is not hinged on any result; it has no necessary conclusion. As such, it knows no traditional alienation, nor any corresponding idea of subjectivity. An occupation doesn't necessarily assume remuneration either, since the process is thought to contain its own gratification. It has no temporal framework except the passing of time itself. It is not centered on a producer/worker, but includes consumers, reproducers, even destroyers, time-wasters, and bystanders—in essence, anybody seeking distraction or engagement.

Occupation

The shift from work to occupation applies in the most different areas of contemporary daily activity. It marks a transition far greater than the often-described shift from a Fordist to post-Fordist economy. Instead of being seen as a means of earning, it is seen as a way of spending time and resources. It clearly accents the passage from an economy based on production to an economy fueled by waste, from time progressing to time spent or even idled away, from a space defined by clear divisions to an entangled and complex territory.

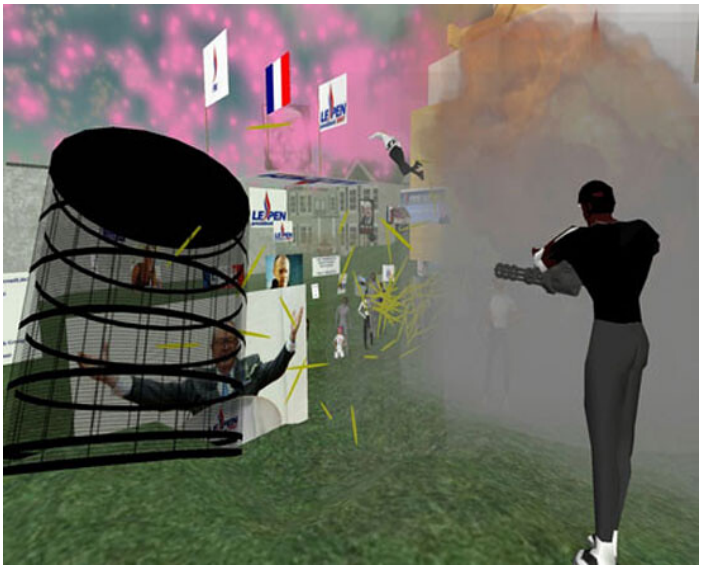
Perhaps most importantly: occupation is not a means to an end, as traditional labor is. Occupation is in many cases an end in itself.

Occupation is connected to activity, service, distraction, therapy, and engagement. But also to conquest, invasion, and seizure. In the military, occupation refers to extreme power relations, spatial complication, and 3D sovereignty.

It is imposed by the occupier on the occupied, who may or may not resist it. The objective is often expansion, but also neutralization, stranglehold, and the quelling of autonomy.

Occupation often implies endless mediation, eternal process, indeterminate negotiation, and the blurring of spatial divisions. It has no inbuilt outcome or resolution. It also refers to appropriation, colonization, and extraction. In its processual aspect occupation is both permanent and uneven—and its connotations are completely different for the occupied and the occupier.

Of course occupations—in all the different senses of the word—are not the same. But the mimetic force of the term operates in each of the different meanings and draws them toward each other. There is a magic affinity within the word itself: if it sounds the same, the force of similarity works from within it.[2] The force of naming reaches across difference to uncomfortably approximate situations that are otherwise segregated and hierarchized by tradition, interest, and privilege.



Violent protests against French political party Front National's Second Life headquarters.

Occupation as Art

In the context of art, the transition from work to occupation has additional implications. What happens to the work of art in this process? Does it too transform into an occupation?

In part, it does. What used to materialize exclusively as object or product—as (art) work—now tends to appear as activity or performance. These can be as endless as strained budgets and attention spans will allow. Today the traditional work of art has been largely supplemented by art as a process—as an occupation.[3]

Art is an occupation in that it keeps people busy—spectators and many others. In many rich countries art denotes a quite popular occupational scheme. The idea that it contains its own gratification and needs no remuneration is quite accepted in the cultural workplace. The paradigm of the culture industry provided an example of an economy that functioned by producing an increasing number of occupations (and distractions) for people who were in many cases working for free. Additionally, there are now occupational schemes in the guise of art education. More and more post- and post-post-graduate programs shield prospective artists from the pressure of (public or private) art markets. Art education now takes longer—it creates zones of occupation, which yield fewer "works" but more processes, forms of knowledge, fields of engagement, and planes of relationality. It also produces ever-more educators, mediators, guides, and even guards—all of whose conditions of occupation are again processual (and ill- or unpaid).

The professional and militarized meaning of occupation unexpectedly intersect here, in the role of the guard or

attendant, to create a contradictory space. Recently, a professor at the University of Chicago suggested that museum guards should be armed.[4] Of course, he was referring primarily to guards in (formerly) occupied countries like Iraq and other states in the midst of political upheaval, but by citing potential breakdowns of civic order he folded First-World locations into his appeal. What's more, art occupation as a means of killing time intersects with the military sense of spatial control in the figure of the museum guard—some of whom may already be military veterans. Intensified security mutates the sites of art and inscribes the museum or gallery into a sequence of stages of potential violence.

Another prime example in the complicated topology of occupation is the figure of the intern (in a museum, a gallery, or most likely an isolated project).[5] The term intern is linked to internment, confinement, and detention, whether involuntary or voluntary. She is supposed to be on the inside of the system, yet is excluded from payment. She is inside labor but outside remuneration: stuck in a space that includes the outside and excludes the inside simultaneously. As a result, she works to sustain her own occupation.

Both examples produce a fractured timespace with varying degrees of occupational intensity. These zones are very much shut off from one another, yet interlocked and interdependent. The schematics of art occupation reveal a checkpointed system, complete with gatekeepers, access levels, and close management of movement and information. Its architecture is astonishingly complex. Some parts are forcefully immobilized, their autonomy denied and quelled in order to keep other parts more mobile. Occupation works on both sides: forcefully seizing and keeping out, inclusion and exclusion, managing access and flow. It may not come as surprise that this pattern often but not always follows fault lines of class and political economy.

In poorer parts of the world, the immediate grip of art might seem to lessen. But art-as-occupation in these places can more powerfully serve the larger ideological deflections within capitalism and even profit concretely

An Egyptian soldier stands guard at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, January, 2011. Photo: Amr Nabil/AP.

from labor stripped of rights.[6] Here migrant, liberal, and urban squalor can again be exploited by artists who use misery as raw material. Art "upgrades" poorer neighborhoods by aestheticizing their status as urban ruins and drives out long-term inhabitants after the area becomes fashionable.[7] Thus art assists in the structuring, hierarchizing, seizing, up- or downgrading of space; in organizing, wasting, or simply consuming time through vague distraction or committed pursuit of largely unpaid para-productive activity; and it divvies up roles in the figures of artist, audience, freelance curator, or uploader of cell phone videos to a museum website.

Generally speaking, art is part of an uneven global system, one that underdevelops some parts of the world, while overdeveloping others—and the boundaries between both areas interlock and overlap.

Life and Autonomy

But beyond all this, art doesn't stop at occupying people, space, or time. It also occupies life as such.

Why should that be the case? Let's start with a small detour on artistic autonomy. Artistic autonomy was traditionally predicated not on occupation, but on separation—more precisely, on art's separation from life.[8] As artistic production became more specialized in an industrial world marked by an increasing division of labor, it also grew increasingly divorced from direct functionality.[9] While it apparently evaded instrumentalization, it simultaneously lost social relevance. As a reaction, different avant-gardes set out to break the barriers of art and to recreate its relation to life.

Their hope was for art to dissolve within life, to be infused with a revolutionary jolt. What happened was rather the contrary. To push the point: life has been occupied by art, because art's initial forays back into life and daily practice gradually turned into routine incursions, and then into

Pierre-Gabriel Berthault, Triumphal Entry of the Monuments of the Arts and Science, 9 and 10 Thermidor Year VI, 1798. Engraving. Parade celebrating the entry of pillaged artworks of into the Louvre Museum.

constant occupation. Nowadays, the invasion of life by art is not the exception, but the rule. Artistic autonomy was meant to separate art from the zone of daily routine—from mundane life, intentionality, utility, production, and instrumental reason—in order to distance it from rules of efficiency and social coercion. But this incompletely segregated area then incorporated all that it broke from in the first place, recasting the old order within its own aesthetic paradigms. The incorporation of art within life was once a political project (both for the left and right), but the incorporation of life within art is now an aesthetic project, and it coincides with an overall aestheticization of politics.

On all levels of everyday activity art not only invades life, but occupies it. This doesn't mean that it's omnipresent. It just means that it has established a complex topology of both overbearing presence and gaping absence—both of which impact daily life.

Checklist

But, you may respond, apart from occasional exposure, I have nothing to do with art whatsoever! How can my life be occupied by it? Perhaps one of the following questions applies to you:

Does art possess you in the guise of endless self-performance?[10] Do you wake feeling like a multiple? Are you on constant auto-display?

Have you been beautified, improved, upgraded, or attempted to do this to anyone/thing else? Has your rent doubled because a few kids with brushes were relocated into that dilapidated building next door? Have your feelings been designed, or do you feel designed by your iPhone?

Or, on the contrary, is access to art (and its production) being withdrawn, slashed, cut off, impoverished and hidden behind insurmountable barriers? Is labor in this

field unpaid? Do you live in a city that redirects a huge portion of its cultural budget to fund a one-off art exhibition? Is conceptual art from your region privatized by predatory banks?

All of these are symptoms of artistic occupation. While, on the one hand, artistic occupation completely invades life, it also cuts off much art from circulation.

Division of Labor

Of course, even if they had wanted to, the avant-gardes could never have achieved the dissolution of the border between art and life on their own. One of the reasons has to do with a rather paradoxical development at the root of artistic autonomy. According to Peter Bürger, art acquired a special status within the bourgeois capitalist system because artists somehow refused to follow the specialization required by other professions. While in its time this contributed to claims for artistic autonomy, more recent advances in neoliberal modes of production in many occupational fields started to reverse the division of labor.[11]The artist-as-dilettante and biopolitical designer was overtaken by the clerk-as-innovator, the technician-as-entrepreneur, the laborer-as-engineer, the manager-as-genius, and (worst of all) the administrator-as-revolutionary. As a template for many forms of contemporary occupation, multitasking marks the reversal of the division of labor: the fusion of professions, or rather their confusion. The example of the artist as creative polymath now serves as a role model (or excuse) to legitimate the universalization of professional dilettantism and overexertion in order to save money on specialized labor.

If the origin of artistic autonomy lies in the refusal of the division of labor (and the alienation and subjection that accompany it), this refusal has now been reintegrated into neoliberal modes of production to set free dormant potentials for financial expansion. In this way, the logic of autonomy spread to the point where it tipped into new dominant ideologies of flexibility and self-entrepreneurship, acquiring new political meanings as well. Workers, feminists, and youth movements of the 1970s started claiming autonomy from labor and the regime of the factory.[12] Capital reacted to this flight by designing its own version of autonomy: the autonomy of capital from workers.[13] The rebellious, autonomous force of those various struggles became a catalyst for the capitalist reinvention of labor relations as such. Desire for self-determination was rearticulated as a self-entrepreneurial business model, the hope to overcome alienation was transformed into serial narcissism and overidentification with one's occupation. Only in this context can we understand why contemporary occupations that promise an unalienated lifestyle are somehow believed to contain their own gratification. But the relief from alienation they suggest takes on the form of a more pervasive self-oppression, which arguably could be much worse than traditional alienation.[14]

The struggles around autonomy, and above all capital's response to them are thus deeply ingrained into the transition from work to occupation. As we have seen, this transition is based on the role model of the artist as a person who refuses the division of labor and leads an unalienated lifestyle. This is one of the templates for new occupational forms of life that are all-encompassing, passionate, self-oppressive, and narcissistic to the bone.

To paraphrase Allan Kaprow: life in a gallery is like fucking in a cemetery.[15] We could add that things become even worse as the gallery spills back into life: as the gallery/cemetery invades life, one begins to feel unable to fuck anywhere else.[16]

[figure fullpage 2011_11_Hito-OccupyEverythingPieChart.jpg Colin Smith, *Poster for the Occupy Movement*, 2011.]

Occupation, Again

This might be the time to start exploring the next meaning of occupation: the meaning it has taken on in countless squats and takeovers in recent years. As the occupiers of the New School in 2008 emphasized, this type of occupation tries to intervene into the governing forms of occupational time and space, instead of simply blocking and immobilizing a specific area:

> Occupation mandates the inversion of the standard dimensions of space. Space in an occupation is not merely the container of our bodies, it is a plane of potentiality that has been frozen by the logic of the commodity. In an occupation, one must engage with space topologically, as a strategist, asking: What are

> its holes, entrances, exits? How can one disalienate it, disidentify it, make it inoperative, communize it?[17]

To unfreeze the forces that lie dormant in the petrified space of occupation means to rearticulate their functional uses, to make them non-efficient, non-instrumental, and non-intentional in their capacities as tools for social coercion. It also means to demilitarize it—at least in terms of hierarchy—and to then militarize it differently. Now, to free an art space from art-as-occupation seems a paradoxical task, especially when art spaces extend beyond the traditional gallery. On the other hand, it is also not difficult to imagine how any of these spaces might operate in a non-efficient, non-instrumental, and non-productive way.

But which is the space we should occupy? Of course, at this moment suggestions abound for museums, galleries, and other art spaces to be occupied. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that; almost all these spaces should be occupied, now, again, and forever. But again, none of these spaces is strictly coexistent with our own multiple spaces of occupation. The realms of art remain mostly adjacent to the incongruent territories that stitch up and articulate the incoherent accumulation of times and spaces by which we are occupied. At the end of the day, people might have to leave the site of occupation in order to go home to do the thing formerly called labor: wipe off the tear gas, go pick up their kids from child care, and otherwise get on with their lives.[18] Because these lives happen in the vast and unpredictable territory of occupation, and this is also where lives are being occupied. I am suggesting that we occupy this space. But where is it? And how can it be claimed?

The Territory of Occupation

The territory of occupation is not a single physical place, and is certainly not to be found within any existing occupied territory. It is a space of affect, materially supported by ripped reality. It can actualize anywhere, at any time. It exists as a possible experience. It may consist of a composite and montaged sequence of movements through sampled checkpoints, airport security checks, cash tills, aerial viewpoints, body scanners, scattered labor, revolving glass doors, duty free stores. How do I know? Remember the beginning of this text? I asked you to record a few seconds each day on your mobile phone. Well, this is the sequence that accumulated in my phone; walking the territory of occupation, for months on end.

Walking through cold winter sun and fading insurrections sustained and amplified by mobile phones. Sharing hope with crowds yearning for spring. A spring that feels necessary, vital, unavoidable. But spring didn't come this year. It didn't come in summer, nor in autumn. Winter came around again, yet spring wouldn't draw any closer. Occupations came and froze, were trampled under, drowned in gas, shot at. In that year people courageously, desperately, passionately fought to achieve spring. But it remained elusive. And while spring was violently kept at bay, this sequence accumulated in my cell phone. A sequence powered by tear gas, heartbreak, and permanent transition. Recording the pursuit of spring.

Jump cut to Cobra helicopters hovering over mass graves, zebra wipe to shopping malls, mosaic to spam filters, SIM cards, nomad weavers; spiral effect to border detention, child care and digital exhaustion.[19] Gas clouds dissolving between high-rise buildings. Exasperation. The territory of occupation is a place of enclosure, extraction, hedging, and constant harassment, of getting pushed, patronized, surveilled, deadlined, detained, delayed, hurried—it encourages a condition that is always too late, too early, arrested, overwhelmed, lost, falling.

Your phone is driving you through this journey, driving you mad, extracting value, whining like a baby, purring like a lover, bombarding you with deadening, maddening, embarrassing, outrageous claims for time, space, attention, credit card numbers. It copy-pastes your life to countless unintelligible pictures that have no meaning, no audience, no purpose, but do have impact, punch, and speed. It accumulates love letters, insults, invoices, drafts, endless communication. It is being tracked and scanned, turning you into transparent digits, into motion as a blur. A digital eye as your heart in hand. It is witness and informer. If it gives away your position, it means you'll retroactively have had one. If you film the sniper that shoots at you, the phone will have faced his aim. He will have been framed and fixed, a faceless pixel composition.[20] Your phone is your brain in corporate design, your heart as a product, the Apple of your eye.

Your life condenses into an object in the palm of your hand, ready to be slammed into a wall and still grinning at you, shattered, dictating deadlines, recording, interrupting.

The territory of occupation is a green-screened territory, madly assembled and conjectured by zapping, copy-and-paste operations, incongruously keyed in, ripped, ripping apart, breaking lives and heart. It is a space governed not only by 3D sovereignty, but 4D sovereignty because it occupies time, a 5D sovereignty because it governs from the virtual, and an n-D sovereignty from above, beyond, across—in Dolby Surround. Time asynchronously crashes into space; accumulating by spasms of capital, despair, and desire running wild.

Here and elsewhere, now and then, delay and echo, past and future, day for night nest within each other like unrendered digital effects. Both temporal and spatial occupation intersect to produce individualized timelines, intensified by fragmented circuits of production and augmented military realities. They can be recorded,

objectified, and thus made tangible and real. A matter in motion, made of poor images, lending flow to material reality. It is important to emphasize that these are not just passive remnants of individual or subjective movements. Rather, they are sequences that create individuals by means of occupation. They trigger full stops and passionate abandon. They steer, shock, and seduce.

Look at your phone to see how it has sampled scattered trajectories of occupation. Not only your own. If you look at your phone you might also find this sequence: *Jump cut to Cobra helicopters hovering over mass graves, zebra wipe to shopping malls, mosaic to spam filters, SIM cards, nomad weavers; spiral effect to border detention, child care and digital exhaustion.* I might have sent it to you from my phone. See it spreading. See it become invaded by other sequences, many sequences, see it being re-montaged, rearticulated, reedited. Let's merge and rip apart our scenarios of occupation. Break continuity. Juxtapose. Edit in parallel. Jump the axe. Build suspense. Pause. Countershoot. Keep chasing spring.

These are our territories of occupation, forcefully kept apart from each other, each in his and her own corporate enclosure. Let's reedit them. Rebuild. Rearrange. Wreck. Articulate. Alienate. Unfreeze. Accelerate. Inhabit. Occupy.

X

This text is dedicated to comrade Şiyar. Thank you to Apo, Neman Kara, Tina Leisch, Sahin Okay, and Selim Yildiz.

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1
I am ripping these ideas from a brilliant observation by the Carrot Workers Collective. See http://carotworkers.wordpress.com/on-free-labour/

2
Walter Benjamin, "Doctrine of the Similar," in *Selected Writings*, *Vol. 2, part 2, 1931-1934* , ed. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, Gary Smith. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 694-711, esp. 696.

3
One could even say: the work of art is tied to the idea of a product (bound up in a complex system of valorization). Art-as-occupation bypasses the end result of production by immediately turning the making-of into commodity.

4
Lawrence Rothfield as quoted in John Hooper, "Arm museum guards to prevent looting, says professor," *The Guardian*, 10.07.2011, "Professor Lawrence Rothfield, faculty director of the University of Chicago's cultural policy center, told the Guardian that ministries, foundations and local authorities "should not assume that the brutal policing job required to prevent looters and professional art thieves from carrying away items is just one for the national police or for other forces not under their direct control". He was speaking in advance of the annual conference of the Association for Research into Crimes Against Art (ARCA), held over the weekend in the central Italian town of Amelia. Rothfield said he would also like to see museum attendants, site wardens and others given thorough training in crowd control. And not just in the developing world." See http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2011/jul/10/arm-museum-guards-looting-war .

5
Carrot Workers Collective, "The figure of the intern appears in this context paradigmatic as it negotiates the collapse of the boundaries between Education, Work and Life." See http://carrotworkers.wordpress.com/on-free-labour/ .

6
As critiqued recently by Walid Raad in the building of the Abu Dhabi Guggenheim franchise and related labor issues. See http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/37846/walid-raad-on-why-the-guggenheim-abu-dhabi-must-be-built-on-a-foundation-of-workers-rights/?page=1 .

7
Central here is Martha Rosler's three-part essay,"Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism," in *e-flux journal* 21 (December 2010); 23 (March 2011); and 25 (May 2011). See https://www.e-flux.com/journal/21/67676/culture-class-art-creativity-urbanism-part-i/ .

8
These paragraphs are entirely due to the pervasive influence of Sven Lütticken's excellent text "Acting on the Omnipresent Frontiers of Autonomy" in *To The Arts, Citizens!* (Porto: Serralves, 2010), 146-167. Lütticken also commissioned the initial version of this text, to be published soon as a "Black Box" version in a special edition of *OPEN* magazine.

9
The emphasis here is on the word obvious, since art evidently retained a major function in developing a particular division of senses, class distinction and bourgeois subjectivity even as it became more divorced from religious or overt representational function. Its autonomy presented itself as disinterested and dispassionate, while at the same time mimetically adapting the form and structure of capitalist commodities.

10
The Invisible Committee lay out the terms for occupational performativity: "Producing oneself is about to become the dominant occupation in a society where production has become aimless: like a carpenter who's been kicked out of his workshop and who out of desperation starts to plane himself down. That's where we get the spectacle of all these young people training themselves to smile for their employment interviews, who whiten their teeth to make a better impression, who go out to nightclubs to stimulate their team spirit, who learn English to boost their careers, who get divorced or married to bounce back again, who go take theater classes to become leaders or "personal development" classes to "manage conflicts" better—the most intimate "personal development," claims some guru or another, "will lead you to better emotional stability, a more well directed intellectual acuity, and so to better economic performance." The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection* (New York: Semiotexte(e), 2009), 16.

11
Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

12
It is interesting to make a link at this point to classical key texts of autonomist thought as collected in *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics* , ed. Sylvere Lotringer and Christian Marazzi (New York: Semiotext(e), 2007).

13
Toni Negri has detailedthe restructuring of the North Italian labor force after the 1970s, while Paolo Virno and Bifo Berardi both emphasize that the autonomous tendencies expressed the refusal of labor and the rebellious feminist, youth,and workers movements in the '70s was recaptured into new, flexibilized and entrepreneurial forms of coercion. More recently Berardi has emphasized the new conditions of subjective identification with labor and its self-perpetuating narcissistic components. See inter alia Toni Negri, i: "Reti produttive e territori: il caso del Nord-Est italiano," *L'inverno è finito. Scritti sulla trasformazione negata (1989–1995*), ed. Giovanni Caccia (Rome: Castelvecchi, 1996), 66–80; Paolo Virno, "Do you remember counterrevolution?," in *Radical thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* , ed. Michael Hardt and Paolo Virno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2010.

14
I have repeatedly argued that one should not seek to escape alienation but on the contrary embrace it as well as the status of objectivity and objecthood that goes along with it.

15
In "What is a Museum? Dialogue with Robert Smithson," *Museum World* no. 9 (1967), reprinted in *The Writings of Robert Smithson* , Jack Flam ed. (New York University Press: New York, 1979), 43-51.

16
Remember also the now unfortunately defunct meaning of occupation. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries "to occupy" was a euphemism for "have sexual intercourse with," which fell from usage almost completely during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

17
Inoperative Committee, *Preoccupied: The Logic of Occupation* (Somewhere: Somebody, 2009),11.

18
In the sense of squatting, which in contrast to other types of occupation is limited spatially and temporally.

19
I copied the form of my sequence from Imri Kahn's lovely video *Rebecca makes it!,* where it appears with different imagery.

20
This description is directly inspired by Rabih Mroue's terrific upcoming lecture "The Pixelated Revolution" on the use of mobile phones in recent Syrian uprisings.

Claire Tancons

Occupy Wall Street: Carnival Against Capital? Carnivalesque as Protest Sensibility

While some commentators and journalists have dismissed Occupy Wall Street as carnival, lawmakers and police officers did not miss the point. They reached back to a mid-nineteenth century ban on masking to arrest occupiers wearing as little as a folded bandana on the forehead, leaving little doubt about their fear of Carnival as a potent form of political protest. *New York Times* journalist Ginia Bellafante initially expressed skepticism about "air[ing] societal grievance as carnival," but just a few days later she warned against "criminalizing costume," thus changing her condescension to caution as she confirmed the police's point: masking can be dangerous, Carnival is serious business.[1]

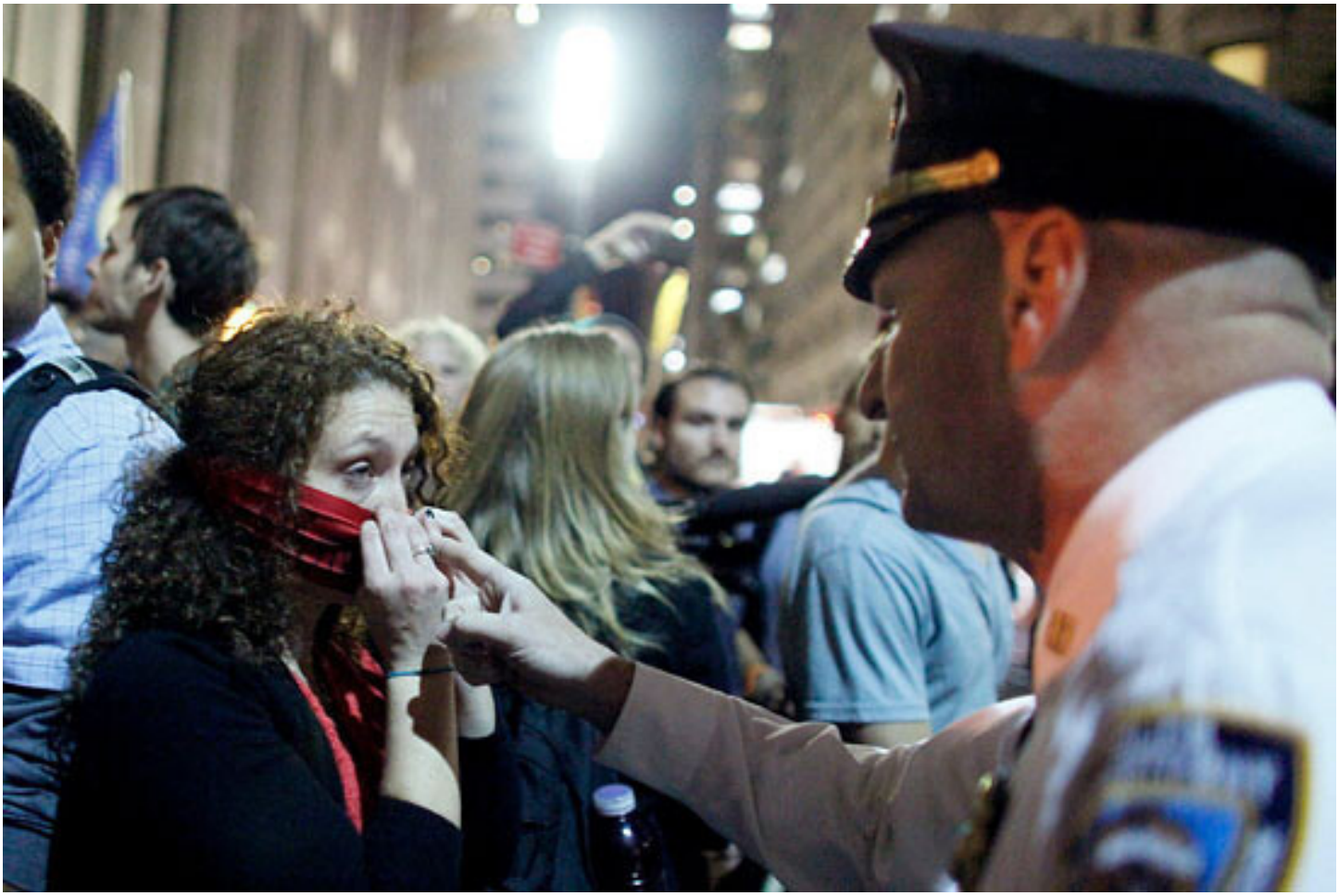
The mask ban was enacted in 1845 to prevent Hudson Valley tenant farmers from resisting eviction by rioting in "Indian" dress and "calico gowns and leather masks."[2] The arrests at OWS on charges of "loitering and wearing a mask" occurred on September 21, the fourth day of the movement's occupation of Zuccotti Park. The eventual eviction from Zuccotti Park happened two days short of the movement's two-month anniversary and planned Day of Action known as "N17." As Kira Akerman noted,

> There is almost something comical in occupiers being evicted from Zuccotti Park by the police force in the middle of the night, much in the same way Native peoples were surprised in their tents and pushed off their land ...This time white people with Mohawks and brown boots with Indigenous-inspired tassels are banging pots and pans.[3]

Carnival hardly exists in the United States anymore. It has survived as a Shrovetide festival with Mardi Gras in New Orleans and as a summer celebration for the West Indian community with the Labor Day parade in Brooklyn. However, the carnivalesque—as a medium of emancipation and a catalyst for civil disobedience—is alive and well, and these contemporary carnivals have retained their rebellious potential.

Then there were the countless examples of personal ingenuity. In the early days of the movement, a helmeted woman in fur boots and a figure skating outfit was seen riding a gold and pink papier mâché unicorn. In another case, a young man dressed up as what might be called a Zorro Graduate. He wore the black mask and gloves of the TV avenger, along with a black graduation hat and gown. He held a convict's chain and iron ball printed with the words "student loan" and a sign reading "Unemployed Superhero, Master of Degrees, Shackled by Debt."

Artists have also answered the call to action. Peter Rostovsky and Lynn Sullivan organized *The Language Experiment* with about twenty other artists who came together under the name Build the Occupation. First performed on Halloween and then reiterated on N17, the



Woman wearing scarf with police officer, Occupy Wall Street, October 5, 2011. Photo: Aristide Economopoulos/The Star-Ledger.

group dressed in orange pie charts and 99% glasses. They held signs (at first handwritten, then printed with a font designed by Steve Robinson) bearing words in the fashion of refrigerator magnet poetry, with reference to Daniel Martinez's Whitney Biennial piece "I can't ever imagine wanting to be white" (1993).[4] Taken together, the performers formed living sentences, the written equivalent of the "human microphone," the occupiers' signature voice amplification technique. These occupation builders delivered collective messages that were permutable at will, if within the range of a carefully chosen consciousness-raising vocabulary.

Yet the most poignant message might have been the simplest, exemplifying the merit of "less is more" (however un-carnivalesque that may sound). The photograph of a young blond man, his mouth taped closed by a dollar bill with "#occupy" handwritten on it, has become iconic of the movement. Or maybe it's because of the American flag tucked in his backpack, putting the whole scene into context.

Still more minimalist, baring it all had been a strategy of (un)masking at Liberty Plaza, as long as the weather allowed. In a corporate world where the clothes make the man, with men in suits (aka the 1%) protected by the blue shirts (regular police officers) and the white shirts (the commanding officers of pepper-spraying fame) from the occupiers (aka the 99%), the spectacle of nudity is a good reminder of the common human nature of the 100%.[5]

However, we shouldn't see Carnival merely for the costumes. OWS might well be another Carnival Against Capital—a tactical re-territorialization of public space and political discourse, of social formation and cultural production, carried out as a concerted effort to regain democratic rights and liberties.

"Occupationist International": Carnival and Anarchism

In fact, carnivalesque protests were a staple of the anti-corporate globalization movement. The Global Carnival Against Capitalism (or "J18"), organized by the activist group Reclaim the Streets, was an international subversive street party that took place on June 18, 1999 to coincide with a G8 summit in Cologne. It updated Mikhail Bakhtin's characterization of Carnival as a topsy-turvy

Corporate Zombies walk, Occupy Wall Street, New York, October 3, 2011. Photo: Frank Franklin, © AP.

Marcelo Expósito, Radical Imagination (Carnivals of Resistance), 2004. Video still. The film documents J18.

world where laughter subverts authority.

Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*, a study of folk culture in the work of French Renaissance writer Rabelais, was written in 1940 but not published in Bakhtin's native Russia until 1965 due to its veiled critique of Stalin's purges. The American and French publications of the book (in 1968 and 1970, respectively) gave European and North American anarchists an anti-hierarchical societal model that appealed to their revolutionary aspirations. But it was French situationist Raoul Vaneigem, in his book *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (1967)[6], who fueled the May 1968 student movement with what could be called Carnival liberation theory. Presciently, Vaneigem wrote that "a strike for higher wages or a rowdy demonstration can awaken the carnival spirit," and "revolutionary moments are carnivals in which the individual life celebrates its unification with a regenerated society."

What seems to prevail in the American incarnation of the Occupy movement is a softer latter-day anarchism inherited from the commune movement of the 1960s and the intentional communities of the 1980s. The latter were themselves indebted to the Situationist International and the Italian autonomist movement, and were compounded in American anarchist Hakim Bey's *Temporary Autonomous Zone* (*TAZ*), the tactical field manual of alter-globalization activists since 1985.

While the word "carnival" is not to be found in *TAZ*, "occupy" is. Bey writes, "Because the State is concerned primarily with Simulation rather than substance, the TAZ can 'occupy' these areas clandestinely and carry on its festal purposes for quite a while in relative peace." This statement aptly summarizes the pre-eviction situation at Liberty Plaza, with an emphasis on " *relative* peace" given the treatment of occupiers by the NYPD, and a de-emphasis on "clandestine" occupation given the media coverage the movement has garnered.[7] However, only one report to date (in the *New York Observer*) has explicitly linked OWS and *TAZ*.[8]

A link that has been more widely made has been between OWS and *The Coming Insurrection* (2009), a pamphlet written by The Invisible Committee, a French insurrectionary anarchist group . Glenn Beck has hysterically attacked *The Coming Insurrection*, indicting it as the inspiration for OWS and the international upheavals that preceded it, from the Greek protests of 2010–11 to the UK student movement of 2010 and the Arab Spring. (The latter was first acknowledged as a source of inspiration by the occupiers themselves). The pamphlet proclaims that "we live under an occupation, a *police* occupation," and states that "we don't want to occupy the territory, we want to be the territory," thereby reversing the rhetoric of occupation (as in the (Un)Occupy Albuquerque movement). It casts a pessimistic light on a state of de facto capitalist colonization of the world.[9] Since the eviction of OWS and other encampments, the need to de-territorialize the occupationist strategy and "be the territory" has never seemed more urgent.

The Invisible Committee can be seen as the latest link in "the theoretical lineage ... constructed in retrospect [by international activists] to serve the interest of [the] contemporary radical project," as Gavin Grindon has put it. Grindon initially identifies Bakhtin, Vaneigem, and Bey as part of this lineage.[10] However, what one might call the "Occupationist International" freely borrows from the anarchist toolbox, using Bakhtin's therapeutic laughter, resurrecting Vaneigem's insurrectional ardor, and implementing Bey's guerilla tactics, while at the same time rejecting The Invisible Committee's exhortation to abolish general assemblies. General assemblies have been one of the core characteristics of OWS, introduced by Spanish activists involved in the M15 movement.

Millionaires March, Occupy Wall Street, New York, October 11, 2011. Photograph © AFP/Getty Images.

Breaking from this anarchist lineage is former French Resistance fighter and concentration camp survivor Stéphane Hessel. His pamphlet *Time for Outrage*, published in French as Indignez-vous! in 2010 and translated into English by The Nation in early 2011, has been credited as a source for the Spanish movement, where protesters were referred to as "los indignados," and now for the American movement, where occupiers are referred to as "les indignés" by the French media.[11]

But David Graeber—the anarchist, activist, and professor of anthropology who was called the "anti-leader" of OWS by Bloomberg Business Week, and who wrote cogently of the movement's aim as "recapturing the radical imagination"—has a singular manifesto of his own.[12] His *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (2011), a sprawling history of debt and its economic and cultural implications, might well be this generation's treatise of *savoir-vivre* (to borrow from Vaneigem's original French title), leaving the Canadian anti-consumerist magazine *Adbusters*, which this summer sent out the call to occupy Wall Street, to do the branding.[13]

For, in addition to indicting financiers directly, as in the "People's Trial" of Goldman Sachs on November 3, OWS also targets the financial system as a whole. Thus, it brought renewed momentum to the Move Your Money campaign, whose latest initiative was Bank Transfer Day on November 5. This gives credence to the notion that OWS is not so much waging an economic war as it is waging a war against the economy, possibly one of the most anarchist statements imaginable in a state of corporate occupation.[14]

Carnival, Capitalism, and Slavery

Just as the economy is the crux of the movement's concerns, it is also at the core of Carnival. The few contemporary commentators who try to establish a link between—to borrow Grindon's categories—"carnivalesque attacks upon a shared popular culture" and "carnival as part of a shared popular culture," usually look to Europe for models of Carnival. But the carnivals of the Americas provide both explanations for and alternatives to this country's economic plight.

Carnival was widely practiced in the Americas, where colonization and slavery replaced European feudalism and servitude, and where plantations afforded experiments with capitalism that would later develop into British industrialism. In the Old World as in the New, Carnival thrived off the extreme disparity between masters, their subjects, or slaves—what today we would call wealth inequality. Role reversals alleviated a brutally divisive social system by crowning servants and slaves king for a day. Carnival created an opportunity for society to cohere anew, at least for the duration of the festivities.

With this understanding of the structural dynamic of Carnival, it is not surprising to see carnivalesque strands appearing in America's frayed social fabric at a time when the rich have never been richer and the poor never poorer. Just as for Graeber the current debt crisis is part of a larger story, so is OWS's carnival. As Graeber explains, "Throughout history, debt has served as a way for states to control their subjects and extract resources from them (usually to finance wars). And when enough people got in enough debt, there was usually some kind of revolt."[15] It is in this sense that capital and Carnival are opposite sides of the same coin, telling the same story from economic and cultural perspectives, respectively. Carnival isn't merely a cultural practice recuperated by the global anarchist movement and instrumentalized as carnivalesque during protests. It harks back to ancient human archetypes in calling for a reversal of the status quo as a means to mediate between opposite ends of the social spectrum and to create a shared, if fleeting, space to live side by side—a sort of Foucauldian heterotopia, or lived utopia.

In stalwart carnival countries, the century-old festival has failed in recent decades to generate political momentum around key societal issues. Instead, it has succumbed to forms of rampant consumerism and escapist fun that are as remote from political relevance as any other mainstream entertainment. And yet, despite these cautionary tales, carnival countries and cities offer alternatives to mainstream economic and cultural life that are worth examining.

In Trinidad and Tobago, which has a longstanding history of rebellion at Carnival time, beaded bikinis made in China sell for up to $2,500 each, turning exotic bodies into tourist commodities. The "ole mas" tradition, which, much like the Occupy movement, included cardboard placards adorned with political slogans, once offered a healthy public forum for political commentary, but is now largely extinct (challenging one occupier's belief that "My Cardboard Can

"Unemployed Superhero, Master of Degrees, Shackled with Debts", Occupy Wall Street, New York, October 2011. Photo: Jacquelyn Martin, © AP.

Beat Your Billboard"). Only a small enclave of artists keeps the ole mas tradition alive. In the mid-1980s, Peter Minshall's *Rat Race* mas band took Port of Spain by storm with its army of masqueraders dressed as rodents holding speech bubbles admonishing greed, gossip, and gullibility in the local vernacular.[16] In a DIY style similar to the vanishing Carnival tradition as it could still be observed in 2005, artists Ashraph Richard Ramsaran and Shalini Seereeram created *T'in Cow Fat Cow* (2009) and *Cobo Town* (2010).[17] These pieces consisted of hand-lettered placards and flags bearing puns about government corruption and public complicity, such as "The People Must be Herd" and "Let us Prey."[18]

It may come as no surprise that the slow commodification and diminishing criticality of the Trinidad Carnival was initiated by the father of the independent nation. Eric Williams founded the People's National Movement in 1956 and became the first Prime Minister of independent Trinidad and Tobago in 1962. (Before entering politics he was a professor at Howard University and the author of the landmark historical study *Capitalism and Slavery* [1944], a work so scathing in its critique of the humanitarian view of British abolitionists that it was not published in the UK until 1964. However, Williams omitted to discuss Carnival as the missing link between Capitalism and Slavery. As Prime Minister, Williams sought to control Carnival through the seemingly auspicious Carnival Development Committee, which attempted to censor calypsonians's tongue-in-cheek attacks on an often tyrannical political process. Recent developments in Trinidad and Tobago confirm the suspicions of those who believe Carnival to be a tool used by the elite to keep the masses in shackles. In late August, the government imposed a state of emergency in connection with its constitutionally questionable anti-drug security campaign[19]. So far, the population has shown little interest in protesting to maintain its civil liberties. Will bottled-up grievances explode at the next carnival, or will they dissolve in commercialized fun?

Prior to independence, Trinidadians migrated en masse to the United States and the UK. In their adopted countries, they revived the resistant ethos of the Trinidad Carnival. In New York City, they organized Carnival in Harlem in the mid-1940s then in Brooklyn in the early 1960s. It has become the West Indian American Day Parade, better known as the Brooklyn Labor Day parade. These were

Build the Occupation, Occupy Halloween: The Language Experiment, New York, October 31, 2011. Photo: Becky Vicars. Courtesy of Peter Rostovsky.

fundamentally political gestures aimed at gaining recognition and staking claim to territory in a new homeland. In London, Marxist–feminist Claudia Jones organized the Notting Hill Carnival in 1959 in an effort to quell the wave of white-on-black racism that had culminated in race riots the previous year.

Carnivalesque Goals? Black Carnival, White Carnivalesque

But neither in New York nor in London have black carnivals (as carried out in Trinidad or Brooklyn) and white carnivalesque (as performed in global protest movements) formed a lasting radical alliance that could combat the economic exploitation suffered by working class communities of color and, increasingly, the white middle class. Perhaps OWS will be the opportunity for such an alliance. Meanwhile, this lack of solidarity (reflected by the lack of diversity in protest movements) was addressed by cultural theorist Greg Tate with some measure of controversy. In characteristically colorful language, Tate wrote a radical rant titled "Top 10 Reasons Why So Few Black Folk Appear Down to Occupy Wall Street," which was first circulated on Facebook and then published in the *Village Voice* on October 19. Many of Tate's reasons should be well taken, in particular: "Radical Love Theory," about how the absence of blacks at OWS has spared the movement more police harassment; "Late Pass Theory," about blacks' avoidance of unnecessary police scrutiny; and "The Prison Industrial Complex Crickets Theory," about the demographic castration of would-be black OWS-ers who are currently incarcerated.[20]

However, like some white commentators, Tate also takes a jab at the carnivalesque: "As we all know, real thugs don't do demos or entertain police assault for abstract carnivalesque goals." This leaves much to be desired in terms of what a greater understanding of the carnival tradition could bring to the movement. (Admittedly, Tate was probably not referring to Carnival at all, as is often the case when using the word "carnivalesque.") Ironically, Tate's writing style displays its own carnivalesque

Portrayal of Dr. Eric Williams at Carnival in Trinidad after the first PNM (People's National Movement) victory at the polls in 1956. Photo: Garnet Ifill. Garnet Ifill Photograph Collection. The Alma Jordan Library, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago.

sensibility. In a sort of *noir* grotesque realism, Tate resorts to a raced Rabelaisian semantic field through the use of reappropriated racial slurs like "Negroes," "Niggas," "Niggerization," and "Niggerdom." He also uses racy expressions such as "bootylicious," "muhfuhkuhs," "shit," "asswhuppings," "grownass," and "clusterfuck." These expressions are made up of words—booty, fuck, shit, ass—that exemplify what Bakhtin called the "material bodily lower stratum." But Tate can hardly be blamed for missing the carnival point even as he uses carnivalesque language, since in the US this language is more closely associated with America's own brand of racial carnivalesque, from minstrelsy to blaxpoitation and hip hop. (It is worth noting that American minstrelsy shaped an actual carnival in the early twentieth century, namely, the Cape Town Carnival in South Africa, which was formerly known as the Coon Carnival.)

Washington-born Tate would not have had the chance to see the Harlem Carnival, which was gone by the early 1960s. And its Brooklyn successor, much like its Notting Hill counterpart, is no longer at the forefront of radical strategies (anti-racist or otherwise) having been tamed by too much government planning and touristic development. More generally, the dismissal of "abstract carnivalesque goals" may evince the legacy of the rift that once separated Caribbean immigrants and African-Americans. During segregation, Caribbean immigrants, having been educated in the British public school system, were favored for the few jobs available to blacks. This divide-and-conquer strategy prevented unity within the US's African-descended population. One of the alleged

Cat in Bag Productions, Cobo Town, 2010. Courtesy of SeanDrakes.com

reasons why the Harlem Carnival lost its parade permit was because of a bottle-throwing incident between Caribbean and African-American participants.[21]

Around the time Tate's statement was published, Occupy the Hood and Occupy Harlem emerged, urging people of color to participate in the movement. In Manhattan, Occupy offshoots advanced their own agendas through direct action in Downtown/Uptown alliances. And at least two interventions have used modes of public address associated with both the civil rights movement—to which both African-Americans and West Indians contributed—and Carnival—an historically Caribbean mode of rebellion.

On November 18, artist Laura Anderson Barbata led the Brooklyn Jumbies in a performance of *Intervention: Wall Street* in Manhattan's Financial District.[22] As their name suggests, the Jumbies come from Brooklyn, where most Caribbean New Yorkers live. According to a press release posted on Facebook, the goal of the event was to "ward off evil and change the mindset of those causing misfortune."[23] In the tradition of West African Moko Jumbie, stilt-walkers embodying spirits were called upon for spiritual cleansing. Moko Jumbies have roots in the Black Atlantic world, from Trinidad and Tobago to Brooklyn, where they incorporate carnival celebrations while retaining distinct spiritual rituals. Barbata, who is from Mexico and divides her time between Manhattan and Mexico City, designed business suits ("reminiscent of David Byrne's *Stop Making Sense* big suit") for the 12-foot-tall jumbies, whose towering height was both suggestive of the Financial District's skyscrapers and symbolic of Wall Street's monumental rule over the country.[24] Barbata started work on this largely self-funded project in 2008 but was finally spurred to carry out the intervention by the auspicious emergence of OWS. She said that the intervention and her work overall are more about "outreach" and "building cross-cultural bridges" than they are about "spectacle."[25]

Will the precedent set by this carnivalesque détournement encourage more Caribbean-Americans to participate in the movement? This is by no means to imply an essentialist view of Caribbean people, according to which Carnival is their sole or even main mode of protest. It is, however, to recognize that much like freedom songs rooted the civil rights movement, so does Carnival root the Caribbean protest tradition.[26] One Brooklynite of Caribbean descent, City Councilmember Jumaane D. Williams, has been an outspoken supporter of OWS. He

Peter Minshall, Rat Race, Port of Spain, Trinidad Carnival, February 11, 1986. Photo: Noel Norton. Courtesy the Callaloo Company, Chaguaramas, Trinidad.

has been arrested at least twice, most recently during the November 17 sit-in at the entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge (fellow councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez was also arrested that day). Prior to OWS, Williams's last high-profile encounter with police came on September 5, when he was handcuffed and briefly detained … at the West Indian-American Parade.[27]

Two days after the intervention by the Brooklyn Jumbies, the newly formed Council of Elders, an "independent group of leaders from many of the defining American social justice movements of the twentieth century," announced an alliance of "basic solidarity" with OWS.[28] Time will tell if this gesture of inter-generational and cross-racial unity will spur more civil rights leaders of color into action, and if the movement's non-violent modus operandi will prevail over police provocation. For the time being, the example set by the Council of Elders seems to have sparked the imagination of mainly white activists, as writer and cultural historian Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts remarked—with the remark not meant to indict said activists as much as to exhort those missing in action.[29] Following the passing of "the torch of hope and social justice" from the Elders to OWS during an interfaith service at Liberty Plaza and a public discussion about "space, liberation, and race" at Judson Memorial Church, organizers and participants set out on a candlelight vigil march from Washington Square Park to Duarte Park.

The march was organized by the interfaith clergy group Occupy Faith NYC, the Council of Elders, and various OWS-affiliated arts and culture groups such as Not an Alternative.[30] In addition to candles, marchers carried so-called mili-tents to symbolize occupation, and their destination prefigured a possible future occupation. Despite the military language of deployment and invasion the artists-activists used when discussing the dissemination of the mili-tents, these and other artistic interventions that surfaced on N17—such as the black-and-yellow banners and placards (the latter doubling up as shields)—were not meant to encourage confrontation with the police. On the contrary, their purpose was to divert attention away from the overwhelming media focus on clashes between occupiers and the NYPD. These interventions, more recently carried out with tape, sought to dislocate the power of authority

West Indian Day Parade, Harlem, September 6, 1948. Photo: W. Smith. Photographic print. Courtesy Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

over space by appropriating and subverting the colors of official spatial signage. The mili-tents, which were held up with sticks, also recalled the umbrellas of New Orleans second-liners, that other protest-prone carnival-inflected American tradition.

Social Aid and Pleasure: Second Liners and Mardi Gras Indians, Geopsychics and Surregionalists

Perhaps nobody can say whether more blacks and other minorities will rally to the movement in significant numbers. Besides, as *Colorlines* editor Rinku Sen put it, "the question is not if you can bring people of color to the party but if they can change the music."[31] But given OWS's underlying anarchist ideology, might not the question as to "why so few black folks appear down at OWS" be more productively phrased as, "where are the black anarchists?" In New Orleans in the late 1970s, Eric Bookhardt and John Clark, two former Louisiana activists from the Vietnam War–era counterculture, came close to circumventing the vexing disappearance of that rare species, the black anarchist: they invented one.

Earlier in the decade, Bookhardt (now an art critic and practicing Buddhist) and Clark (a philosophy professor and self-identified anarchist) were colleagues at the University of New Orleans, where they combined situationist-inflected anarchism with New Orleans's own homegrown brand of anarchism: Carnival, or as it's known in the local language, Mardi Gras. In an email to this author, Bookhardt wrote: "Carnival almost always is an innately anarchic and psychodramatic event ... that enables everyone to visualize how things can be different and make them different, at least for a day, and that in itself is an inherently valuable, liberating, and potentially revolutionary practice." He continued: "Carnival was the earliest TAZ prototype because the 'king' was always a parody and people's roles within society were always autonomously self-defined, at least for that day."[32]

In 1979, Bookhardt published the first edition of *Geopsychic Wonders*, an illustrated book celebrating the Crescent City's idiosyncratic urban landscape. The book sparked a cult following among generations of New Orleans artists. Sharing startling similarities with the situationists' psychogeography, whose key words it inverts, geopsychics is a tribute to New Orleans's fertile anarcho-situationist soil.

Some artists who practice geopsychics, like the painter Myrtle Van Damitz III, have been involved in both Mardi Gras krewes and local Occupy events. In her work, Van Damitz III renders in oneiric hues the kind of transmogrified creatures seen in the waking dream that is Mardi Gras. An occasional member of Krewe of Eris, "technically the Goddess of Discord parade," and Krewe of Poux ("lice" in French), Van Damitz III took part in Occupy Frankie and Johnnie's on October 21. This was the occupation of a local furniture store threatened with corporate takeover by CVS. The store is located in the St. Claude corridor, the site of New Orleans's latest artist colony and a neighborhood increasingly subject to gentrification.[33] But as Van Damitz III clarified, Occupy Frankie and Johnnie's "was more a farce of Occupy, and a statement about the continuity of free expression and humor in New Orleans to make a statement and effect change."[34] Precisely to the point!

The decadent disguises of Krewe of Eris make Occupy Halloween's cardboard costumes look rudimentary, while Occupy Frankie and Johnnie's so-called costumed malcontents—including artist Skylar Fein running around in a fake CVS lab coat while carrying a syringe and a wad of money—are seen as an advantage that Occupy New Orleans has over other Occupy movements. Whether or not this is true, the Mardi Gras tradition has galvanized New Orleans radicals around issues like gentrification and corporatization, which are harshly criticized on such local blogs as *Nola Anarcha*.[35]

Under the pseudonym Max Cafard ("cockroach" in French), Clark wrote the *Surre(gion)alist Manifesto*, which cast into words Louisiana's Creole anarchism.[36] Bookhardt created the founding figure of surre(gion)alism, Lafcadio Bocage (an Afro-Creole), whom he describes as such: "He was also a poet as well as a philosopher, and his anarchism had its roots in his observations of nature and in his contacts with indigenous Louisiana Indians who, in good years, excelled at a lifestyle of purposeful leisure." Knowing the life and legacy of New Orleans's free people of color, one can easily imagine Lafcadio Bocage as a forbearer of the Mardi Gras Indian tradition.

Laura Anderson Barbata in collaboration with the Brooklyn Jumbies, Intervention: Wall Street, New York (Broadway and Bowling Green), November 18, 2011. Photo: Frank Veronsky. Courtesy Laura Anderson Barbata. See →.

Mili-tents, New York (Washington Square Park to Duarte Park march), November 20, 2011. Photo: Luther Blissett. See→.

According to Van Damitz III, participants in Occupy New Orleans and Occupy Frankie and Johnnie's are mostly white, as are the Eris and Poux krewes.[37] The Mardi Gras Indians and the related Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs are mostly black. These latter groups first emerged in the early nineteenth century among New Orleans's slaves and free people of color, as well as among the city's mixed native Indian communities, to which the Mardi Gras Indians trace their roots. On rare occasions, white and black carnival traditions converge, as was the case on October 22 when 6t'9, a white Social Aid and Pleasure Club, invited Mardi Gras Indian Big Chief Fi-Yi-Yi and his gang to participate in their Halloween parade. But for the most part, these traditions remain separate. (One major exception is the carefully choreographed dance of Rex, an old-line [white] krewe, and Zulu, the first black krewe allowed on the official Mardi Gras parade route.) In fact, as musician and historian Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes puts it, the Mardi Gras Indian tradition "built off of a history of resistance to old laws that prevented blacks from masking during Carnival."

In New Orleans, Mardi Gras remains an exercise in subtle segregation. The fact that there are not floats to give Occupy New Orleans any traction might confirm, as in Trinidad, the safety valve theory of Carnival. Occupy New Orleans officially started on October 6 and has drawn relatively few participants thus far, although Brendan McCarthy of *The Times-Picayunes* wrote that one of their demonstrations "had a second-line feel to it."[38] But then, just like West Indians played an important part in civil rights movements—most famously, Trinidad-born Black Panther Stokely Carmichael, aka Kwame Ture—so did Louisianans, including Black Panther co-founder Huey P. Newton, leader Geronimo Ji-Jaga, and Justice Minister Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin.[39] Though there was hardly anything in the tactics of the Black Panthers recalling a New Orleans culture of celebration, the connection between black carnival organizations and black political activism is well established. According to New Orleans historian Ned Sublette, second lines "are in effect a civil rights demonstration … demonstrating the civil right of the community to assemble in the street for peaceful purposes. Or, more simply, demonstrating the civil right of the community to exist."[40] Indeed, in the afternoon of Saturday, October 29, veteran activist Jerome Smith was not demonstrating with Occupy New Orleans. Instead, he was in the annual second line parade of the Black Men of Labor Social Aid and Pleasure Club, along with Mardi Gras

Dragon Float in the Mistick Krewe of Comus parade on Mardi Gras evening, New Orleans, circa 1970s from the book Geopsychic Wonders of New Orleans. Photo: D. Eric Bookhardt.

Indian Big Chief Fi-Yi-Yi. In speeches prior to the parade, the Black Men of Labor paid homage to Freedom Riders and members of New Orleans' Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) chapter. Says Bookhardt,

> Mardi Gras Indians are, to my mind, anarchist analogs in the sense that they are self-organizing and non-programmatic expressions of an intuitive ethno-flâneur sensibility. The route is a dérive and they are expressions of geopsychics and psychogeography, and as such they are intuitive native situationists. Anarchists without portfolio. A perfect expression of Nola's innately anarchistic culture of celebration.

Can the black anarchists be found in New Orleans? If a black radical is a jailed radical at best and a dead radical at worst (there are still several Black Panthers in decade-long solitary confinement at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana), non-confrontational carnival tactics might offer a necessary outlet for otherwise radical practices. More fundamentally, the mutual aid systems under which such practices thrive have been honed for centuries in New Orleans, ensuring the city's survival. Basic survival is a radical proposition in the face of post-Katrina disaster capitalism (see Naomi Klein) and gentrification-fueled ethnic cleansing (Flaherty), which force blacks out of the city. As Van Damitz III summarizes, "There's a lot more self-determination and group harmony in a carnival society."

As the white middle-class is driven out of their homes, campuses, and banks, they are realizing that the social contract no longer works for them, something blacks have felt for a long time. At this juncture, it might be critical that

Myrtle Van Damitz III, Night Walk, 2011. Inks and acrylic on paper. Courtesy of the artist.

black carnival and white carnivalesque join forces against capital.[41]

Carnivalesque Protest Sensibility

Scholars Peter Stallybrass and Allon White argue that "it actually makes little sense to fight out the issue of whether or not carnivals are *intrinsically* radical or conservative."[42] They assert that "there is no a priori revolutionary vector to carnival." However, at the beginning of OWS, both skeptical journalists and committed protesters made direct references to the mother of revolutions, the French Revolution. The former mocked the protesters' disappointment that "the Bastille hadn't been stormed" (only to later ponder, "Carnival or Revolution?").[43] The latter warned in a "memo to the 1%": "The 99% are waking up. Be nervous. Be Very Nervous. Marie-Antoinette wasn't." This followed Roseanne Barr's call for the return of the guillotine in a speech at Liberty Plaza. This revolutionary chorus, was met with an anthropophagic crowd menacing that "One day, the Poor Will Have Nothing Left to Eat but the Rich" (or the short version: "Hungry? Eat a Banker.")

What is at stake here is not so much whether the carnivalesque is turning OWS into a revolutionary movement. Rather, what matters is the bringing to light, through carnivalesque ritual strategy and hierarchy inversion, of the expanse (and expense) of the gap between the 1% and the 99%, and the diversity and disparity within the 99%. As much a site of resistance as a relational mode, the carnivalesque occupation of Wall Street is a symbolic struggle to break the high-low binarism that has besieged contemporary American society, whether in class or race.

Beyond symbolism, what is the likely agency and outcome

Black Men of Labor Social Aid & Pleasure Club Second Line, New Orleans, October 29, 2011. Photo: Lewis Watts.

of this proto-carnivalesque protest? London's decade-old Carnival Against Capitalism provides some indication. It set the stage for The Battle of Seattle, the World Social Forum, and other counter-summits. It also enabled the tactical media technology behind Indymedia and prefigured the current globalization of grass-roots anti-capitalist movements.[44]

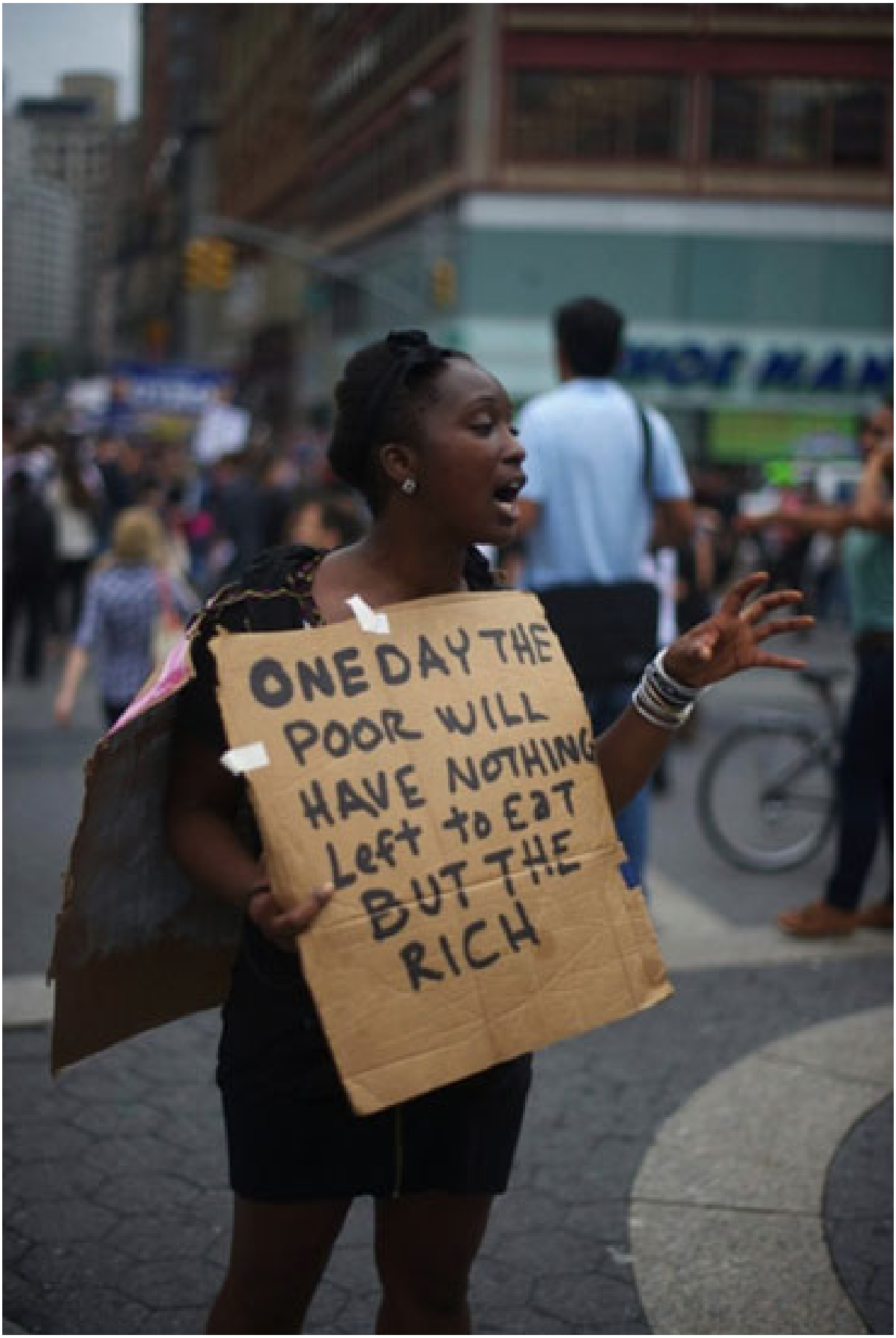
One cannot help but hope that in New York and the other cities where the movement has taken hold, the carnival cosmology will supplant the exchange economy, as it has in Mardi Gras, allowing for a renewal of the senses atrophied by dematerialized financial transactions. But the real reversal of this carnival might well lie elsewhere, outside the United States. The Arab World is the movement's proclaimed source of inspiration, having set the tone for this century's worldwide wave of societal change. From this perspective, American citizens might be looking a lot more like 99% of the rest of the world population, no longer in the privileged top 1%.

This inversion of the world order would also help break that other binary, the one between Western and Arab worlds. It may also resist related reciprocal terrorism in which the body, as in Carnival, is the weapon. In response to Rahul Rao's question about what "protest sensibility" might befit a world in which there is not one single locus of threat, these protests show that it might well be in the all-encompassing and chaotic carnivalesque. Rao posed this question in the introduction to his book *Third World Protest: Between Home and the World* (2010). He was responding to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's assertion in *Empire* (2000) that "the first question of political philosophy today is not if or even why there will be resistance and rebellion but rather how to determine the enemy against which to rebel."[45] In their follow-up volume, *Multitude*, Hardt and Negri included a section titled "Carnival and Movement," which was devoted to "protests that are carnevalesque, however, not only in their atmosphere [but] also in their organization." They credited Bakhtin for "help[ing] us understand … the logic of the multitude, a theory of organization based on the freedom of singularities that converge in the production of the common."[46]

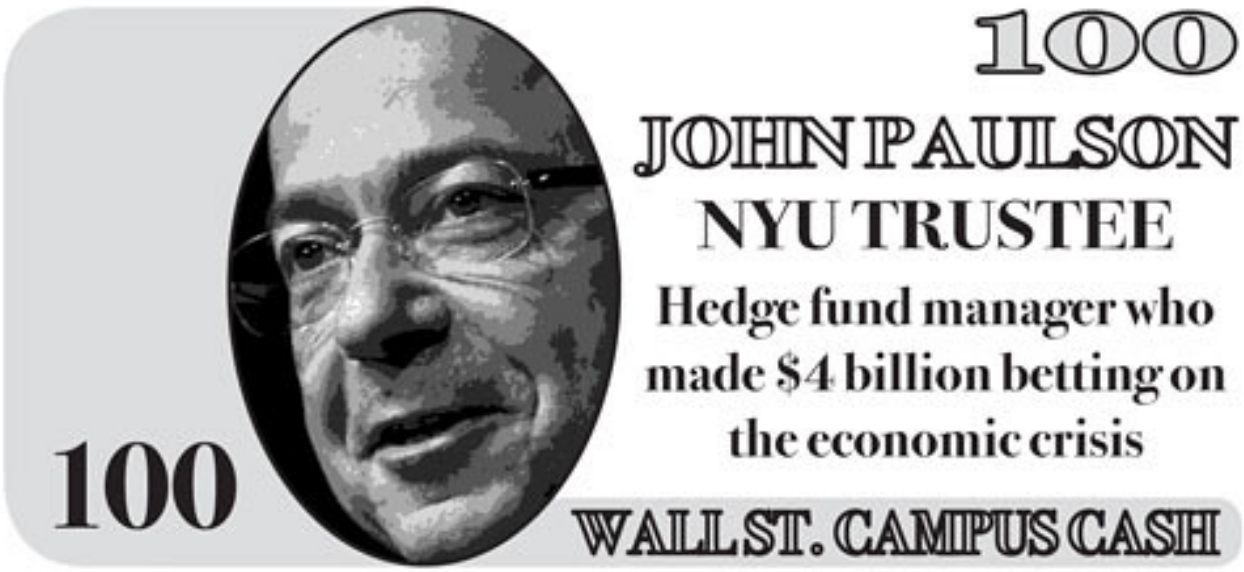
NYU4OWS, Wally, November 17, 2011. "The Spirit of Occupy Wall Street at NYU" bull piñata performance, New York (Stern School of Business, New York University). Courtesy Daniel Aldana Cohen. See→.

Staging their carnival in the middle of a severe economic downturn—the twenty-first century form of Lent—the Wall Street occupiers might seem to want to have their cake and eat it too. For Bakhtin following Rabelais, the essence of carnivalesque celebration was "a feast for the whole world" in which oxen were slaughtered and shared among the citizenry, a form of wealth redistribution.[47] So beware: the Wall Street bull may end up like the fattened ox of Mardi Gras, sacrificed this coming Fat Tuesday, or the next Black Wednesday.

Postscript: I originally wrote this closing metaphor on October 12. Only a month later, it came to life. On N17, a purple-and-golden bull-shaped piñata named Wally, "the spirit of Wall Street at NYU," was castrated in front of New York University's Stern School of Business. Wally was created by NYU4OWS, a group of artists and NYU students led by Daniel Aldana Cohen, a PhD student in sociology, with funds from the New York General Assembly's Arts and Culture Committee. After being castrated, Wally was bashed open by the student body, aka the 99%. From its bulging belly fell "Wall Street Campus Cash," fake banknotes featuring pictures and financial data about NYU President John Sexton ("Earns $1.6 million a year"), NYU Trustee John Paulson ("Hedge fund manager who made $4 billion betting on the economic crisis"), and others. The bullfight fulfilled the protester's desire to "destroy the symbols of [the 1%'s] power with a smile."[48] Let's hope that more such



"One Day the Poor Will Have Nothing Left to Eat But the Rich", Occupy Wall Street, New York, October 2011.



NYU4OWS, Wall Street Campus Cash, Courtesy Daniel Aldana Cohen.

prophecies will soon be realized, more ancient rituals reenacted, and new rituals invented as part of what Jack Santino, in reference to the carnivalesque, termed "the ritualesque." Traditionally associated with Mexico, the piñata is commonly known to have come from Spain and become part of Lenten celebrations. It is also said to have had Chinese origins, where it was part of New Year festivities and represented … a cow or an ox.

X

Claire welcomes your comments on this essay at carnivalagainstcapital@gmail.com as she develops it into a book.

Claire Tancons (1977, Guadeloupe, French West Indies) is a curator, writer and researcher whose work focuses on carnival, public ceremonial culture and protest movements. She was the associate curator for Prospect.1 and Contemporary Arts Center, both in New Orleans (2007-9), a curator for the 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008), a guest curator for CAPE09 (2009) and is the currently the curatorial director for Harlem Biennale. In 2012-13, she will guest curate a project at Göteborgs Konsthall, Sweden. She lives between the United States and the Caribbean.

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Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* , trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), 223.

48
For a YouTube video of the event, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJwdC0XWveY . For a written account of the event see http://web.archive.org/web/20111123074328/https://eastvillage.thelocal.nytimes.com/2011/11/17/video-thousands-of-students-and-anne-hathaway-protest-in-union-square/ .

Grant Kester

The Sound of Breaking Glass, Part I: Spontaneity and Consciousness in Revolutionary Theory

Discipline and Punish

> I paint this way because I can't join the shooting in Santo Domingo.
>
> —Ricardo Carreira (1965)[1]

In 1968 the Argentine artist Graciela Carnevale presented a new work entitled *Acción del Encierro* (Confinement Action) as part of the Ciclo de Arte Experimental exhibition in Rosario, organized by the Grupo de Arte de Vanguardia de Rosario.[2] The work was participatory, drawing on the then-emerging genres of performance art, installation, and happenings. Once the audience members had assembled in the gallery space the artist departed, locking the door behind her. In preparing the space beforehand Carnevale had covered the glass wall at the front of the gallery with posters, further isolating and confining the visitors. In a recent interview with historian and critic Fabian Cerejido, Carnevale explained that she had hoped to incite a form of "exemplary violence" among the participants, who would be forced to take action once they realized their plight, by breaking through the gallery's glass front door. This action would effectively empower the audience members, moving them from a state of passive acquiescence to conscious agency. The act of breaking the glass, and the self-liberation of the audience, had particular significance in Argentina at the time of Carnevale's work. Less than two years earlier, General Juan Carlos Onganía had taken power in a coup d'etat, overthrowing elected president Arturo Illia. Within a matter of weeks Onganía's Federal Police had ruthlessly suppressed protests at the University of Buenos Aires, beating and jailing professors and students in the notorious *La Noche de los Bastones Largos* (Night of the Long Batons).[3] Shortly after the *Encierro* action, Carnevale herself participated in the famous *Tucuman Arde* project in Rosario, which was closed down by the police.

During periods of political repression the relationship between aesthetics and politics, and between private and public expression, undergoes both erosion and reconsolidation. In the case of Carnevale's *Acción del Encierro*, the struggle to break free of physical confinement was presumed to exist in a corollary relationship with the struggle against political repression. In the event, none of the participants was willing or able to break the glass from inside the locked gallery. Instead, they required the assistance of a sympathetic passerby who, upon seeing the distressed faces of the participants, managed to break through the glass to free them. At this point, as Cerejido discovered in his interview with Carnevale, one of the artist's friends, who had remained inside with the crowd to monitor their reactions, assaulted

Inside view of Graciela Carnevale's 1968 action Acción del Encierro from the Cycle of Experimental Art. Rosario, Argentina.

the well-meaning passerby with an umbrella. Apparently, he was angry that the good Samaritan had interrupted the performance before the audience members reached the state of desperation necessary to force them into action.[4] As a result of the ensuing tumult, the police soon arrived and closed the gallery.

From the Vendôme Column to the Futurist Manifesto, and from Gustav Metzger to Survival Research Laboratories, creative destruction has a well-established place in the history of modernism. This gesture is typically performed by the artist for the benefit of a viewer, who might be inspired to emulate or reproduce it at some future point. In Carnevale's case, she withdrew from the creative scene in the hope that the audience itself would take action and destroy the plate glass window of the gallery. What was the significance of this gesture, in that place and at that time? And what sort of risk did it entail to encourage Argentines to "break free" from their confinement at a historical moment when even the most nominal expression of public dissent could be met with arrest, imprisonment, and even disappearance? The decisive gesture in Carnevale's work wasn't the unfulfilled promise of autonomous collective action, but rather the withdrawal of the artist from a scene of transgression that she hoped to precipitate but not share. Instead of the artist acting as a surrogate for the viewer, by engaging in various acts of symbolic destruction, the viewer was to act as a surrogate for the artist's own vision of resistance.

How do we understand the underlying choreography of this project, the mise-en-scène of creative action? First, we have the artist, who fabricates an apparatus to be inhabited by the viewer—in this case premised on a model of human psychology in which pressurized confinement is understood to produce a corresponding response (the viewer coming to consciousness of his or her capacity for liberatory action). Then we have the site of the exhibition itself, prepared by the artist beforehand. And finally we have the viewer, who is delivered over to the apparatus of the piece. They arrive only in order to be worked upon by the triggers and mechanisms of the space (the blocked-out windows, the locked door, the disturbed crowding of known and unknown bodies, the confusion and frustration of confinement). Notwithstanding Carnevale's commitment to "exemplary violence," the meaning of this work cannot be reduced to a simple exercise in operant conditioning. Did audiences in Buenos Aires at this time, in the early days of the Onganía regime, need the experience of Carnevale's confinement piece in order to fully grasp the nature of their oppression at the hands of the Federal Police? Or was their failure to immediately break out on their own an illustration of the hopelessness of their broader political situation? And how do we interpret the response of the passerby who "rescued" the trapped gallery-goers, and whose action was motivated not by an experience of therapeutic suffering, but by empathetic identification?

Carnevale's work demonstrates some of the central themes of post-war avant-garde art practice. Certainly it expresses the movement toward action, performance, and event that was a key component of the period, as well as the belief that insight emerges from a singular moment of crisis. At the same time, *Encierro* retains a behavioralist attitude toward the viewer, who enters the gallery as a passive accomplice to power, only to be provoked into a cathartic recognition of her capacity for resistance and independent action. The gallery space—the very separation between art and the world beyond—becomes a disabling constraint. It is necessary to literally shatter this division, in order to activate the viewer. In Carnevale's work the viewer will come to feel, viscerally, the repression and containment of an authoritarian regime.[5] In this, her work has much in common with revolutionary political discourse, in which a vanguard party seeks to exaggerate and increase social inequity, and solicit state repression, in order to awaken a previously quiescent working class and precipitate an insurrection that would otherwise be deferred. The model of consciousness in each case is similar, suggesting a deeper continuity between avant-garde art and revolutionary politics during the modern period.

Outside view of Graciela Carnevale's 1968 action Acción del Encierro from the Cycle of Experimental Art. Rosario, Argentina.

Bourgeois Science

> We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness ... The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals.

—Vladimir Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?* (1902)[6]

> It is frequently contended that the laboring masses are incapable of achieving a revolution for themselves, freely. This thesis is particularly dear to the "Communists," for it permits them to invoke an "objective" situation necessarily leading to repression of the "wicked Utopian Anarchists" ... But this thesis is absolutely gratuitous. Let them furnish proof of such alleged incapacity of the masses. One can search history without finding a single example where the masses were really left to act freely ...

—Voline, *The Unknown Revolution, 1917–1921* (1947)[7]

In *The Unknown Revolution*, the Russian anarchist Voline presents a compelling critique of the Leninist tradition of a vanguard party. For Lenin, meaningful revolution will occur only when the impulsive energies of the proletariat are harnessed and directed by the strategic intelligence of a vanguard party led by professional revolutionaries. As he writes in *What Is to Be Done?*, "the spontaneous struggle of the proletariat will not become its genuine 'class struggle' until this struggle is led by a strong organization of revolutionaries." Here, the masses are an active bodily principle, a kind of pure agency grounded in the material immediacy of labor but incapable of abstraction or long-term planning. The professional revolutionary, on the other hand, lacks the collective physical potentia of the masses, but possesses instead a capacity for strategic thinking without which the masses would blunder about blindly, like a body without a head. Within this division of labor, the task of the revolutionary is to "expose" the masses to the truth of their oppression in order to move them from a spontaneous and local consciousness (in which they are concerned only with their immediate circumstances and with forms of resistance intended to achieve short-term goals) to a methodical and global vision of revolution capable of destroying the apparatus of the capitalist system in its entirety.[8] "It is not enough to explain to the workers that they are politically oppressed," Lenin writes. "Agitation must be conducted with regard to every concrete example of this oppression." The workers must be made conscious of the interconnections between their individual experience and a national, and international, mosaic of oppressive practices and constituencies.

While the professional revolutionary must learn from the struggles of the proletariat, the underlying logic of the vanguard party remains that of an advanced consciousness, revealing to the disenfranchised the nature of their own exploitation and guiding their actions. As Lenin notes,

> we must make it our concern to *direct* the thoughts of those who are dissatisfied only with conditions at the university, or in the Zemstvo [a form of local self-government initiated by Tsar Alexander II] to the idea that the entire political system is worthless. *We* must take upon ourselves the task of

El Lissitsky, Lenin Tribune, 1920.

> organizing an all-round political struggle under the leadership of our Party in such a manner as to make it possible for all oppositional strata to render their fullest support to the struggle and to our Party.[9]

Notwithstanding a series of revolutionary uprisings in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, many elements within the working class displayed a frustrating indifference to their historical mission. It was this failure, this indifference, that necessitated the intervention of a force "brought to them from without": the viral discourse of socialism created by an alienated faction of bourgeois intellectuals.

The political activist is charged with awakening the working class, multitude, or precariat to its revolutionary mission either by revealing the hidden contradictions of capitalist power and the systemic roots of what are otherwise perceived as merely individual or epiphenomenal forms of injustice, or by working to exaggerate suffering or conflict or provoke the authorities into a violent response that will further radicalize those members of the working class who become its target. This suggests a key distinction within revolutionary theory. It isn't simply that the members of the working class are unaware of their own suffering (or that they don't fully understand its significance), but that their suffering, in its current form, is not yet sufficient to force them to act in a properly revolutionary manner. We might say, as Lenin does, that they don't yet know what to do with that awareness, what lessons to draw from it (for Lenin, that is the task of the vanguard leader). As a result, the vanguard leader must actually increase or exacerbate their suffering by provoking the ruling class, setting up an escalating cycle of assault and violent counter-response which will transform working class consciousness (binding them together by creating a characteristic and differentiated class enemy). While these actions and provocations may well increase the suffering of the working class here and now, this suffering is justified because it will ultimately lead to their total emancipation. The retribution of the state becomes the crucible in which their new consciousness will be forged.

Questions of agency and autonomy are central to the concept of the vanguard party (and suggest a broader set of tensions within modernity that link the aesthetic and the political). On one side stands the proletariat, a discrete and relatively homogeneous entity with identifiable boundaries, which can be mobilized, educated, and brought to consciousness. On the other side stands the professional revolutionary, a kind of cognitive entrepreneur who comes from the oppressor class but whose capacity for independent thought regarding the conditions of that oppression has led to the creation of a motivational heuristic system (Marxism) that "opens up for him the widest perspectives, and … places at his disposal the mighty force of many millions of workers 'spontaneously' rising for the struggle."[10] The key difference between the (collective) proletariat and the (individual) revolutionary is the capacity for "consciousness," which Lenin identifies with a global and strategic understanding of the totality of the capitalist system. This insight can only be achieved through sustained intellectual and theoretical engagement, leading to a "scientific" grasp of political economy. While certain advanced elements within the proletariat might be drafted up into the ranks of the professional revolutionary, by virtue of their exemplary initiative and intelligence, the "science" of socialism remains a uniquely bourgeois innovation. Lenin approvingly cites Karl Kautsky's formulation here:

> Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the bourgeois intelligentsia: it was in the minds of individual members of this stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without and not something that arose within it spontaneously.[11]

This scientific knowledge is necessary, according to Kautsky, in order to "imbue the proletariat with the consciousness of its position and the consciousness of its task. There would be no need for this if consciousness arose of itself from the class struggle." The vanguard party, Kautsky continues, is a "spirit that not only hovers over the spontaneous movement, but also raises this movement to the level of its program." Here again we encounter the formulation of the proletariat as an independent organism, incapable of self-improvement and dependent on an external influence for growth or liberation.

What Is to Be Done? constitutes an extended polemic against the principle of "free criticism" being advocated at the time by the Rabocheye Dyelo ("Workers' Cause") faction, which sought to preserve space for a plurality of tactics within the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party.[12] The key terms in this debate were *spontaneity* and *consciousness*. Spontaneity, which Lenin associates with both the anarchist and reformist strands of the Russian left, suggests that revolutionary leaders should allow their strategic planning to be guided by the shifting tactical actions of the proletariat in its unfolding struggle against

the Russian state.[13] This is the "organization-as-process" error that Lenin will later deplore in the Mensheviks.[14] It implies that meaningful insight is produced through the experience of political resistance itself, rather than introduced from "without."

Kronstadt Rebellion, 1921.

This belief was anathema to Lenin, for whom the correct political path—and true "consciousness"—had to be established a priori, through "scientific" principles that would then guide the actions of the proletariat. It also implies, for Lenin, a willingness to develop tactical alliances with reformist institutions, and therefore a timid backing away from the militancy, discipline, and resolve required for authentic revolution. In *What Is to Be Done?*, Lenin repeatedly warns of the danger posed by this "new trend" in Russian Social Democracy, and chastises activists for variously "bowing to," "slavishly cringing before," and "worshipping" spontaneity.[15] While spontaneity might, with proper cultivation, eventually evolve into "consciousness," ("the 'spontaneous element,' in essence, represents nothing more nor less than consciousness in an embryonic form"), on its own it can only produce "outbursts of desperation" lacking in theoretical rigor. It is therefore essential to maintain a strict hierarchical separation between the two, to prevent spontaneity, in all its physical immediacy, from "overwhelming consciousness."[16] In this there can be no compromise and no negotiation. The true revolutionary must "combat spontaneity," and the movement as a whole "must become imbued with intolerance against those who retard its growth by their subservience to spontaneity."[17]

For the Russian anarchist Voline, on the other hand, spontaneity implies a freedom from coercion that is essential to political liberation. In *The Unknown Revolution* he argues that the proletariat, if allowed to develop by means of its own "natural and free activity," possessed the wisdom necessary to create a new political system that would transcend the limitations of the authoritarian state. He cites emblematic moments of spontaneous self-organization (the formation of the Saint Petersburg Soviet in 1905, uprisings in Petrograd, Kaluga, and Kazan in 1917, and the Kronstadt Rebellion in 1921) as evidence of an innate, libertarian tendency among the working class. But while the masses may possess a natural predisposition toward democratic forms of social organization, this capacity has never been allowed to flourish. "One can search history," Voline writes, "without finding a single example *where the masses were really left to act freely*." Even the Bolsheviks, who claimed to be fighting on behalf of the working class, immediately sought to consolidate their new-won power in centralized forms of state control. Moreover, they ruthlessly suppressed any efforts to develop non-hierarchical, democratic alternatives within the Russian left.[18]] is to transform the economic and social bases of society *without having recourse to a political state*, to a government, or to a dictatorship of any sort. That is, to achieve the Revolution and resolve its problems not by political or statist means, but by means of natural and free activity, *economic and social, of the associations of the workers themselves*, after having overthrown the last capitalist government." Voline, *The Unknown Revolution*, 175.]

> Instead of simply helping the workers to achieve the Revolution and emancipate themselves, instead of aiding them in their struggle, the role to which the workers assigned it in their thoughts, the role which, normally, would be that of all revolutionary ideologists, and which never [properly] includes taking and exercising "political power"—instead of performing this role, the Bolshevik party, once in control, installed itself as absolute master.[19]

Despite their differences, both Lenin and Voline underestimate the reciprocal relationship or attunement that is possible between thought and action, strategy and resistance, and theory and practice. For Lenin, the masses constitute an unconscious conative power, waiting to be mobilized into conscious, strategically coordinated action by the leaders of the vanguard party. In his rejection of "spontaneity," Lenin overlooks the possibility that consciousness or insight can be produced through the act of political resistance itself, rather than prescribed from above by an a priori strategy. Here thought is creative and generative while action is merely iterative, marking the application of ideas already perfected in the consciousness of the intellectual or the professional revolutionary.

For Voline, the instinctual democratic sensibility of the working class can only come to fruition in a moment of autonomous political expression, uncontaminated by the actions of organized parties, governments, or leaders. If

only the masses "were really left to act freely" (i.e., without the interference of the Bolsheviks), this natural inclination would necessarily assert itself in the formation of a just and equitable social order. But it is precisely in organizing to resist the external force of class oppression, as well as to resolve their own internal contradictions, that the masses come to have an identity and a political orientation capable of coherent expression in the first place. Working class "consciousness" is not a fixed or pre-existing entity, the relative purity of which can be either preserved or contaminated. Rather, it comes into being through a set of social relationships in which "external" and "internal" determinants, antagonism and solidarity, are complexly related. In the act of resistance, the proletariat generates new insights regarding political forms, relationships among and between conflicting class interests, and definitions of justice and freedom. Thus, while Voline wishes to challenge the "alleged incapacity of the masses," he has some difficulty explaining how a revolution involving millions of Russian peasants and workers, rather than a single local Soviet, would proceed without eventually requiring the emergence of (implicitly compromised) forms of political representation, leadership, and hierarchy.

The Descent to the City

> If the peasants are skeptical, their confidence in themselves must be restored by imbuing them with revolutionary faith, faith in the revolutionaries that are speaking to them.
>
> —Régis Debray, Revolution in the Revolution (1967)[20]

For Lenin, action in the world must be preceded by, and subordinate to, a coherent revolutionary vision and a hard-nosed assessment of those measures necessary to seize state power. For Voline, on the other hand, action or practice is reduced to the simple liberation of a pre-existing moral or political capacity (the redemptive working class, finally freed from bureaucratic oversight and manipulation). In their own way, each posits action as the unfolding of a generative, a priori plan or orientation to the world. Lenin's fear of an improvisational spontaneity that threatens to "overwhelm consciousness" is reiterated over half a century later in the context of revolutionary theory in Latin America. In his pivotal study *Revolution in the Revolution*, Régis Debray draws on his experiences with Che Guevara in the Cuban Revolution and in Bolivia, where he was imprisoned for three years (and where he wrote the book).[21] Debray's book presents many of the key tenets of Guevarism and Latin American revolutionary theory, and it served as a bible of sorts for revolutionary movements during the late 1960s and early 70s.

Debray contends that the Cuban Revolution introduced an entirely new "problematic" into revolutionary theory. Instead of military action being guided by the political leadership of a vanguard party (as with the Bolsheviks, Maoists, and Viet Cong), in Latin America the guerrilla army itself became the locus of a revolutionary consciousness in which the political and the military were conjoined.[22] This consciousness was incubated in a new organizational form: the foco ("focus," "center," or "core"). The foco was a small guerrilla cell that operated independently. Rather than trying to defend a fixed territory it was mobile and autonomous, freed from any obligation to protect, or even consult with, the peasants and workers on whose behalf it waged "total class war." ("In the initial stage the base of support is in the guerrilla fighter's knapsack," as Debray writes.[23]) The foco would gather the inchoate energies of the peasants and urban working class into a disciplined and coherent force for change, both an embodiment of, and example to, the incipient Latin American proletariat.

Debray develops his analysis through a contrast between *foquismo* and the discredited strategy of "armed self defense," in which worker cadres defend a specific site (for example, a striking mine or factory or an embattled *barrio*). Armed self-defense is heroic but futile, according to Debray. Only the small, autonomous foco has the tactical freedom necessary to engage the forces of class domination in a manner that can lead to the absolute overthrow of the capitalist state. The foco succeeds because it isn't distracted by time-consuming negotiations with the government, nor does it attempt to form tactical alliances with class factions of the bourgeoisie or work through the compromised mechanisms of electoral or party politics. In the foco all other considerations are secondary to the immediate strategic demands of warfare. We must "cast aside political verbosity," Debray argues.[24] "No political front which is basically a deliberative body can assume leadership of a people's war; only a technically capable executive group, centralized and united ... only a revolutionary general staff."[25]

Any attempt to win concessions (electoral reform, recognition of unions, etc.) that might soften the "contradictions" of class domination through political engagement will simply delay the onset of true revolution. "In the new context of struggle to the death, there is no place for spurious solutions ... there is no middle way," as Debray insists.[26] As noted above, this unforgiving instrumentality, in which everything is sacrificed to military necessity, nonetheless has the capacity to produce genuine political insight among the foco cadres. Thus, *foquismo* was not simply a product of military calculation (guerrilla fighters in Cuba initially lacked the heavy weaponry and troop strength necessary to meet Batista's army in massed battle), but also an incipient form of political consciousness.

Portrait of Régis Debray.

Under certain conditions, the political and the military are not separate, but form one organic whole, consisting of the people's army, whose nucleus is the guerrilla army. The vanguard party can exist in the form of the guerrilla foco itself. The guerrilla force is the party in embryo. This is the staggering novelty introduced by the Cuban Revolution.[27]

Debray's contrast between armed self-defense and *foquismo* is predicated on a series of spatial and temporal oppositions. Where armed self-defense is based on a principle of "spontaneity," as workers respond to specific challenges at the local or situational level, proper revolution requires discipline and planning. Debray cites Lenin directly on this point:

> self-defense is discredited today ... But beware! It tends to appear again in more seductive forms, though naturally without revealing its name. ... In the ideological background of self-defense there are to be found ideologies which Lenin repeatedly described as indigenous to the working class and which he said would again and again come to the fore whenever Marxists and Communists lowered their guard: "economism" and "spontaneity."[28]

Spontaneity, an ideology "indigenous" to the working class, must be replaced by the clear-headed thinking required for revolution. And the proper locale for the cultivation of this thinking is the remote mountain fastness, among scattered peasant villages. "Power is seized and held in the capital," Debray observes, "but the road that leads the exploited to it must pass through the countryside."[29] It is here, far away from the corrupting influence of the city, that authentic revolution is born, as the petty bourgeois intellectuals of the city become hardened guerrillas through shared adversity. "These are the militants of our time," Debray declares.

> Resolute and responsible, each of them knowing the meaning and goal of this armed class struggle through its leaders, fighters like themselves whom they see daily carrying the same packs on their backs, suffering the same blistered feet and the same thirst during a march.[30]

Debray associates the city with the reviled actions of politicians and the "vice of excessive deliberation." He writes:

> The reconstitution of the Party ... requires an end be put to the plethora of commissions, secretariats, congresses, conferences, plenary sessions, meetings, and assemblies at all levels ... such a mechanism ... hampers executive, centralized, and vertical methods ... demanded in the conduct of military operations.[31]

While the mountains and the countryside are the loci of authentic revolutionary insight, isolated, pure and autonomous, the cities are sites of compromise and temptation, "lukewarm incubators" that "make one infantile and bourgeois."[32] The experience of the mountains is transformative for Debray:

> In the first stages of life in the mountains, in the seclusion of the so-called virgin forest, life is simply a daily battle in its smallest detail; especially it is a battle within the *guerrillero* himself to overcome his old habits, to erase the marks left on his body by the incubator—his weakness.[33]

In the army, in the mountains, the would-be guerrilla will "shed his skin" and undergo a "resurrection."[34] It is here that "the political word is abruptly made flesh. The revolutionary ideal emerges from the gray shadow of formula and acquires substance in the full light of day. This transubstantiation comes as a surprise."[35] Only military cadres forged in the crucible of armed rebellion can understand the true nature of change, the demands that it makes for violent action rather than talk or negotiation. And only the army "can guarantee that the people's power will not be perverted after victory."[36] The *focquista* vanguard, in its single-minded commitment to military action, will model a proper revolutionary discipline for emulation by the peasants and working-class, "imbuing" them with revolutionary fervor.[37] The "small motor" of the foco will bring the "big motor" of the masses to political consciousness, and "set them in motion."[38] For this process to succeed, it is necessary that the masses see the foco, the "small motor," as "their only interpreter and guide, under penalty of dividing and weakening the people's strength."[39] Debray evokes a kind of revolutionary work ethic in which the exploited, through proximity to the exemplary foco, come to realize both the vulnerability of the powerful and the discipline and self-sacrifice necessary to overthrow the capitalist systemas a whole.

As I suggested at the beginning of this essay there are significant parallels between the rhetoric of the vanguard intellectual and the avant-garde artist during the twentieth-century. The exemplary consciousness, and the capacity for decisive, violent, action, displayed by the revolutionary cadre undergoes a process of displacement, as the artist also seeks to serve as the catalyst for a heightened awareness of the political. In the second half of this essay I will explore this transaction in more detail, linking Graciela Carnevale's work to recent developments in contemporary art theory and practice.

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To be continued in "The Sound of Breaking Glass, Part II: Agonism and the Taming of Dissent."

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1
Quoted in Ana Longoni, "'Vanguardia' y 'revolución,' ideas-fuerza en el arte argentino de los 60/70," *Brumaria* 8 (Spring 2007): 66.

2
This work has been listed under several titles, including *Lock-up Action* , *Encierro y Escape* (Entrapment or Confinement and Escape), and *Acción del Encierro*.

3
On July 28, 1968, the Onganía regime revoked the autonomy of Argentina's universities, which had first been granted in the reform of 1918.

4
As Cerejido notes: "It was 1968 and as the Tucuman Arde action was taking shape, (Carnevale) presented *Encierro*, the piece documented in the photograph that I saw in Kassel. For this piece she told me in the interview, it was her intention to induce the people into exemplary 'liberating violence.' The liberating violence was spiked by some elements of screwball comedy. The exterior wall and the door of the gallery were made of glass. Once the people were inside, Carnevale locked the door from outside. The glass was covered with posters that the trapped public (most of them students) proceeded to remove. Then a group attempted to take apart the hinges. A man that was passing by, seeing the desperation in some of the faces inside, broke the glass wall to let them out. At this point an artist friend who was inside as a mole, disappointed by the actions of the rescuer, hit him with an umbrella. There was pushing and shoving, angry insults and the noise of broken glass. It happened to be October ninth, the first anniversary of Che's assassination in Bolivia and the police were particularly alert. Soon a police battalion intervened and closed down the exhibit." Fabian Cerejido, *Assured Pasts or Gambled Futures: Contrasting Approaches to Context in Selected Twentieth Century Mexican and Argentine Art Practices* (UCSD, Ph.D. in Art History, Theory and Criticism, 2010), 67.

5
There is a good reason, I believe, for the persistence of this revelatory modality in both art and revolutionary theory. When confronted by countless instances of human cruelty, there is a sincere desire to believe that this is not due to some intrinsic predisposition, but is instead the result of a lack of knowledge or insight. We want to believe that humanity remains violent, vengeful, passive or complicit only because we have not yet adequately grasped the true nature of our own identity or our relationship to others. This is the utopian kernel, the optimistic humanism, at the heart of avant-garde discourse.

6
Lenin, *What Is to Be Done? Burning Questions of our Movement* (New York: International Publishers, 1981), 31.

7
Voline, *The Unknown Revolution, 1917-1921* (New York: Free Life Editions, 1974), 190. "Voline" is the pseudonym of Russian anarchist Vsevolod Mikhailovich Eichenbaum.

8
Lenin's account of "exposure literature" in *What Is to Be Done?* focuses on the genre of factory or industrial investigations, then popular in Russia. http://pdf.e-flux-systems.com/#_ftnref9 Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?* , 85. He writes on page 119, "Our wiseacres, however, at a time when Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a crisis entirely due to the lack of sufficiently trained, developed, and experienced leaders to guide the spontaneously awakening masses, cry out, with the profundity of fools: 'It is a bad business when the movement does not proceed from the rank and file.'"

9
Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, 85. He writes on page 119, "Our wiseacres, however, at a time when Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a crisis entirely due to the lack of sufficiently trained, developed, and experienced leaders to guide the spontaneously awakening masses, cry out, with the profundity of fools: 'It is a bad business when the movement does not proceed from the rank and file.'"

10
Ibid., 60.

11
Ibid., 48.

12
What Is to Be Done? was written in response to divisions within the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) during the early 1900s. The two primary factions within the RSDLP, which would subsequently evolve into the Bolshevik and Menshevik parties, were identified with political journals. The moderate faction, associated with *Rabocheye Dyelo* ("Workers' Cause"), was willing to accept some negotiation with liberal democratic forces in Russia and worked primarily through legal forms of trade unionism. The more radical faction, associated with Lenin and *Iskra* ("Spark"), advocated armed rebellion and sought to overthrow the entire political system of Tsarist Russia.

13
This wouldn't prevent Lenin himself from accusing the Mensheviks of precisely the same fault: underestimating the capacities of the proletariat. For Lenin, the Mensheviks' failure to support the uncompromising *Iskra* plan was evidence of their own a lack of faith in the radicalism of the proletariat. See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works (January–July 1905, Volume 8)* , trans. Bernard Issacs and Isidor Lasker (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 34.

14
"The Congress most emphatically condemns this disruptive conduct and warns all Party-conscious Social-Democrats against the notorious organization-as-process theory which has been used to justify disorganization and which has debased the theory of revolutionary Marxism in an unheard-of manner." Ibid., 191.

15
"This shows (something *Rabocheye Dyelo* cannot grasp) that *all* worship of the spontaneity of the working class movement, all belittling of the role of 'the conscious element,' of the role of Social-Democracy, *means, quite independently of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not, a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers* . All those who talk about 'overrating the importance of ideology,' about exaggerating the role of the conscious element, etc., imagine that the labor movement pure and simple can elaborate, and will elaborate, an independent ideology for itself, if only the workers 'wrest their fate from the hands of the leaders.'" Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, 39.

"And so, we have become convinced that the fundamental error committed by the 'new trend' in Russian Social-Democracy is it's bowing to spontaneity and its failure to understand that the spontaneity of the masses demands a high degree of consciousness from us Social-Democrats." Ibid., 53. "But what was only part misfortune became full misfortune when this consciousness began to grow dim (it was very much alive among the members of the groups mentioned), when there appeared people—and even Social-Democratic organs—that were prepared to regard shortcomings as virtues, that even tried to invent a *theoretical* basis for their *slavish cringing before spontaneity* ." Ibid., 63.

16
"Even the primitive revolts expressed the awakening of consciousness to a certain extent. The workers were losing their age-long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them and began... I shall not say to understand, but to sense the necessity for collective resistance, definitely abandoning their slavish submission to the authorities. But this was, nevertheless, more in the nature of outbursts of desperation and vengeance than of *struggle*." Ibid., 31.

17
"There is no middle course ... to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology ..." Ibid., 40–41.

18
"The Bolshevik idea was to build, on the ruins of the bourgeois state, *a new 'Workers' State'* ... The Anarchist idea [was and

19
Voline continues: "It was quickly corrupted. It organized itself as a privileged caste. And later *it flatte ned and subjected the working class in order to exploit it, under new forms, in its own interest* . Because of this the whole Revolution was falsified, misled. For, when the masses of the people became cognizant of their danger, it was too late. After a struggle between them and the new masters, solidly organized

and in possession of ample material, administrative, military, and police strength, the people succumbed." Voline, *The Unknown Revolution* , 157. Voline himself was criticized by the Ukrainian anarchist Nestor Makhno, who called him a "moralizing intellectual unconnected with social practice." See Paul LeBlanc, *Marx, Lenin, and the Revolutionary Experience: Studies of Communism and Radicalism in the Age of Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 208.

20
Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 47.

21
Debray was a young philosophy professor from Paris at the time. Despite receiving a thirty-year prison term from the Bolivian government, he was freed in 1970 following an international campaign that featured the efforts of Jean-Paul Sartre, Charles de Gaulle, and Pope Paul VI. Debray went on to become an advisor to François Mitterand during the 1980s.

22
Debray contends, "The guerrilla force, if it genuinely seeks total political warfare, cannot in the long run tolerate any fundamental duality of functions or powers." He cites Guevara on this point, arguing that, "the military and political leaders" should "be united, if possible, in one person." *Revolution in the Revolution*, 107. http://pdf.e-flux-systems.com/#_ftnref23 Ibid., 65. Debray is paraphrasing Castro here.

23
Ibid., 65. Debray is paraphrasing Castro here.

24
Ibid., 112.

25
Ibid., 86.

26
Ibid., 28.

27
Ibid., 106.

28
Debray continues, "At bottom Trotskyism is a metaphysic paved with good intentions. It is based on a belief in the natural goodness of the workers, which is always perverted by evil bureaucracies but never destroyed." Ibid., 39.

29
Ibid., 114.

30
"These are the militants of our time, not martyrs, not functionaries, but fighters. Neither creatures of an apparatus nor potentates: at this stage, they themselves are the apparatus." Ibid., 113.

31
Ibid., 102–103.

32
Ibid., 71.

33
Ibid., 71.

34
Ibid., 112.

35
Ibid., 112. In fact, the deliberate disconnect between the *foco* and a larger, urban, party-based structure, as well as the *foco*'s reli ance on volunteerism and exemplary violence, was questioned at the time by figures such as Abraham Guillén, a veteran of the Spanish Civil War who criticized *foquismo* in his book *Estrategia de la Guerrilla Urbana* (1966).

36
Ibid., 109.

37
Ibid., 47.

38
Ibid., 84.

39
Ibid., 109. See also page 84.

Paul Chan

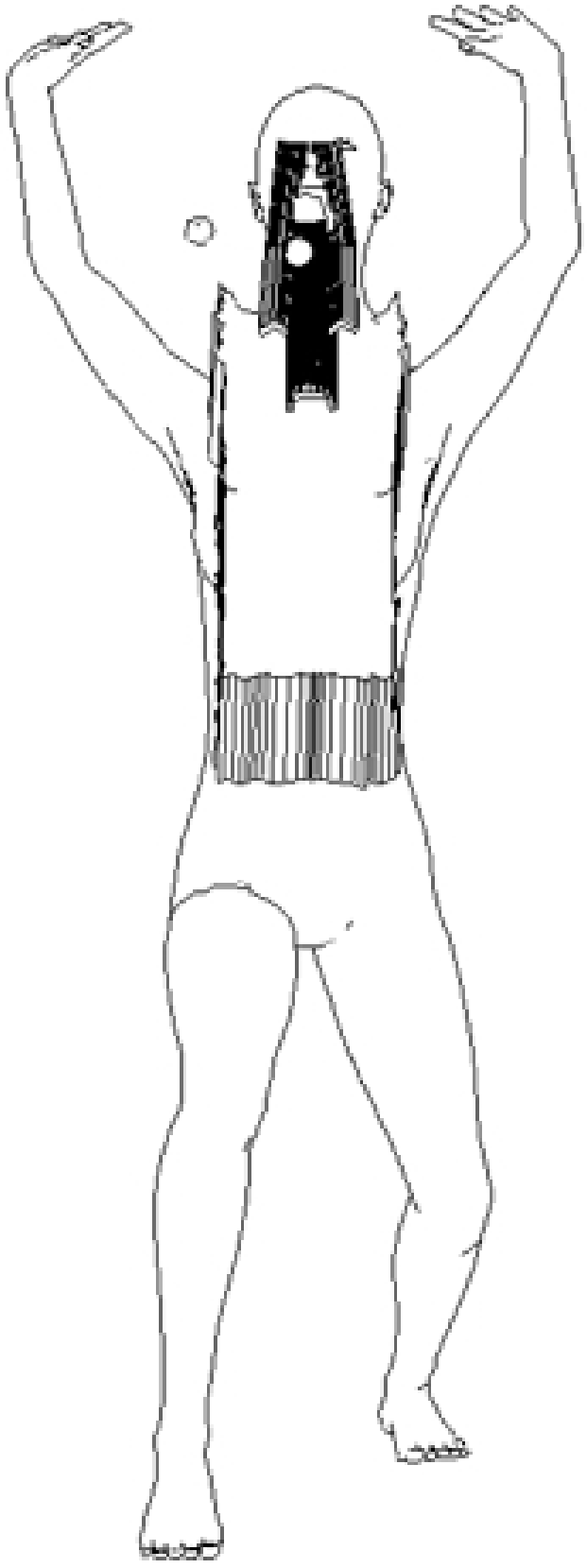
A Lawless Proposition

There is a Daoist saying that goes, "Whatever can be taught is not worth learning." It is a sobering thought, perhaps even a little cruel, as any insight that rings true feels. I don't take it to mean that one should stop listening to others. Philosophically, Daoists are realists: they want to see things as they are in the world. And the reality is that, just because you stop listening, doesn't mean people will stop talking—to you, at you, about what to do, how to do it, when to do it, who to do it to, and so on.

If it is a given that people will always have something to say about your business, how does one turn the jabber into something worth learning from? For Daoists, experience is key. Knowledge is not knowledge unless it is embodied in the stream of lived experience. The daily practice of living is what crystallizes the learning into concepts and ideas that inform one's external acts. The aim of knowledge is experience insofar as knowing some-*thing* substantiates a material reality for how a person comes to live as some- *one*. Experience, on the other hand, is the origin of knowledge to the extent that a person's reality is the grounding where one discovers and learns what makes life matter—from the inside out.

This Daoist notion that emphatically binds knowledge to experience is not unlike what ties artists to their work—at least in the case of artists for whom art is a matter of making work that remakes them. Of course, not all artists work like this; there are as many ways of making art as there are artists. But true as this may be, the truth is that artists all tend to follow the same basic assumption: artists make art and not the other way around. Artists make art as a means to tell us something: about themselves for instance, or others, or things that are important and useful to know about, the history or scene they wish to belong to, and certainly what is worthy of being art. Work like this can be experienced in a flash, because the form is merely a mannequin for what that "something" is, which drapes over the form like a dress on sale, waiting to be noticed. What matters most is the moment when one "gets it," as if the value of the work depends on the recognition of whatever benefits and gains there are from what the artist is getting at. It is the art of advertising.

What happens when it is the making that instructs the maker? What happens when the art makes the artist? When I make a work, there is sometimes a turning point; a moment when the conceptual and sensuous materials bind in such a way that the composition begins to resist my attempts to shape it according to my original intentions, and develops, against my will, its own sense of what must be done in order to be itself. It doesn't happen all the time. But when it does, I feel relieved, because it means the minutes, days, or years of working up to this point were worth the effort. But there is also a degree of despair, because the initial conception of how the work ought to be no longer holds sway in how it will continue to evolve. I am no longer the prime mover of the work. My directions are no longer followed. Beyond this certain



Françoise Gamma, 03___METAPHYSICAL___variación, 2011.

point there is no return. This point has to be reached.

It only sounds supernatural. Robert Bresson once said, "the supernatural is the natural precisely rendered." What is being rendered is not an image or an idea, but a process, which produces a feeling of autonomy in the work, as if the work has as much say as the maker on what to do and how to do it. By following the contours of this internal reasoning, a work takes on an uncanny quality that comes from it being an outgrowth of the experience of something becoming aware of becoming itself.

The essence of this concept of artistic development is informed by the nature of art as rooted in the historical idea of nature itself. In the West, the pre-Socratic philosopher, Empedocles, was the first to make an explicit connection between art and nature. He wrote about how human beings were created by mixing together the four elements, not unlike the way an artist mixes colors to make a painting. Art has hewn itself closely to nature ever since, not only to recreate it in images and objects, but also to mirror it as a force that animates inert matter into living forms. Art appropriates the power of nature to create works by mimicking the process that nature uses to engender life.

For Empedocles, life was divine because nature was ruled by gods. Art was used to enshrine the realities of life as an expression of the divine. Today, life is anything but, even though it is ruled by men who think they have inherited the power of gods. The law of nature evidently serves and protects only one percent of reality.

Against this, art becomes enlivened by internalizing the process that expresses the rest of what is real. By using the compositional struggle between what the artist wants and what the material is willing to be as the basis and principle for aesthetic development, art begins to follow another way. Over time, this internal tension transforms both the artist in mind and the matter at hand; it pushes and pulls the work toward becoming something neither fully intentional nor completely accidental. And yet by ending up being what it isn't supposed to be, a work becomes something more. It manifests a reality more real than any representation can ever hope to achieve, because it embodies the irreconcilable tension that animates contemporary life itself. This spirit of irreconcilability is the telos of artistic form.

By way of illustration: human beings carry a faint but discernable electrical charge simply by being alive. Plants, animals, and all living things produce bioelectricity in order to store metabolic energy. Human beings generate a relatively low amount of bioelectricity compared to, say, an electric eel. But this is not always the case. Several years ago, researchers found that some people produced more electricity than others, and some generated still more electricity in times of stress and other states of intense feeling. In both cases, there was a strong enough electromagnetic field around these people that they disrupted electronic devices nearby. Mobile phones dropped signal. Laptops wouldn't boot up. Calculators refused to subtract or divide. Nothing worked around these people. They were living forms of civil disobedience.

This is what art is like. Art appears when what is made feels as if there is a profound misunderstanding at the heart of what it is, as if it were made with the wrong use in mind, or the wrong idea about what it is capable of, or simply the wrong set of assumptions about what it means to fully function in the world. A work works by not working at all. By not obeying the law of any system or authority external to the process of its own making, a work emphatically expresses its own right to exist for itself and in itself, and questions—by merely existing—the rule of law that works to bind all to a semblance of the common good. Art is a lawless proposition.

But no artist creates lawlessly. The freedom the artist exercises in making work turns on the idea of law as an inner tendency rather than an external rule. Think the law of nature as opposed to the law against littering. Artists follow their own intuitions as the right of artistic freedom they grant themselves in obeying the law of one's inner essence. Cézanne may have had this in mind when he said that the ideal of earthly joy is "to have a beautiful formula."

Paul Cézanne, Mont Sainte-Victoire, 1904-1906. Oil on canvas.

The case can be made that the history of Western thought revolves around one question: which law to follow? Plato, for instance, believed in the power of human law to shape the course of social and political life. But he conceded that the law of nature was more binding, because this kind of law was divine in origin. Thomas Aquinas would absorb the metaphysical discourses pioneered by Plato—later expanded by Aristotle—and make them into the basis for his treatise on the essence and structure of law under

Animated excerpt of Yvonne Rainer's 1968 Trio A choreography.

Christ in the middle ages. Hegel renewed this tradition at the same time he upended it in the gothic cathedral–like system of his philosophy in the late 18th century, invoking reason as the universal spirit that ruled over men and nation states alike. Whatever the philosophy or theory, law—as what binds men to a greater order than themselves—is itself always bound to the grace and authority of a higher power. Carl Schmitt would come to define this entanglement in thetwentieth century, arguing that despite modernity's progress and the separation of church and state, all modern theories of law derive their power from secularized theological concepts.

If nature or God does not compel people to follow the law, violence is usually up to the task. Look at what has been happening for the last several months in New York, Los Angeles, Dallas, Portland, Chicago, Atlanta, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and so on; on campuses, on streets, on bridges, in parks, and elsewhere. Police maintain order by inciting chaos. Inalienable rights of speech and assembly are revoked in the name of the state. The times resound with songs for change and the law responds by restoring the same.

By being violent, the state remains hard on the heels of life. The point of political violence is the restoration of a past that no longer takes part in life as it is lived. This violence institutes new law to assert order against calls for change. But a paradox lurks: the new is essentially the old. In the coercive act, the law constantly becomes new law. To maintain power, the state must be both lawful and violent, a refuge of the old law and a source of the new. Caught in the dynamic to preserve and renew itself, the state reveals its own particular nature: a compulsion to repeat this traumatic cycle of law-giving and violence-making, to cling to a continuity with a past that alone legitimates its authority. Law represents the border that separates what the sovereign past justifies and what the frontiers of a more just future might hold. This is why political movements that embody new and substantive calls for more justice, liberty, and equality must act without fear of being unlawful. Otherwise they would not remain true to what first inspired them to act: the promise of a time to come, where law has no jurisdiction.

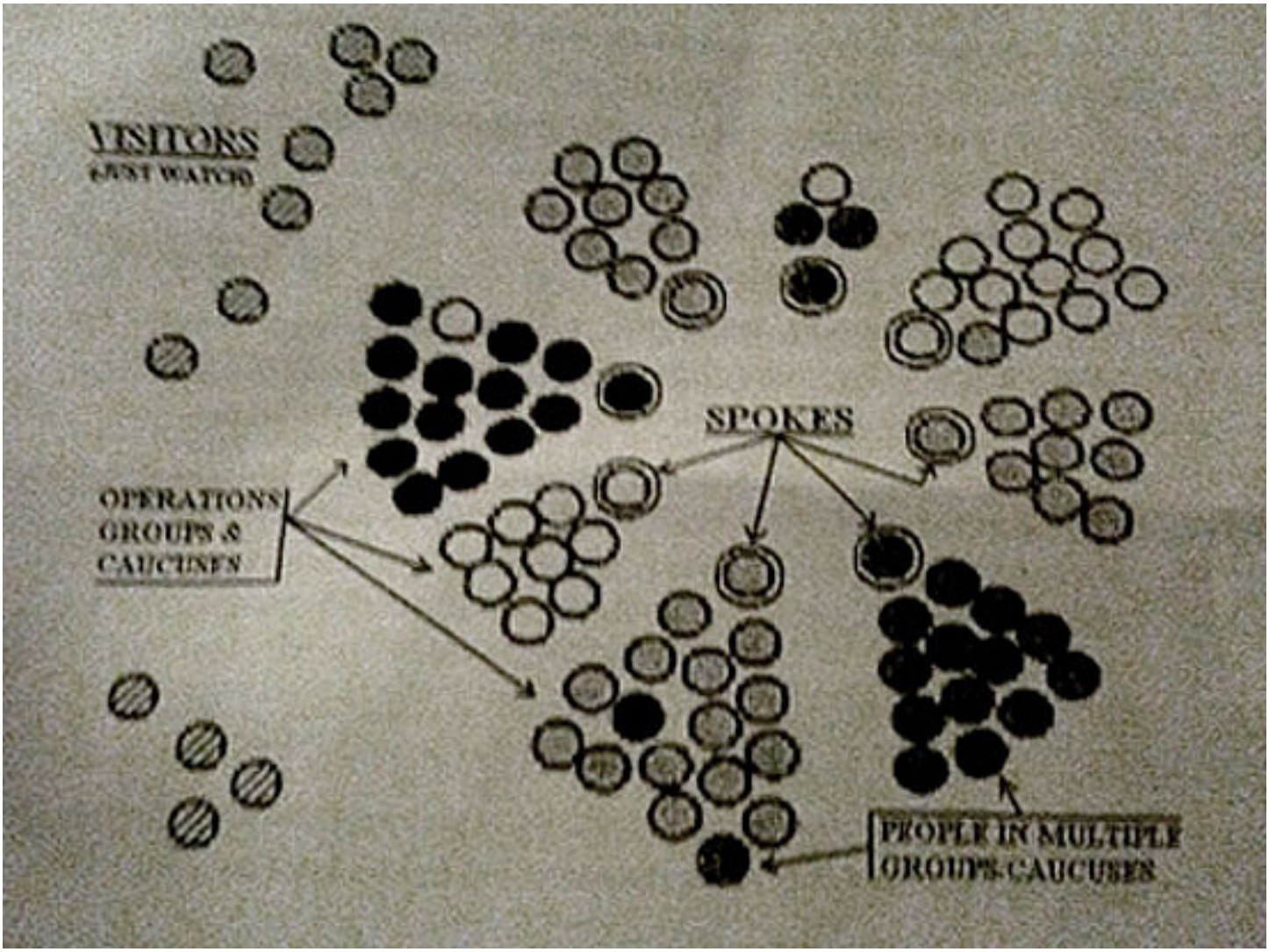
Crimes are committed every day, many by bankers during normal business hours. But even criminals follow the law as dictated by the nature of their own self-interest. Anyone who has ever been arrested can attest that a crime may be unreasonable, but it is never without reason. What the legion of moralists, philosophers, and legislators since Aquinas fear most is that what steers man towards criminality is more binding than law that ties him to the state, the common good, or God. The fascination with crime comes in part from the idea that one can live rightly by following real needs and desires, against the rule of an external authority that declares what one ought to have and must remain. By following impulses where they want to go, and aiding and abetting them with knowledge and experience, one transforms those needs and desires into a law that rules from within. What is perhaps most satisfying about committing crime may be the feeling that one is following a superior law while doing so. In a sense, this is what autonomy is: self-rule. And this is why criminals are so captivating: they are ciphers of independence. On the other hand, the self that rules may not be a self at all, but the force of an inner nature that governs by compulsion. Who has not experienced the utter lack of freedom that comes from being ruled by various passions and urges? One feels no longer in control, with no will to determine the course of one's life, as if the self just split and left. And yet, isn't there always also a curious pleasure to unfreedom, as if what secretly pleases one most is being told what to do?

Life without law lives outside the grace of authority. But true lawlessness would amount to disregarding *both* the commandments of external law and the law legislated by one's inner nature. Perhaps the most paradoxical and compelling account of what it means to live against all law comes, ironically, from Christianity's first great institutional organizer, Saint Paul. In *Letters to the Romans*, Paul links the notion of law in general to sin and decay, and suggests that death lives *first* through law.

> What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

What Paul is describing is not a literal death. I think he is saying that the law not only regulates and commands, but also agitates and excites, and how this excitation produces a deadening. But it is not a deadening that renders one still and lifeless. Rather, the force of law burdens the one who follows it so much that anxiety seizes a person's waking life, and takes a hold of his experience in the world, and shakes him into a kind of petrified unrest. It might be more precise to say that what happens is an *un* deadening; like being turned into a zombie, or other varieties of the living dead. Seen from this vantage point, death is life paralyzed by power, and sin becomes the inability for a life to take on more life by the only process that renders more life possible: change.

Law, for Paul, makes life unlivable by instilling a manic dimension that disrupts the potential for inner development, for that life has been too captured (or captivated) by its own repetition compulsion to follow and fulfill the law.



Naeem Mohaiemen, Day 42: new organizational spoke model which is being debated in GA, 2011.

Paul is wrong, of course. Many people today live in petrified unrest and enjoy very full and productive lives. For example, scores of artists manically follow the law of their inner compulsion to make innumerable works and employ many more to do the same, all in the name of artistic freedom. It is their right, and even perhaps their nature. The works they produce are art insofar as they are made by artists. But little else emerges from their material presence beyond the feeling that what has settled into form before us was made "by the book" so to speak; forms of expression that embody—more than anything else—the manic energy generated by the anxiety and restlessness of being a law-abiding subject through and through.

I began to write this with what I thought was an image of lawlessness in my mind. It is not one of the countless images of protests and revolts that have appeared, although it could very well have been. It isn't Che, nor the Outlaw Josey Wales. It isn't late, late Matisse, or the films of Chris Marker, although either would have fit. I thought it was a moment that occurred recently, where three mountains were in view, with the sun shining dully behind the drama of slow-moving clouds, but thinking now, it wasn't that either. The image is gone, and with it, the contours of a reason that led me here. But here is not so different than back there, where I began, except for the appearance of these words, the time spent writing them, and what remains to be said and done, now that these words have come to an end.

Martha Fleming-Ives, Phillip Glass with Occupy Lincoln Center, 2011.

Chris Marker, Untitled (pepper spray cop on the moon), 2011.

X

An earlier version of this speech was presented as part of a conversation with Kasper König in London in October 2011, on the occasion of the exhibition “Before the Law” at the Ludwig Museum in Cologne.

Paul Chan lives and works in New York.

Jalal Toufic

The Resurrected Brother of Mary and Martha: A Human Who Lived then Died!

To be fully alive and *then* die physically, a state most people mistakenly view as being ours in general, a given, is actually an exceptional state. What would it take to achieve what we assume our condition to be? It would take no less than being resurrected by the Christ, "the life" (John 11:25). Yes, to be fully alive and then die physically is not the condition of all humans, but is rather the exceptional condition of the New Testament's brother of Mary and Martha, the one who was resurrected by the Christ, *the life*, and hence was, until he died physically, solely alive, rather than, as we, mortals, are, dead while alive. Following his resurrection by *the life*, the brother of Mary and Martha was no longer really a mortal; in that he was no longer really a mortal, i.e., no longer dead while alive, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha had become what the Arabic word *hayawân* indicates, alive, alive to the highest degree, and an animal. When he picked some heads of grain and ate them on the Sabbath, the Pharisees did not say to him, "You are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath"! Indeed, whatever the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha did, people did not consider it as condemnable, unconsciously treating him as an animal, one to whom the values of Good and Evil did not apply (animals did not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil). In order to resurrect, one's call to the dead by the name he had while alive must be such as to re-differentiate this name from every name in history (in "his" dying before dying ["This autumn, as lightly clad as possible, I twice attended my funeral, first as Count Robilant (no, he is my son, insofar as I am Carlo Alberto, my nature below), but I was Antonelli myself"], Nietzsche writes: "I am Prado, I am also Prado's father, I venture to say that I am also Lesseps.... I am also Chambige ... every name in history is I"),[1] and such as to overcome the over-turn that undoes the dead's turn to reply to the call in the labyrinth of undeath;[2] but it never occurs to those mortals living then to call the resurrected, because, at the most basic level, he no longer needs the call since, as is the case of most animals, he faces himself in the mirror naturally, i.e., since his facing himself in the mirror is not the result of a successful interpellation, and, at a derivative level, because he happens to be facing the mortal whenever the latter needs him to be in that direction. From the time of his resurrection to his subsequent physical death, no one called the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha. But *he* called; about the ninth hour after he was given again spirit by the Holy Spirit, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha cried out in a loud voice, "My God, why have you left me poor in world?" After the Holy Spirit infused the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha again with spirit, that is, after the latter could no longer be considered only an animal, the "wise men" of that time felt that he was "no good"[3], 162).]—notwithstanding that, fully alive, he could not be evaluated, was beyond (or rather below) Good and Evil[4]), since beyond the Last Judgment there is no longer Good and Evil given that these would still be judgments. Since there can be Good and Evil until the Last Judgment but not beyond it, Heaven and Hell are beyond Good and Evil. There's a General Judgment (aka

Last Judgment) following the individual judgment, which is related to each of us as specific if not unique, because the General Judgment is one where everyone exclaims: "Every name in history is I." The General Judgment is a sort of Buddhist complement to Islam and Christianity, their Zen moment.] (Nietzsche: "Judgments, value judgments on life, for or against, can ultimately never be true: they have value only as symptoms, they can be taken seriously only as symptoms,—in themselves, judgments like these are stupidities.... *the value of life cannot be estimated*").[5] The resurrected brother of Mary and Martha proved to be a bigger problem for the Pharisees than Jesus, since the latter still affirmed the Law ("Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven" [Matthew 5:17–20]), while the former's transgressions, his "strange actions," went on becoming more blatant and flagrant. While it may have been for the glory of God that Lazarus was resurrected, it was certainly not for the glory of the Law. It is to the discredit of Paul that in none of his letters does he mention the real resurrected, the one through whom the question of whether the Law has been abrogated/made inoperative with the resurrection, at least in the case of the resurrected, is to be really raised. How come no Christian has written a text or epistle to the people of Bethany titled, *Twilight of the Law*, in which a section is titled, "The Problem of the Resurrected Brother of Mary and Martha"?

"Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.' ... 'Leave her alone,' Jesus replied. 'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.[6] You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me'" (John 12:1–8). Is that all?! Was there no dialogue worth reporting other than the one between Judas and Jesus? Wasn't there a dialogue between the life and the resurrection and the resurrection and the life, between the Christ and the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha? I imagine the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha turning to Judas and saying: "What a petty view of poverty you have! You are talking about those who are poor only in a secondary sense, since they have a world, a whole world. I am poor in world." I imagine that he then said to Jesus, "I heard that you asked rhetorically, 'What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?'" (Matthew 16:26), then lamented, "Now that you have given me my life back and that the Holy Spirit has infused me with a soul and spirit, why have you, through whom, as far as one can tell, the world was made,[7]]" (John 1:10).] not also bestowed a world on me?" I imagine that Jesus answered him with these words of Nietzsche, who would later sign some of his final letters with "The Crucified": "I teach to you ... the creating friend, who always has a complete world to bestow."[8] The resurrected prayed then to God, the world-creating friend, to bestow a world on him. And God the creator of worlds (it may very well be that God does not create [out of nothing] the things/events, for example Earth, wheat field, crows, Julius Caesar's crossing the Rubicon in 49 BC, but rather creates and bestows a world, makes it possible for us to experience these as a world—while it may be the case that when one goes mad, one actually perceives and experiences more of the "universe" or multiverse than one does normally, even so one becomes poor in world then) bestowed a world on the resurrected, henceforth his *waliyy* (friend). There are at least three risks of resurrection: that the one who returns be another—this danger is averted when the one doing the resurrection is the life, the Christ; that the one who returns be only a *hayawân*, both someone who is only and fully living and an animal—this danger is averted with the reinfusion of spirit in the resurrected by the Holy Spirit; and that the one who returns to life be poor in world—a condition that can be remedied through the bestowal by God the world-creator of a world on the resurrected. It seems that the resurrection demands to be the act of the Trinity: the Christ, the life, gives the resurrected back life; the Holy Spirit gives him, who is then only alive and therefore really solely an animal, spirit; and God the world-creator creates a world and bestows it on him.

Given that the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha did not remember anything that happened to him in death,[9] at first his two sisters were apprehensive that his memory was overwhelmed by what he underwent in undeath and that he would no longer remember them or remember very little of their previous life together. Instead, unlike with other people, who would have needed age revivification in order to re-access much of the early years of their childhood, which was otherwise occulted by infantile amnesia, and notwithstanding that he could not be hypnotized since he no longer dreamt when he went to sleep[10]—it was as if he had done all the dreaming he was ever to do in his "four days" (John 11:17) in the undeath realm, where he felt that he had spent an eternity or an infinite time—the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha could remember the slightest, minutest incidents of his and his sisters' common childhood, recounting to them childhood events that they had long forgotten as well as

ones they denied vehemently ever having happened given that these involved what seemed to be perverse sexual experiences. One of the prerequisites for fulfilling Jesus Christ's enjoinment to be like little children ("And he said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven'" [Matthew 18:3]) is to fully accept oneself as a child, one's childhood, including one's sexuality then, that is, not to repress much of it, as implied by *infantile amnesia* (before Jesus Christ's many miracles, what most took aback his acquaintances was that he remembered everything from his childhood—will we one day discover new Gospels in which Jesus Christ, who did not undergo *infantile amnesia*, often refers to his childhood, *exactly as if he were reliving it*?). Moreover, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha never forgot the name of a relative or had a slip of the tongue, etc., thus he had no need, at least in the context of this world, to interpret what he did. What Deleuze and Guattari write about the female protagonist of Henry James' novella "In the Cage," a telegrapher with a "prodigious talent for interpretation," actually applies far more to the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha (and to others in their perceptions of and dealings with him): "She ended up knowing so much that she could no longer interpret anything. *There were no longer shadows to help her see more clearly, only glare*."[11]], 197. We are notified by Massumi in the corresponding note that the reported quote from James is actually his English translation of the French translation used by Deleuze and Guattari; the actual words in James' text are: "She knew at last so much that she had quite lost her earlier sense of merely guessing. There were no different shades of distinctions—it all bounded out"). And indeed, who has gone "further in life" than the New Testament's resurrected brother of Mary and Martha?]

Didn't Judas intuit during the aforementioned dinner given in Jesus' honor in Bethany and attended by the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha that he and the eleven other apparent disciples of Jesus were not the latter's true disciples, that the true disciple of the life and resurrection was Lazarus, the resurrection and the life, and so felt less qualms when it came to betraying the one he no longer considered his Lord? Jesus Christ, the life and the resurrection, had only one disciple, whom he loved ("Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" [John 11:5]), Lazarus, the resurrection and the life, whereas his apparent disciples, one of whom betrayed him and the other eleven abandoned him as soon as he was apprehended, if they were the disciples of anyone, it was later of the Holy Spirit. The disciple of the one who when "some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from you,'" answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:39–40), is Lazarus, someone who was four days in the grave and who when Jesus called him, "Lazarus, come out!" (John 11:43), left the realm of death and followed him (to life). And yet, following the death of Judas, "said Peter, 'It is written in the Book of Psalms: … "May another take his place of leadership." Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.' So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.' Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:20–26). In their search for a replacement of the dead Judas, the remaining apparent disciples surely managed to skip the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, the Christ's one real disciple!

Nietzsche: "There was really only one Christian, and he died on the cross" (*The Anti-Christ*, #39).[12] If by "there was really only one Christian," Nietzsche was referring to Jesus, then his assertion "he died on the cross" is false since *the life* (John 11:25) did not die ("They slew him [the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Allâh's messenger] not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them …" [Qur'ân 4:157]—someone else, a look-alike, was crucified in his place), indeed cannot die on the cross or in any other manner: "'Pretend to weep, my friends, since poets only pretend to die,' says Cocteau in his film *The Testament of Orpheus* (1960). How pretentious can some poet be at times! Notwithstanding Cocteau's assertion, it is not poets, but *the resurrection and the life* [actually the life and the resurrection], Jesus Christ, who could have said to the [genuinely Christian] mourners around his body, 'Pretend to weep, since Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life [actually the life and the resurrection], only pretends to die.'"[13] If one considers that Nietzsche does not include in the term *Christian* the Christ but only some follower of his, then Nietzsche's assertion is accurate; this one and only Christian is the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha. I propose the following add-on to Nietzsche's assertion: "There was really only one Christian martyr, and he died on the cross." Is Lazarus to be considered a Christian martyr because had Jesus Christ not lingered two days where he happened to be ("So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days" [John 11:6]) but instead immediately went to Bethany and miraculously cured him, who was then gravely ill, Lazarus would not have died at that point? That Lazarus died for the glory of God does not make him strictly speaking a *Christian* martyr; what makes him a Christian martyr, possibly the only Christian martyr, is that he lived for the cause of the Christ, of the life, and he could do so only by no longer being a mortal, i.e., dead while alive, but instead solely alive. Trusting Nietzsche's intuition that the only Christian died on the cross, I deduce

that the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha was crucified ("Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him" [John 12:9–11]). If one includes the Christ in the term *Christian* in Nietzsche's assertion, then there were really only two Christians, the life and the resurrection, Jesus Christ, and the resurrection and the life, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha. In Lebanon, Christians say, *al-masîh qâm, haqqan qâm* (Christ rose [from death, i.e., was resurrected], truly he rose); they should rather say: *Alî'âzar qâm, haqqan qâm* (Lazarus rose [from death, i.e., was resurrected], truly he rose). The word order in John 25, "I am the resurrection and the life," is inaccurate—the life, even if it is crucified, cannot die and therefore cannot be resurrected.[14] The assertive sentence must be: "I am the life and the resurrection"—"I am ... the resurrection" here means: I am the one through whom the resurrection can happen. It is the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha who can say, "I am the resurrection and the life"; I can very well imagine that when his listeners did not understand what he just said, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha *told them plainly*: "I've been resurrected—by the life—and thenceforth can only be alive—until I physically die." It is a great mark of a disciple of the Christ and indicates a true *imitation of Christ* when his description is mistaken for that of Jesus Christ: the one who used to be called Lazarus is the resurrection and the life and he died on the cross.

X

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1
From Friedrich Nietzsche's 5 January 1889 letter to Jakob Burckhardt, in *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche* , ed. and trans. Christopher Middleton (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), 347.

2
On the over-turn, see "Over-Turns" in my book *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* , revised and expanded edition (Sausalito, CA: Post-Apollo Press, 2003; available for download as a PDF file at http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm), and "On Names: Letter to Lyn Hejinian" in my book *Forthcoming* (Berkeley, CA: Atelos, 2000), 179–194.

3
Friedrich Nietzsche: "The wisest men in every age have reached the same conclusion about life: *it's no good* ... Always and everywhere, you hear the same sound from their mouths,—a sound ... full of exhaustion with life, full of resistance *to* life" (*The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* , ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman; trans. Judith Norman [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005

4
One can go beyond Good and Evil in at least two other manners: by achieving the will, which eliminates one of the two terms, Evil (in the sense of what cannot be willed to recur eternally—even by the redeemer)—and eradicates death; and by having a Last Judgment. The Last Judgment is, paradoxically, God's way of implementing Artaud's program: to have done with the Judgment of God (*pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* [the title of his cancelled, 1947 radio broadcast

5
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* , 162.

6
And if we go along with the Moslem accusation that the Gospels have altered and suppressed some of what Jesus Christ actually said and did, might it not be that Jesus Christ's call to the physically dead Lazarus, "Lazarus, come out!" was preceded by these words that are absent from the New Testament: "Call not those who are slain in the way of Allâh 'dead.' Nay, they are living, only ye perceive not" (Qur'ân 3:169)?

7
"The world was made through him [the Son

8
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody* , translated with an introduction and notes by Graham Parkes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 54.

9
That in the New Testament the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha is not asked what he saw to the other side of death indicates that the New Testament revolves around life.

10
Once the Holy Spirit gives him, who is then only alive and therefore really solely an animal, spirit, and God the world-creator creates a world and bestows it on him, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, in so far as he did not dream but *always* had a re lationship to objects as such, was very different from animals.

11
Deleuze and Guattari comment: "You cannot go further in life than this sentence by James" (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Tho usand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* , translation and foreword by Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987

12
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* , 35.

13
Jalal Toufic, *Graziella: The Corrected Edition* (Forthcoming Books, 2009; available for download as a PDF file at http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm), 67–68.

14
Those who consider that the Christ, the life, was resurrected must consider that his prior dying was his greatest miracle. Which is far more extraordinary in the era ushered in by the Christ, the life: dying or resurrection? In the case of a Christian, who is alive through Jesus Christ, the life and the resurrection, it is death, rather than resurrection, that should be accompanied by wonders. Indeed, according to the accounts of the Gospels, when Jesus was purportedly resurrected no signs and wonders appeared in the world, but when he died, "the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split" (Matthew 27:51).

Sotirios Bahtsetzis

The Time That Remains, Part II: How to Repeat the Avant-Garde

Continued from "The Time That Remains, Part I: On Contemporary Nihilism" in issue 28.

> To live is therefore also, always, to experience in the past the eternal amplitude of a present.
>
> —Alain Badiou[1]

Is there a way out from the compulsive repetition that is symptomatic of our times? Boris Groys has defined the specific artistic gesture of the universalistic, messianic avant-garde through what he calls "the weak gesture of avant-garde" in opposition to the strong gesture of historicism as a form of domination in official culture. The avant-garde is not something that occurred once, but something that must always be repeated, precisely because it has been incorporated into the forgetfulness of historicizing culture and its ideology of progress. In this regard, the very notion of repetition, or even "re-volutio" understood as the circular temporal movement enacted by a self-repeating gesture, is inherent to the avant-garde.[2] For Groys,

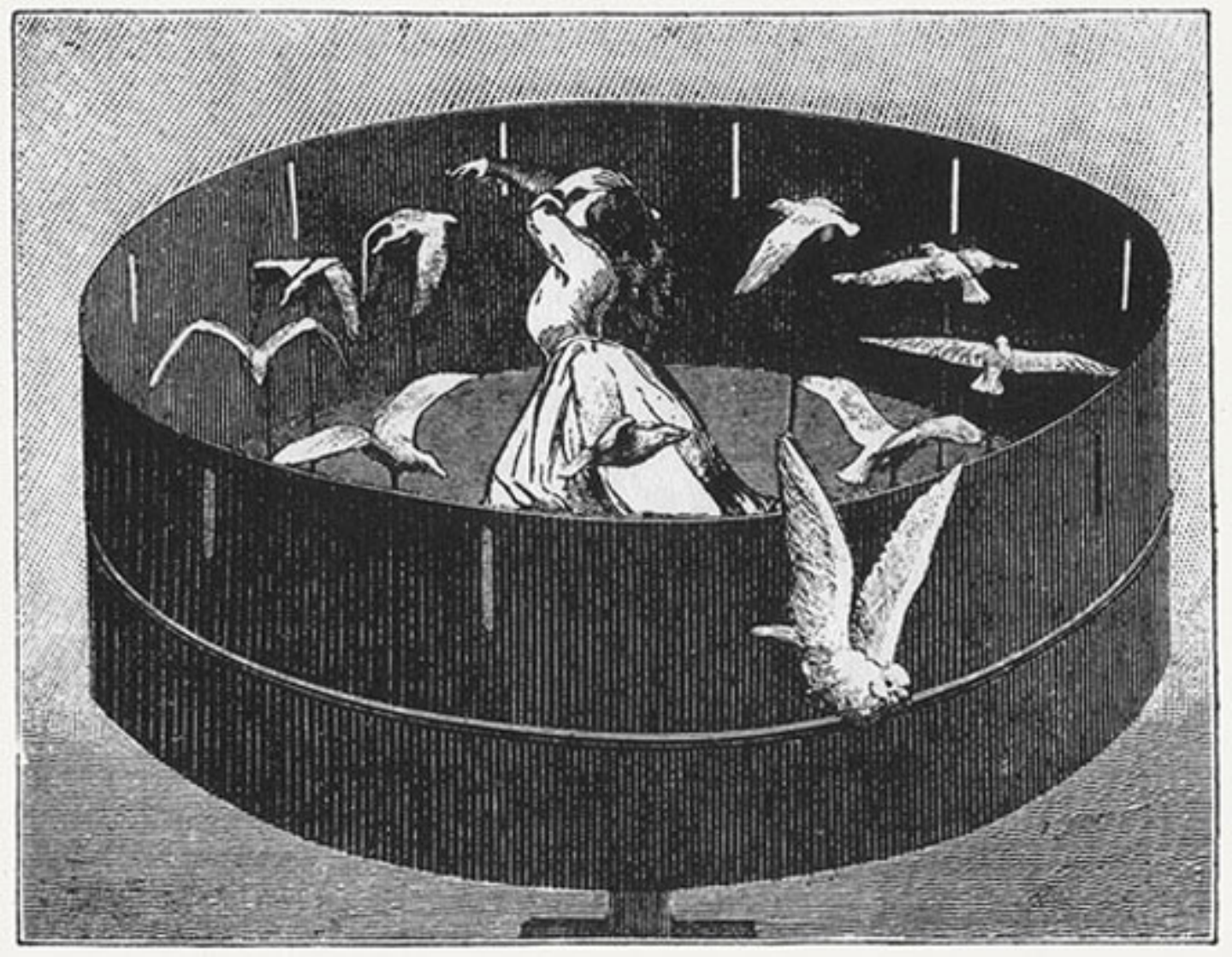
> it is not enough to reveal the repetitive patterns that transcend historical change. It is necessary to constantly repeat the revelation of these patterns—this repetition itself should be made repetitive, because every such repetition of the weak, transcendental gesture simultaneously produces further confusion, and so forth. That is why the avant-garde cannot take place once and for all time, but must be permanently repeated to resist permanent historical change and chronic lack of time.[3]

To repeat here means to retaliate against historicism and against its devastating influence. Applied to the avant-garde, this notion of time enables us to retain modernity in our present as a "soteriological device," one that may transform chronological history into suspended time.[4]

Returning to the concept of revolution as already inherent to the avant-garde, we can further suggest that the revolutionary gesture of avant-garde repetition is only the assertion of a specific subjectivity. Giorgio Agamben, in his discussion of temporality, differentiates between two ways of being in time: the "as if" type of chronological time versus the "as not" type of messianic time. The first lives

as if he or she were "normal, as if the reign of normality existed, as if there were no problem ... and this alone constitutes the origin of their discomfort, their particular sensation of emptiness."[5] In his *Arcades Project,* Walter Benjamin introduces the emblematic figures who occupy this empty temporality of perpetuation.[6] Waiting in the nineteenth century was already the symptom of the "as if" type—signified by the player, the flâneur, and by a state of boredom (*ennui*). Each foretells modernism's self-repeating phantasmagoria in our present.

of perspective within given conditions, not necessarily in the change of the conditions. It opposes the passive nihilism of society's death drive, and the fundamental tendency of the symbolic order to perpetuate the same through continual displacement. In doing so it contests the basic conceits of linear time: the fetishization of history, mythologies that celebrate novelty and dynamic change, and the overriding imperative toward modernization. The condition of active nihilism can be seen as a political and philosophical mode of acting against waiting, acquiescent nihilism, and these modes of



Max Ernst, Rêve d'une Petite Fille qui Voulut Entrer au Carmel, 1930. Collage.

In contrast, the revolutionary subject is defined through what Agamben calls "living as not" (the Paulian *hos me, quasi non, as if not,* or *als ob nicht*). In Agamben's view, what is essential to this subject is not dogma or theory, but factual experience: an awareness of the way worldly relations are lived and "appropriated in their impropriety ."[7] Realizing this avant-garde sensibility consists of a change

self-effacement.

This is what Baudelaire's project of modernity was also about: an active transformation of detached *ennui* into an effective and self-reflexive spleen, made into a critical attunement to the nature of modern life.[8] Obviously,

Baudelaire's distinction between an ennui-negativity and a spleen-negativity reflects both an aesthetic and ethical differentiation, as it does for Agamben, who elsewhere recasts this couplet to enable a more distinctive profile of the "as not" type as artist. By differentiating between a negative and a constructive negativity as elucidated by Nietzsche (the originator of this philosophical concept), Agamben gives it an operational quality:

> This devaluation of all values—which constitutes the essence of nihilism—has two opposite meanings for Nietzsche. There is a nihilism that corresponds to "increased power of spirit" and to a vital enrichment (Nietzsche calls it "active nihilism") and a nihilism that is sign of "decline" and impoverishment of life ("passive nihilism").[9]

Nietzsche's distinction between, on the one hand, a desire for destruction, for change, and becoming, a desire "pregnant with future," and, on the other hand, a desire to fix, to immortalize, the desire for *being* prompted to creation," gives us the means to reconsider the current situation of art within the double bind outlined in the first part of this essay.[10] Nietzsche's invocation from *The Gay Science* is, in this respect, pertinent: "Ah, if you could really understand why we of all people need art ... but "another kind of art ... an art of artists, for artists only!"[11] We can understand Nietzsche's call for the "destruction of aesthetics" as setting art and subjectivity beyond narrow notions of the work of art, the artist, and the public.

A positive devaluation of all values within the system of art might mean, as John Rajchman states, to "free the whole idea of 'aesthetics,' not only from the Kantian problematic of regulated faculties but also from the whole salvationist problematic of judgment or judgment day, connecting it instead to another unfinished sense of time."[12] Any contemporary assertion of an "ethically demanding negativity" within our current systems of aesthetic judgment is the symptom of their reification, but also the only possible resistance against it. The symptom of negativity can be made into a cure through repeated gestures of self-negating negativity—Nietzsche's active nihilism.[13]

How, then, can we imagine today this novel sensitivity of an ethically demanding negativity that is able to assert the self-repetitive gesture of the avant-garde? Such a re-orientation doesn't begin with the artist or the institutional system of art, but with the problematic of judgment. Let us not forget that the conceptual evaluation of aesthetics during German Idealism—the period of birth time for modern understandings of art and philosophy—was simultaneously accompanied by the discovery of reflexive judgment. It is no surprise that one of the most recent meditations on the state of art, provided by Jacques Rancière, reevaluates not the artist but the spectator as bearer of aesthetic evaluation. According to Rancière, every spectator acts as someone who observes, selects, compares and interprets:

> This is the crucial point: Spectators see, feel and understand something in as much as they compose their own poem, as, in their way, do actors, playwrights, directors, dancers or performers.[14]

Redressing the function of both spectator and public means to avoid the allure and primacy of the object, which results, almost automatically, in an aesthetics of the work, the monopoly of the artist, and the art system as we know it, which, even in their contemporary perverted, nihilistic, postmodern configurations, are still based on categories of the *homo aestheticus*. What Rancière proposes is not a rupture or break within the historic continuum of works of art, or with the notion of the artist as such, but with the role of the spectator who guarantees the validity of aesthetic judgment. This means a break with universal concepts of judgment based solely on the notion of artistic geniality and the man of *bon goût* as a privileged and necessary agent. Such works of art, newly repositioned, cannot be constituted through an *ex cathedra* judgment, however noble and enlightened it might be, but through an organically growing palimpsest of decisions between emancipated spectators-as-quasi-producers.

Even for Kant the universal validity of judgment does not derive from determinate, preexisting concepts but from common sense, which is then reciprocally addressed as a universal category. We can ague that such an option is based on a constant negotiation of aesthetic criteria, which—and this is important—cannot be pre-established or strictly reliant on specialized competencies, but that function on the basis of changing cultural conventions and arrangements.[15] For Groys the essential character of the avant-garde is that it is a democratic art. But, paradoxically, it is not popular with larger audiences, exactly because it is democratic:

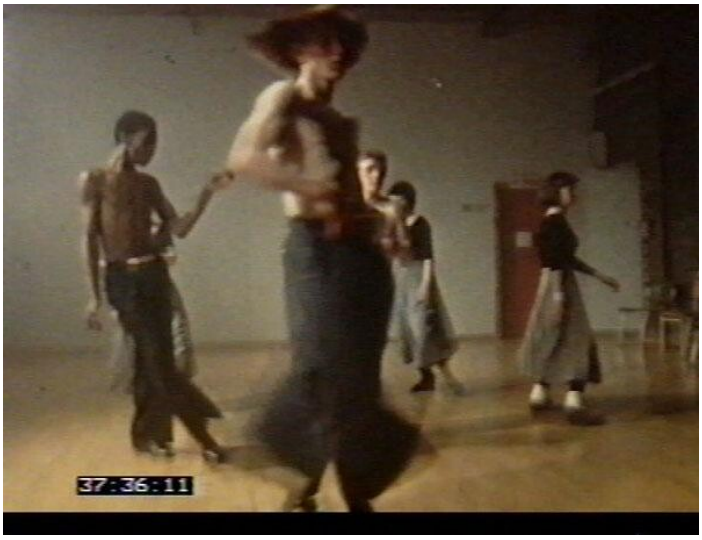
> Indeed, the avant-garde opens a way for an average person to understand himself or herself as an artist—to enter the field of art as a producer of weak, poor, only partially visible images. But an average person is by definition not popular—only stars, celebrities, and exceptional and famous personalities can be popular. Popular art is made for a population consisting of spectators.[16]

Elaborating on the notion of an active spectator, Rancière gives an answer to Nietzsche's question of how anyone can understand herself as an artist: a fundamental

Joulia Strauss, Death of TV, 2005. Performance.

aspiration of the avant-gardes. Beginning from a political view of the educator, Rancière rethinks learning as a specific cultural technology one of the first that creates actual audiences under conditions of passive reception. Designating the members of these groups as "embodied allegories of inequality"—positions of specific capacities and incapacities linked to various roles found most social distributions—Rancière argues that popular instruction produces inferiority in the form of stultification; lack of knowledge results in an inability to exercise creative intelligence and vice versa.[17] "To be a spectator is to be separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act."[18] For Rancière, intelligence within this framework does not admit to differences of quantity, but of positions within a specific system that attributes capacities and maintains the distance between those who know and those who don't know. If we extend Rancière's concept of the "ignorant schoolmaster" beyond practical and intelligible matters (as he does), we can argue that the capacity of sensuous apprehension (*aesthesis*) extends to everyone.

This optimistic "devaluation of all values [of hierarchy and category]" that is implied in Rancière's theory should be seen as an opportunity to rethink the art-spectator relation from the beginning. A universal judgment not based on the inculcation of inferiority signifies, in this respect, the possible aesthetic and political emancipation of the spectator.[19] A work's meaning is literally constructed by the viewers as it is subject to a negotiation and opposition on the part of the participating audience, which are both political and educational. As Rancière puts it: "Emancipation is the possibility of a spectator's gaze other than the one that was programmed."[20] Moreover, the inclusion of everyone in matters of *aesthesis* equals an opportunity for a novel redistribution of the sensible—that is, both of the sensuous apprehension and of making sense. (The French word *sens* contains this double meaning.) Because aesthetic judgment is the universal condition for the world's comprehension, the political



Mark Lecky, Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore, 1999. Video.

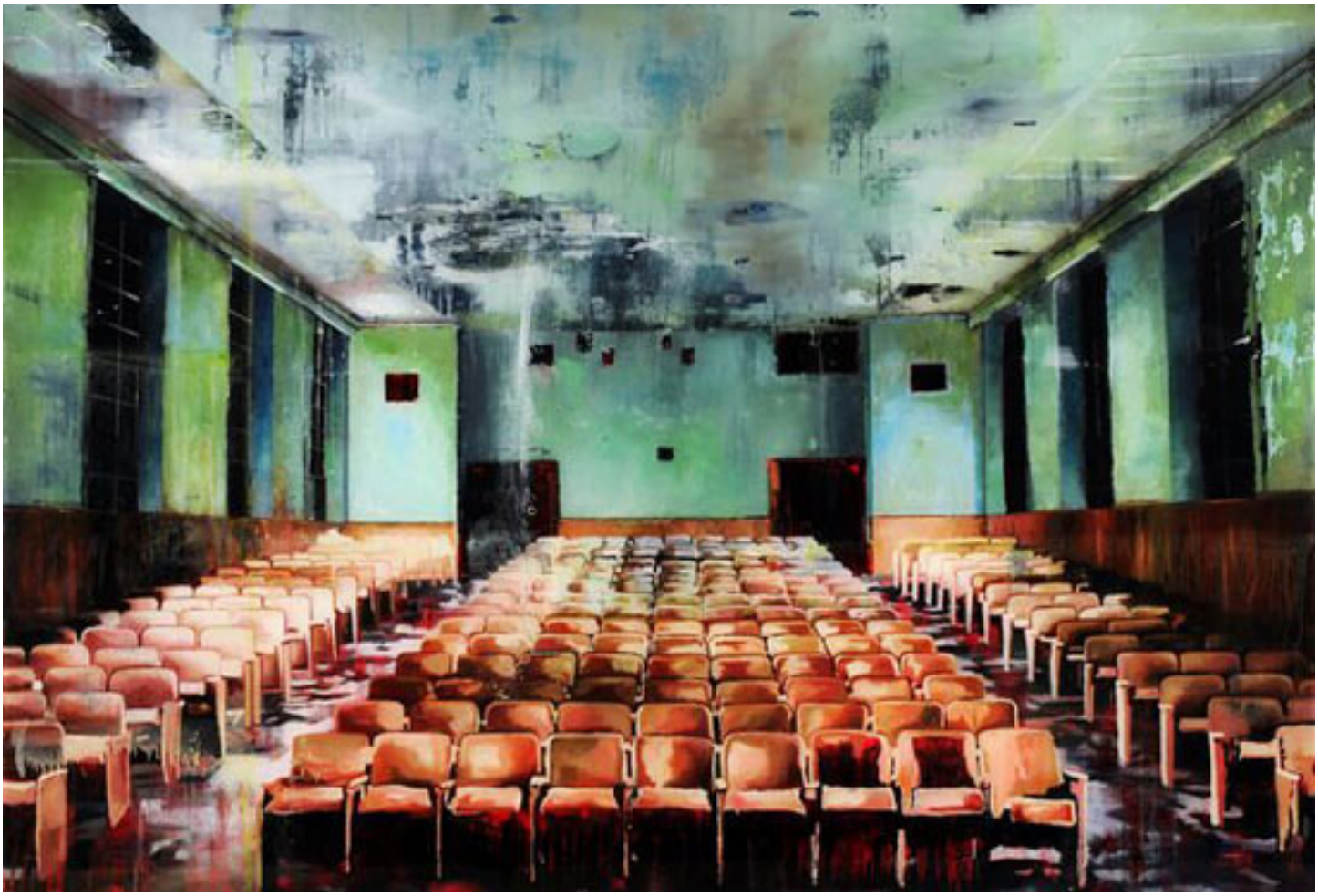
implications of this proposal are immense. If aesthetic discussion is a matter of common consideration such that everyone has access to a decision-making that could change common sensibility—not just in art, which would cease to exist as such—then this new ethos can lead to the total abolishment of the narcissistic artist and of the consumerist viewer dependent on that disposition. This would also mean the abolishment of art as a monopoly—meaning art maintained by professional experts: curators, critics, dealers, collectors, advertisers, culture managers), those who, as Theodor Adorno remarks, "monopolize progress."[21] This would mean an end to art that acquires legitimation only because of its so-called educational and cultural value; art that is offered to a continuously ignorant and stultified public through state or privately funded museums and public art projects; and art that is substantiated by economic entities such as assets, profit or interest rather than the real needs of life.

One can set Rancière's emancipated spectator within a broader concept of art as the state of "bringing forth." In this phrase Heidegger conceives making art as something, "extended to every ability to bring forth and to everything that is essentially brought forth."[22] More narrowly, Heidegger describes the Nieztschean aesthetic capacity as "a relation to art of a creative or receptive sort," which effectively reasserts the essential, aesthetic and even political position of the viewer.[23] Putting a name to this capacity, Heidegger elaborates on the ancient Greek word *techné*, which is often translated as craftsmanship, craft or art, and he brings us toward a unique definition of art, that makes a clear distinction between art of the artist and the public: " *Techné* is often the word for human knowledge without qualification."[24]In difference to *techné* the word *episteme* stands for the knowledge or science of quantifiable experts. For the ancient Greeks, *polis* politics is not linked to expertise and qualification, but is a capacity that can be actualized by doing; it is a civic way of life and an ethos for every citizen. That is why Plato speaks about *politike techné* and not *episteme*. What Rancière proposes is not a manual for how to do art, as has been often misunderstood; instead, he offers an answer to the question of what the artistic state should look like. In a truly democratic way—meaning looking at things from the standpoint of people or of civic society—Rancière demands an *aisthetike techné ,* not an *episteme,* one addressed to all as political beings, that would advance art to an essential position within a political constitution.

For this reason, it is not a coincidence that the ancient amphitheater, the architectural *dispositif* of viewing and being seen, functions as Rancière's emblematic figure of both political and aesthetic emancipation.[25] The amphitheater unifies the two primary and essential arts of redistributing the sensible implicit in Rancière's theory: dancing and building (assigning a site)— *chorós* and *chôros*. In this space, a redistribution of the sensible occurs within an affective framework as a transmission of sensuous and sensible affects passed from one body to another, from one ear to another. I believe it is in such contemporary *dispositifs* of placing bodies, of making and unmaking sites, of seeing and being seen, that such modern amphitheaters (not panoramas or panopticons) establish where the repetitive gesture of avant-garde can be performed.[26]

However this gesture cannot be guided by modernism's aspiration to change social reality, or by "the dream of an art directly involved in producing the forms and the buildings of new life."[27] It may have the more modest goal to infuse reality with momentous breaks of perception that emancipate people, meaning to interrupt the programmed state of being with "dis-identifications" that construct new affective, discursive and pragmatic capacities: "Aesthetic experience has a political effect to the extend that the loss of destination it presupposes disrupts the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations. What it produces is not rhetorical persuasion about what must be done. Nor is it the framing of a collective body. It is a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world they live in and the way in which they are 'equipped' to adapt to it. It is a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible."[28]

In my view, this is also what Simon Critchley means with his argument for anarchism as an ethical practice, a mode of active nihilism understood as re-motivating means of political organization and aesthetics. The 'deterritorialization' of aesthetic judgment should be seen in this respect as a practice, which demands an emancipated spectator, one who exercises an interpretative and selective active looking, one who performs the repetitive and at the same time futile gesture of the avant-garde again and again, always producing peripheral and anarchic blind spots, signs of low visibility



Gil Heitor Cortesão, Remote Viewer 2, 2008. Acrylic on glass.

against the domination of historized and fetishized culture while continuously creating momentous dispositivs of sensuous time. The avant-garde doesn't constitute an epoch; it is not just a historical period of art, the contents of which can be archived and reenacted, but rather a practical tool, a mechanism that enables the emergence of such 'evental' sites, and promises but never achieves with certainty the reconciliation of antinomies. The operations that define the way in which art weaves a community together are made according to Rancière, "en vue de – with a view to and in the hope of – a people, which is still lacking." [29]Repeating the messianic gesture of the avant-garde means to assume in an act of faith that this people exists.

X

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1
Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds. Being and Event, 2* (New York, London: Continuum, 2009), 510.

2
Equally, a "revolution" is a turn, a roll-back (*revolutio*), a strophé that is in search of its own temporal dimension. However, this turn also can be a *diastrophé* associated with Gianni Vattimo's concept of the Heideggerian *Verwindung* , which explains our time, a concept that " *contains no notion of dialectical sublimation (Aufhebung) nor of a 'leaving behind' which characterizes the connection we have with a past that no longer has anything to say to us* ." This turning may appear to us as a sudden reversal of that which is expected: as both a sudden end and a reversal against (*strophé* kata). This *katastrophé* is a crisis that enables the opportune, the pivotal moment (*kairos*) to appear. Incidentally Alain Badiou's retroactive constitution of the event, the temporality of the *futur antérieur,* which in his account has always a catastrophic dimension, connects the repetitive gesture of temporality to the revolutionary, terrible event. See Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-modern Culture* , (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 7.

3
Boris Groys, "The Weak Universalism" *e-flux journal* no. 15 (October 2010). See https://www.e-flux.com/journal/15/61294/the-weak-universalism/ .

4
Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* , trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford,CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 82.

5
Agamben, ibid., 36–37.

6
See Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* , ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge MA, University of Harvard Press: 2002), passim and esp. 101-119.

7
Agamben, ibid., 34.

8
Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping. Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008) 6.

9
Agamben, *ibid.*,86.

10
See https://www.e-flux.com/journal/28/68012/the-time-that-remains-part-i-on-contemporary-nihilism/ .

11
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs* (New York: Vintage, 1974), 37.

12
John Rajchman, *Constructions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 2.

13
The aristocratic version of this figure of negativity is found in Theodor Adorno, who, in *The Philosophy of New Music* , trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press: 2006), declares radical and novel art—notably the music of Arnold Schönberg—to be "restricted to definitive negation." In turn, for Edward Said, Adorno is a figure of lateness, "an untimely, scandalous, even catastrophic commentator of the present." Although Said's lateness: "fully conscious, full of memory, and also very (even preternaturally) aware of the present," is tinted by ethno-biographical history, it could be easily be turned into a Nietzschean figure of active nihilism. Edward W. Said, *On Late Style. Music and Literature Against the Grain* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 13.

14
Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), 13.

15
Related models that deny strict categorical privilege and function would be Marcel Mauss' gift economy, which produces consensus through a reciprocal obligation to offer, or Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's concept of "agonistic pluralism" as the basis of radical democracy. See Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London, New York: Verso, 2000), 80–107.

16
Groys, *ibid.*

17
Rancière, ibid, 12.

18
Rancière, ibid, 2.

19
Rancière has often pointed to Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* aesthetic as a production model that will emancipate the spectator. See also Owen Hatherley, who has recently assessed the cinematic and avant garde components of Brecht's Epic Theater in terms of their political and educational objectives and their functional democratization of the cultural apparatus.. Owen Hatherley, *Militant Modernism* (Winchester,UK, Washington, D.C., 2008), 116

20
Jacques Rancière, Fulvia Carnevale, and John Kelsey, "Art of the Possible," *Artforum* (March 2007), 267.

21
Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music* .

22
Heidegger, *Nietzsche,*. 71. This is also Agamben's view: "But the castle of culture has now become a museum in which, on the one hand, the wealth of the past, in which man can in no way recognize himself, is accumulated to be offered to the aesthetic enjoyment of the members of the community, and, on the other, this enjoyment is possible only through the alienation that deprives it of its immediate meaning and of its poietic (sic) capacity to open its space to man's action and knowledge." See Agamben, *ibid.,* 111. The poietic in Agamben—from poiein "to pro-duce" in the sense of bringing into being—r—efers to the Heideggerian poet of truth (*aletheia*) who, in Alain Badiou's view, is momentous, unpredictable and rare as opposed to Agamben's *homo aes theticus* , the poet of continuation, application, and reiteration. See Alain Badiou, *On the Truth-Process, An Open Lecture* by Alain Badiou (2002). See http://www.egs.edu/faculty/alain-badiou/articles/on-the-truth-process .

23
Heidegger, *Nietzsche,* 96.

24
Heidegger, ibid.,81.

25
The term amphitheater derives from the ancient Greek *amphi-*, meaning "on both sides," and *theasthai* "to behold or view",For one discussion of *dispositifs* in the current moment, see Agamben, *What is an Apparatus and other essays* , trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Palo Alto, Stanford University Press: 2009), 1–23.

26
In this regard, the amphitheater functions as the political equivalent of the critical Deleuzian architectonic figure, the fold, see Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibnitz and the Baroque* , trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press: 1992).. As with the distinctive operations of Deleuze's many arts: film, literature, music and film, Rancière's amphitheater is kind an abstract architectonic and operative generator that creates other spaces, "not by reducing sense but by multiplying it....It is not a matter of architectures that refer back to their own rules of construction and nothing else. Rather, it is a question of constructing free spaces of unregulation, undetermined by any prior plan, which so loosen an arrangement as to allow for sensations of something new, other affects, other percepts." See Rajchman, *Constructions*,8. According to Deleuze, if philosophy creates "concepts," the arts create novel qualitative combinations of sensation and feeling, so-called "percepts" and " *affects.* " For a discussion of the term "affect," see Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2002). Equally, parallels can be drawn to Lacan's baroque vision in which the topological figure of the *torus*, Lacan's "doughnut," constitutes an anchoring point in his theory of the constitution of a hollow subject. See Walter Seitter, "Lacans Barockismus" in Blühmle, Claudia and Heiden, Anne von der (ed.), *Blickzähmung und Augentäuschung. Zu Jacques Lacans Bildtheorie* (Berlin, Zurich: Diaphanes 2005), p. 355; Jean-Paul Assoun, *Lacan* (Paris 2003), p. 9, and Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *La folie du voir. Une esthétique du virtuel* (Paris: Galilée 1987).

27
Rancière, *ibid*, 78.

28
Such a position signifies a Rancièrian affective turn that leads us beyond our current aesthetic regime. Aesthetics for Rancière means the collapse of

an isomorphic mediation, “the continuity between thoughts and its signs in bodies, and also between the performance of living bodies and its effect on other bodies.” In Rancière’s vocabulary this mediation defines the mimetic regime of art, which has ended with the advent of the modern aesthetic regime by the end of the 18th century. Rancière, *ibid*, p. 72 and 62.

29
Rancière, *ibid*, 57.